

# Modern India 2024

## Handout 6: Anglo-Mysore Wars

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With the conquest of Bengal began the process of the subjugation of the entire Indian subcontinent, a process that continued for the next hundred years and even beyond. The Company continued to systematically weaken local/regional polities elsewhere by intervening in their disputes, as they had done in Bengal.

Apart from being engaged in devising means for the appropriation of the Bengal resources, for much of the latter half of the century, the Company concentrated its energies on establishing effective control over South India. From 1760s to 1790s, the Company's expansionist drive in south India was fiercely resisted by the state of Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. The Anglo-Mysorean relations between 1760-99 must be understood in this context.

Causes for conflict:

- Pro-French policy pursued by both Hyder and Tipu
  - During the second Carnatic war, Hyder came in contact with the French through de Bussy's subordinates. This tilt became more pronounced by the 1760s. Ties between the two states acquired greater depth in later half of the century, particularly after the French Revolution.
- Hostilities between French and British at global level.
- Mutual rivalries among Indigenous powers (eg Arcot, Hyderabad, Marathas)
- English policy of supporting one indigenous ruler against another
- Other British interests
  - Mysore controlled part of rich Malabar coastal trade which was a threat to British trade in cardamom and pepper.
  - Buffer state issue: Powerful Mysore near Madras was a threat.

"...most contemporary Indian rulers were tyrannical usurpers of previous dynasties and rights and could therefore dispensed with at will so that (this ancient, and highly cultivated people) could be 'restored to the full enjoyment of their religious and civil rights'." (Perception created by British to legitimize their rule)

## First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)

Lord Verelst (1767-69) was the governor of Bengal Presidency and Charles Bouchier was the governor of Madras Presidency (1767-70) during this phase.

- British felt threatened by the military might of Mysore and its pro-French stance.
- In late 18th c, Mysore assumed central importance. The Nizam of Hyderabad, Nawab of Arcot and Marathas also felt threatened. English now joined them and formed a broad-front against Mysore. (Triple Alliance)
- Haider rose to the occasion. He diplomatically turned the Marathas neutral and Nizam into his ally against Nawab of Arcot. He offered Marathas the regions of Shivener and Gutti, apart from war indemnity of Rs. 32 lakh.
- After isolating British, Haider suddenly attacked Madras. His forces reached the outskirts of Madras, causing complete chaos and panic. This compelled the English to sue for peace. Though Haider did not want stop his offensive against the English, the threat of Maratha invasion forced him to negotiate peace with the English.
- Treaty of Madras (1769):
  - It restored the status quo and mutual restitution of territories.
  - There was no provision for war compensation.
  - Important clause: This was a defensive alliance and both powers agreed to help each other in case of an attack by a third party.



iramukhoty Hyder Spanks the English

To show that the English did not have sole rights on myth making, here is a cartoon by Antoine Borel, showing Hyder Ali of Mysore giving a British officer a thorough spanking while a French soldier smirks and supplies the twigs

The French had fought in large numbers for Hyder Ali and Tipu sultan during the 1778-1784 second Anglo-Mysore wars, and this cartoon reflects that mood in France. The French were particularly peeved with the brits for having captured their main trading post, Pondicherry, during the American Revolutionary War.

Bibliotheque National des Estampes, 1783

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williamdalrymple Brilliant

This treaty was an honourable treaty for Hyder Ali. It severely damaged the prestige of English in India. The importance of the First Anglo-Mysore war lies in the fact the English, for the first time in India, seemed to be on backfoot. The seeds of a continuous friction between Mysore and the British power were thus sowed.

## Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84)

Warren Hastings (1772-85)

Warren Hastings and Robert Clive are credited with laying the foundation of the British Empire in India - from difficult position post-Mughal and regional rivalries.

- First Anglo-Maratha War
- Second Anglo-Mysore War



### Causes

- The second war started after about a decade since the first war.
- In 1771, Mysore was invaded by the Maratha but British didn't come to help. Despite his appeal, they preferred to remain neutral. Hyder Ali considered it a contravention to the spirit of the Treaty of Madras and accused them of breach of faith.
- Haider Ali found the French more resourceful in terms of fulfilling the army requirements of guns, saltpeter and lead. Consequently, he started importing French war materials to Mysore through Mahe, a French possession on the Malabar Coast.
- The increasing friendship between Mysore and French raised concern for the British. In 1779, the British company invaded the French region, Mahe. As Mahe fell under the jurisdiction of Mysore, Haider Ali resisted British attempt to capture it and took it as a direct challenge to his sovereign power. It provided the immediate pretext for the war.



### Course of the War

- It was a fiercely fought military context ranging over a vast area stretching from Mangalore on the west coast to Arcot in the east.
- Using his rare diplomatic skill, Hyder was able to win over Marathas and Nizam on his side for some time. This broad united front worked fairly well initially.
- His main strength lay in his cavalry and semi-guerrilla tactics. He was able to capture almost the whole of Carnatic.
- However, after 1781, tables started turning.
  - Battle of Porto Novo (1781): General Eyre Coote defeated Hyder Ali
  - British made peace with Marathas which enabled them to concentrate their entire military strength against Mysore.



The battle of Pollilur (near Kanchipuram, 1780) when Mysore army led by Tipu defeated the EIC forces. EIC suffered massive losses 'the severest blow that English had suffered ever in India.' The painting offers the wealth of information on battle formations, composition of armies with horses, elephants, foot soldiers, uniforms and military band that accompanied them.

- In 1782, **Hyder** Ali died when the war was in full-swing. It was Tipu Sultan who took command of the war for its remaining **duration** (1782-84).
  - Tipu got big military successes at many places and hence British came under the pressure. Neither side was capable of **overpowering** the other completely.
  - At the same time, Madras was hit by financial crunch and **Lord Macartney**, the Governor of Madras initiated peace talks. Tipu also needed time to consolidate his hold and strengthen administration.
  - Thus, it remained an **inconclusive War**.
- Treaty of Mangalore (1784)
  - Both sides restored all conquests. This treaty kept Tipu's kingdom and military **intact**. It was a respectable treaty for Tipu as there was **no place for war compensation even in this treaty**.
  - Although the British had been shown **to be too weak to defeat Mysore**, they had certainly proved their ability to hold their **own in India**.

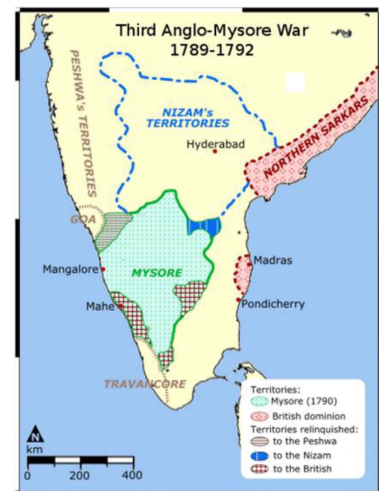
### Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92)

#### **Cornwallis** (1786-93)

- He was sent with instructions to avoid conflict.
- Known for administrative, legal and **revenue** reforms
- Third Anglo-Mysore War - he inflicted temporary defeat on Tipu



- The Treaty of Mangalore was not enough to resolve the conflict. It was just a **temporary** respite before a final showdown.
- The relationship between Tipu and Iran/France were improving, which threatened the British interests.
- *"The authorities of the East India Company were **acutely** hostile to Tipu. They looked upon him as their most **formidable** rival in the south and as the chief obstacle standing between them and complete domination over South India. Tipu, on his part, thoroughly disliked the English, saw them as the chief danger to his own independence and nursed the ambition to expel them from India."* - NCERT
- Causes
  - Lord Cornwallis diplomatically brought **Marathas** and **Nizam** to the British side. They were against Tipu's growing power.
  - In 1789, Tipu invaded the state of **Travancore**. Travancore was protected by British as per the Treaty of Mangalore (1784).
- War





- Cornwallis came out to protect Travancore and sent an expedition led by General Meadows against Tipu. However, this expedition of unsuccessful.
- Then, Cornwallis formed a Triple Alliance and succeeded in isolating Tipu diplomatically - Marathas and Nizams against Tipu along with British. The rulers of the states of Travancore, Cochin and Arcot were already hostile to Tipu.
- Tipu was compelled to fight simultaneously on several fronts which overstretched his military resources. Still, he sustained the war for one long year. Finally, Tipu was comprehensively defeated in 1792 and had to make a treaty of Srirangapatam.
- Treaty of Seringapatam (1792)
  - Humiliating treaty for Tipu - he lost half of his region to the British, along with 3.3 crore rupees as war compensation.
  - British shared some regions submitted by Tipu with their allies. (Kadappa and some regions near Tungabhadra to Marathas, regions near Pennar river to Nizam) but the most important regions at Cochin, Coorg and Malabar coast and places like Dindigul, Barmahal (Salem district) were brought under their own control.
- This war depleted Tipu's strength and destroyed his dominant position in the south and firmly established British supremacy there.



Mysorean Rockets  
First iron case rockets



*Cornwallis receiving the sons of Tipu Sultan as hostages, painted by Daniel Orme, 1793*



Velu Nachiyar was an 18th-century queen of Sivaganga. She was one of the first queens to fight against the British rule in India.

In 1780, when the British captured Sivaganga and forced her to flee, she sought refuge in the Kingdom of Mysore. With the help of Gopala Nayaka, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, she regained control of Sivaganga in 1780, becoming the first queen to do so in Indian history. She then ruled the kingdom with the help of Tipu Sultan until her death in 1796.

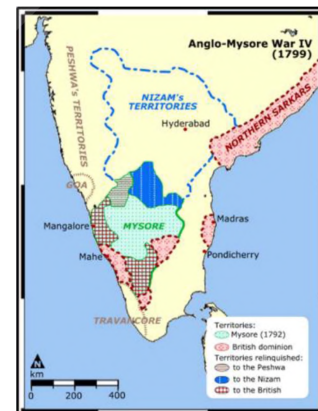
## Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

Lord Wellesley (1798-1805)

- French Menace
  - He was sent to India during when Napoleon was preparing for the invasion of Egypt and there was a possibility of French invasion of India and the danger of French revival in India. Wellesley was expressly sent to India to check the French menace.
- Fresh vigour to the British expansionism (policy of annexation)
  - He tried bringing as many Indian states as possible under British control. By his arrival, the two strongest Indian powers (Mysore, Marathas), had declined in power; aggression was easy as well as profitable. And in that, the French menace provided good pretext.
- Wellesley adopted three different methods to achieve his goal:
  - The method of war - 4th Anglo-Mysore, 2nd Anglo-Maratha
  - The method of Subsidiary Alliance
  - The method of Annexation - Surat, Tanjore, Carnatic (he created the Madras Presidency by merging these areas)
- Wellesley had no doubt about its legality or morality. His only objective was supremacy of the British in India.



- Tipu's spirit of resistance did not subside even when reduced to half. He was in the search of alternative method to counter the British.
  - French Connection
    - Developed some military arsenals with French support. He developed three armouries - Mangalore, Wazirabad and Malidabad - with the French help.
    - He entered in negotiations for an alliance with Revolutionary France.
    - He hoisted French flag and hoisted Tree of Liberty in Seringpatanam. He subscribed himself to the Jacobin Club and preferred to call himself Citizen Tipu.
- British were not prepared to accept Tipu's Francophile policy.
  - Sent ambassadors to many regions including France, Mauritius, Constantinople, Afghanistan and Iran to forge an anti-British alliance. He even maintained correspondence with Napoleon.
- Under the circumstances, the destruction of Tipu's power became even more urgent from the British viewpoint. Tipu was accused of plotting against the British with treasonable intent. Lord Wellesley decided to eliminate Tipu first.



- He sent Arthur Wellesley and Major Stewart to crush the power of Tipu. British attempted to persuade Tipu to sign Subsidiary Alliance but he refused.
- British forces attacked Seringapatnam in 1799. Although by now, Tipu was no match for the British, yet he fought valiantly. The battle of Seringapatnam was brief but fierce. Tipu died valiantly fighting in 1799.



British Regiment storming  
Seringapatnam

#### Outcome

- Nearly half of Tipu's kingdom was divided between Nizam and British. A small portion was restored to Wodeyars. They were made to sign the subsidiary alliance system.
- Thus ended the independent Mysore state. It had taken the English 32 years to subjugate Mysore.
- The fall of Mysore permanently brushed aside the threat of French revival in the Deccan.
- Just after it, in 1801, there was the formation of the so called 'Madras Presidency'.

the downfall of the Mysore has been attributed to the inability to handle the political situation as tactful as Hyder Ali would have done. Hyder Ali born to create the empire and Tipu to lose one. However, the close scrutiny of the South India gives in closing decades of 18th century much more complexity.

1) Political situation in India and abroad has gone transformation in the days of Hyder Ali. Hyder took advantage of the ongoing Anglo-French and Anglo-Maratha contest in the South India. British made the peace with the Marathas and thus concentrated exclusively on the Tipu by the time Tipu ascended the throne. The English had driven the French from India.

2) Tipu's attempt to build up an anti-British front abroad did not succeed while he had far-sightedness to feel the necessity of other indigenous power is on another page.

3) The British diplomatic gestures could successfully realign the Indian power to suit their interest by bringing Nizam of Hyderabad and Marathas on the side. British isolated the Tipu. While the English received assistance from the indigenous power, Tipu's attempt to receive help from the French was not successful. Tipu had to fight the British single-handedly.

5) The British power was high in 1790. There was now perennial supply of food to continuous war while Hyder relied on cavalry to dislodge the British infantry. Tipu depended on artillery forces directly. The English succeeded because they are better equipped.



conclusion:

finally, the sooner and later the fall of mysoor was inevitable tipu did not have the power to reverse the force of british.



Tipu's Tiger Contraption,  
Victoria and Albert Museum



Tipu Sultan's camping tent, seized after fall of  
Seringpatnam, today in Powis castle (Welsh)