Nawabi Karnatak: Muhammad Ali Khan in the Making of a Mughal Successor State in Pre-colonial South India, 1749-1795

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Chapter 4: Nawabi Sword

> However much his companions persuaded him to vacate his seat,
> Ḥaẓrat-i-A'lā replied, "At the time of the display of bravery,
> the guarding of one's life is opposed to the honour of a soldier."[1]

This chapter explores the Nawabi military and dynastic servants under the general category of "the sword." First, it will provide readers with a broad overview of the main military developments in South Asia prior to and during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Then, it will discuss briefly ideological aspects of the "Nawabi sword" and how the Nawab presented or positioned himself within this pillar of the state. Next, there will be an exploration of various prominent military groups that were linked to the Nawab's court. The chapter will also reflect further on the political challenges in local society that the Nawab faced and his attempts to deal with them.

4.1 The South Asian Military Labor Market

Turkish Cavalry and Mughal Warfare

According to military historians, in the second millennium South Asia underwent two momentous military revolutions. Prior to the twelfth century, warfare was based on large numbers of infantry, to which were added available war elephants and small numbers of light cavalry.[2] From the twelfth century onwards, the semi-nomadic conquerors from West and Central Asia who established various Indo-Islamic polities brought with them a new type of warfare, one mainly based on more heavily-armed cavalry. This led to the first military revolution,[3] and from the sixteenth century the horse-based army became the dominant mode of warfare on South Asian battlefields.[4] Along with the Turkish-style heavy cavalry, the use of firearms increased over time, with metallurgical techniques mainly developed from Iran.[5] It has been widely acknowledged that, with their firearms, the Turkish-style cavalry were far

[1] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 159.
[2] Streusand, "The Process of Expansion," 341.
[3] The terms "Lord of Horses" (Ashwapati)—which was given by contemporaries in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries to the Deccan sultanate of Bahmani—"Lord of Men" (Narapati)—which referred to the southern Indic ruler of Vijayanagara—and "Lord of Elephants" (Gajapati)—which was given to the Indic king of Orissa—are good illustrations of the various modes of warfare used by Indic and Islamic rulers on the South Asian battlefield in the first half of the second millennium. See: Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*, 55-56.
[4] As Gommans and Kolff suggest, this phenomenon was not unique to South Asia, being part of a wider revolution in military warfare that occurred throughout most of the Eurasian continent. Cavalry warfare was both the cause and effect of the rise of transregional nomadic and semi-nomadic empires from 1200-1800, e.g. the Chingisid Mongol, Turkish-led Ottoman, and Mughals empires, as well as heavily-Turkified Safavid Persia. See further: Jos J. L. Gommans and Dirk H. A. Kolff, "Introduction," in *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000-1800* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31-33; Jos J.L. Gommans, *The Indian Frontier: Horse and Warband in the Making of Empires* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2018), 259-263; Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, 14.
[5] Gommans, *The Indian Frontier*, 165.

superior to the indigenous armies with their low-drilled infantry and light cavalry (such as those of the Rajputs, Telegus, and Marathas), and this was the driving force behind the Muslim conquests of North India and the Deccan, especially those of the Mughals.[6]

These semi-nomadic conquerors also introduced new military ideologies, based primarily on openness and equality—including that of organizing a military household—to South Asian warfare. The Mughal army could incorporate a wide variety of talented individuals regardless of their caste, social status, or religious background.[7] It was a grouping of many individual warband units, and it generally had no clear lines of command. The soldiers in each unit paid allegiance to their own commander and had no loyalty other than to him who paid them directly. Such a system could ensure cooperation between wide-ranging military forces throughout the subcontinent. However, it also contained several inherent disadvantages. In such a system, there was always a lack of unity among the various sub-leaders during a military expedition. Frequently, personal wrangling could prevent collaboration. Furthermore, fitna was an oft-employed aspect of military culture throughout the Mughal period. When a commander shifted alliance, the followers in his warband would all follow him. Furthermore, if a leader was killed, his military household tended to collapse and was only reunified after a new leader had come forward.[8]

Drilled Infantry and European Warfare

Before the middle of the eighteenth century, the South Asian battlefield was still dominated by the Turkish mode of warfare. But from the 1750s onward, one can observe the rapid rise of a new military system inspired by Western Europeans.[9] From the sixteenth century, small numbers of European jamadars or mercenaries and the firearms they imported from Europe had appeared on the South Asian military market and been employed in the armies of many local rulers.[10] However, the European-style troop that was introduced in the mid-eighteenth century by the East India Companies, especially the French CIO and the British EIC, was a revolution. It was based on well-drilled infantrymen—who were equipped with more

[6] Gommans, *The Indian Frontier*, 159. However, how far firearms actually contributed to the success of the Mughals in their conquests is still debated. For discussions on this issue, see: Streusand, "The Process of Expansion," 339, 348; Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*, 60.
[7] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 56-57.
[8] Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, 131, 156; Gommans, *The Indian Frontier*, 166; Oak and Swamy, "Myopia or Strategic Behavior?," 356; Karen Leonard, "Hyderabad Political System and Its Participants," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, 3 (1971): 574.
[9] In the same way that the cavalry age was linked to the rise of the Central Eurasian nomadic/semi-nomadic empires, the ascent of infantry warfare was related to the rise of many Western nation-states. See the further discussions in: Jos J.L. Gommans, "The Warband in the Making of Eurasian Empires," in *Prince, Pen, and Sword: Eurasian Perspectives*, ed. Maaike van Berkel and Jeroen Duindam (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 375-380; Stein, "State Formation and Economy Reconsidered," 391; Kaushik Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare, and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849," *The Journal of Military History* 69, 3 (2005): 652-654.
[10] Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, 14.

advanced European firearms and tactics (such as matchlocks, flintlock muskets with bayonets, and disciplined light artillery). The army was organized into well-planned and tactical units like battalions, regiments, and brigades. The force was commanded by European officers who had clearly-assigned ranks and positions that mainly followed the model of the royal army in Europe (e.g. General, Major, Captain, etc.). The soldiery consisted of a small number of imported Europeans and a large number of locally-recruited South Asians, known as sepoys (derived from the Persian *sipahi*). The indigenous soldiers were trained and disciplined by European officers, and dressed in European-style uniforms.[11] In its first few battles in South Asia, the European infantry proved itself easily capable of overcoming South Asian opponents who were significantly larger in numbers; scholars usually point to the First Carnatic War of 1746, which directly involved the Walajah Nawabs, as the first example of such an encounter. The Mughal-style army of Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan, which consisted of 10,000 soldiers, was quickly and easily crushed by a small troop of 230 Frenchmen and 700 disciplined indigenous sepoys.[12] In the words of Robert Frykenberg, "the myth of European valor was born."[13] Following this were the more renowned Battle of Plassey in 1757 and Battle of Buxar in 1764. In the former, the army of the Bengal Nawab, consisting of 50,000 soldiers, was defeated by 3,000 troops of the EIC, two-thirds of whom were well-drilled sepoys. In the Battle of Buxar, 40,000 soldiers belonging to the Nawab of Awadh were defeated by 1,000 European soldiers and 6,000 sepoys.[14]

Their performances proved that full-time, professional, and strictly-disciplined soldiers were extremely effective, and their coordination in battle was better than the traditional South Asian armies that consisted of various independent warbands. Regular payment in salaries, rather than the uncertain spoils of wars, gave them a sense of security and improved their performance. Uniforms increased their feelings of solidarity. Furthermore, the European-style army placed less emphasis on individual heroism, instead focusing on following orders from officers of superior rank, whomever they were. Consequently, the army would not quickly collapse when one leader was killed. These qualities, which seemingly could fix the problems inherent in the local, Indian style of

[11] Gommans, *The Indian Frontier*, 157-158; Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia," 652-654, 685; Kaushik Roy and Peter Lorge, *Chinese and Indian Warfare – From the Classical Age to 1870* (London: Routledge, 2014), 330-333. For example, the sepoys of the EIC in Madras consisted particularly of *Telingas*—Telegu speakers from South India—as well as northern Indian mercenaries who had moved south to serve in the armies of various Mughal successor states.
[12] Phillips, "The Development of British Authority in Southern India," 12.
[13] Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788-1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 26.
[14] Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: The Softback Preview, 1998), 35; Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia," 685.

warfare, meant demand for European-style troops and weapons dramatically increased in South Asia from the second half of the eighteenth century, and all prominent regional rulers tried, as far as possible, to procure them. Some of them hired European officers to westernize their forces, while others hired the ready-made mercenary troops of the European Companies, paying them in cash, land, or some other way.[15] Within a few decades, most South Asian armies were increasingly dominated by units of disciplined infantry sepoys, staffed with European officers, and equipped with European firearms, although some traditional elements remained. By 1800, this new-style army and mode of warfare had replaced the Turko-Mongolian warband as the chief military model in South Asia.[16]

Military Developments in South India

As suggested by Susan Bayly, throughout the early modern period South India had been full of highly militarized societies. This was largely due to its geopolitics. Large sections of the region outside its core areas (the "wet-zone") consisted of forests and hills and remained highly unsettled. These areas, the so-called "dry-zone," were inhabited largely by "fringe peoples"—predators and plainsmen—who usually had highly-developed martial talents.[17] At the beginning of the second millennium, South India saw the downfall of many ancient Hindu empires, and the resultant power vacuum allowed many ambitious chiefs from the dry-zone to form independent chiefdoms and petty states, resulting in the growth of a militaristic atmosphere in the region. The zenith of the upwardly-mobile political power of the dry-zone warriors was during the Vijayanagara Empire, as large numbers of them, mostly Telegu-speakers—later known as the Nayakas—were recruited to form the core of the Vijayanagara military.[18] Vijayanagara imperial expansion led to an influx of Telugu Nayakas into the Coromandel Coast, who in turn formed semi-autonomous Nayaka states in Senji, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, and Madurai—the old Tamil dynastic centers.[19] In the Tamil regions, the Nayakas recruited unsettled pastoralists and forest dwellers from both the Deccan and Tamilnadu (such as the Kallar and Maravar people) as fresh troops and local collaborators. Hundreds of the forest warrior chiefs were elevated by the Vijayanagara emperors and the Nayakas to the positions of overlords in their petty domains, known as Poligars.[20]

[15] See the discussions in: Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia."
[16] Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788-1848*, 26; Stein, "State Formation and Economy Reconsidered," 391; Metcalf and Metcalf, *Concise History of Modern India*, 50; Gommans, "The Warband," 379; Gommans, *The Indian Frontier*, 165-166; Oak and Swamy, "Myopia or Strategic Behavior?," 356.
[17] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, 19-25.
[18] Bes, "The Heirs of Vijayanagara," 5-7.
[19] Bes, "The Heirs of Vijayanagara," 7-8, 11; Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*, 59-60, 75.
[20] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, 25, 51-52.

Vijayanagara fell in the sixteenth century, and most of the Nayaka dynasties had ended by the early eighteenth century. However, many of the small Poligar states managed to survive throughout the course of the eighteenth century. Ruled by networks of dry-zone Nayakas and Poligars from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, South India was thus transformed into an increasingly militarized society.[21] This was clearly manifested in the forms of religious belief and kingly self-representation prevalent in the area during this period. According to Susan Bayly, in other parts of South Asia the dominant form of Hinduism was the "orthodox" one, mainly based on concepts of purity and worship of "high" gods and goddesses (e.g. Siva, Vishnu, and Kali). In contrast, the most popular form of Hinduism in South India was the veneration of lesser, demonic, blood-drinking, warrior-style male and female deities, known as "bhakti devotionalism." This was an ancient feature of South Indian religion, particularly popular among the "fringe" people, which expanded throughout the region concurrently with the political ascent of the Nayaka-Poligar petty states. Regarding rulership, all the chronicles of the prominent Poligar families depict the origins of their small states as periods of epic bloodshed, full of decapitations, and human sacrifice.[22]

In the realm of military technology, South India was also affected by changing methods of warfare in North India and the Deccan. Here, the openness and "inclusive" nature of the South Indian states and the southern military market to foreign elements and their high degree of integration should also be underlined. It is claimed that, in order to learn about military advances in the Indo-Persian world (in order to fight against them), the Indic ruler Devaraja II of Vijayanagara (r. 1432-1446) enlisted as many as 200 Muslim soldiers as officers, and many more, up to 10,000, at lower levels; at the Battle of Talikota in 1565 there were as many as 2,300 cannon and many more smaller guns deployed by his army.[23] This Vijayanagara policy was widely followed by their subordinates and successor states in South India over the next three centuries. Although these petty Hindu rulers drew most of their military men from their own caste groups, their forces also contained Muslim warriors from North India and the Deccan. One significant development in the local military market after the Vijayanagara downfall to the eighteenth century was the influx of many new groups of professional mercenaries in addition to the local Tamils and Telegu warriors, including Turanis, Iranis, Rajputs, Afghans, Nawayats, Marathas, and Europeans. These newcomers

[21] Mukund, *The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant*, 44, 54-56.
[22] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, 30, 40-41, 49, 53.
[23] Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*, 56, 59-60, 63-64.

greatly increased the variety and quantity of soldiers and brought with them advanced new military tactics and weapons.[24]

4.2 Nawabi Self-Fashioning

Muhammad Ali Khan was certainly a man of the sword. Frequently referred to in the diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, during the reign of his father, Prince Muhammad Ali Khan (as well as his elder brother Mahfuz Khan) was constantly assigned by the old Nawab to lead armies to wage wars against their rivals, such as the Marathas and the French. In the first fifteen years of his own reign, the new Nawab also roamed around the Karnatak region with his army and the force of his British ally, subjugating rebellious subjects and consolidating his state.[25] It was only after the mid-1760s, that the Nawab altered this practice, stayed permanently in the palace and focused on resolving other problems. The role of the army's leader was then assigned to his generals, and sometimes his two eldest sons, who were ordered to work in close cooperation with the EIC's military officers. All previous historians have usually focused on the Nawab's debts, his military's dependence on the EIC, and his other activities, especially after the mid-1760s. As a result, the military role of the Nawab as well as his military household, have remained almost unseen in previous literatures. Furthermore, it seems that references to the Nawab's active military engagements in his court's literatures have been considered as fictional and self-praised, and thus neglected.

It is certain that one principle means of self-representation that the Nawab sought to craft of himself—and arguably the most prominent one which his main court chronicle, the *Tuzak-i Walajahi*—is that of a warrior. Many examples of this can be found in the text. Most take the form of conversations between the Nawab and various historical figures or between others speaking about him. These include a dialogue reported to have taken place between the Nawab and a group of his military generals, both South Asian and British commanders, including General Lawrence, one desperate night during his war with the Mysore prince Nand Raj and the Maratha general Murari Rao in the mid-1750s. The Nawab's army was cornered in Trichinopoly and surrounded by enemies "on all sides of the fort [so] even the birds did not fly." The Nawab had only 5,100 soldiers and six cannons in his force, while the enemy had 95,000 men and 100 cannons. Therefore, as the chronicle continues, "the army of

[24] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, 12, 61-62, 96-103.
[25] *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*: II, 22-23; III: 112, 127, 212; IX, 206, 254, 265, 340, 345.

the Nawab was only one-hundredth of the enemy's force."[26] The conversation begins as follow:

> The Nawab: […] At present, considering the hopelessness of help from any one, […] It does not behove [sic] our [here "my"] reputation that we [here "I" refers to the Nawab himself], in preference to the preservation of our borrowed life, lost the vast inherited kingdom for the sake of which in reality my father shed his blood. In this troubled state, I seek counsel from you, my trustworthy companions.
>
> All the followers: In these delicate times we do not find any way but to risk our lives according to your command.
>
> The Nawab: The same is our [my] counsel. As long as our breath remains we [I], in your company, will hold in our [my] hands the sword and try according to the maxim, the sword is the best of stratagems. […]
>
> All the followers: We hear and obey […]
>
> The Nawab: Tomorrow is the day for the exhibition of bravery, the occasion to display courage on the *maydan* of intrepidity, the opportunity for the performance of sword-play; it is the market to purchase honour and reputation.[27]

As the chronicle goes on to describe, at this desperate time many of the Nawab's companions sought to persuade him to give up his position. The Nawab refused, replying: "At the time of the display of bravery, the guarding of one's life is opposed to the honour of a soldier."[28] The Commander-in-Chief of the EIC's force, General Lawrence, requested that the Nawab shelter in a safer place and assured him that the British would fight to his achieve his goals: "It is advisable for your majesty to stay in the fort, take your seat in the tower and watch from there the *tamasha* of the bravery of your devoted servants [including the EIC forces]."[29] However, the Nawab refused, stating: "We [the Nawab] have also the same hope from the trustworthy English; we have faith in their eternal fidelity. […] yet it behoves [sic] that the sardar [commander] in the battle remains behind the valiant fighters. It should not be like the saying

[26] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 157. As the chronicle describes, the Nawab had 1,100 horse and 2,000 infantry—belonging to himself and his allies from Tanjore and Tondaman—and 500 Europeans, 1,500 armed EIC sepoys from the EIC, and six canons. On the other hand, the enemy's forces had 30,000 horse, 50,000 infantry belonging to the Mysore prince and Maratha mercenaries, and 12,000 armed men, 3,000 soldiers, and 100 canon belonging to the French.
[27] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 155-157.
[28] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 159.
[29] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 159.

'in the play of cards, confusion happens without the chief.' […]"[30] After the conversation ended, the Nawab readied his army. Two of his generals, Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Muhammad Abrar Khan, were placed on his right and left, while the armies of Tanjore and Tondaiman were at the rear. The EIC force, led by General Lawrence, was in the vanguard.[31]

This conversation was, of course, more the fictional invention of the chronicler than a real historical discourse. The size of the opposing army is also evidently greatly exaggerated. However, such accounts are very useful as they allow us to observe that the Nawab wished his audience to perceive him as an able warrior; thus, he was no different from other Indo-Islamic rulers of his and earlier ages in his desire to present himself as a great military leader. Ruling over such a highly-militarized society as South India, this image would have been particularly important for the Karnatak Nawab. Yet, what is perhaps more interesting is how the Nawab increasingly used the rising fame of the Europeans in the South Asian military market to enhance his own military image. The Nawab's chronicle does not depict him and his family as reveling in bloodshed as had the Poligar chiefs of South India. Instead, it stresses the Nawab's role as a supreme and decisive military leader, under whose banner stood not only South Asian warriors but also the powerful and renowned British commanders. It depicts these EIC officers serving him loyally and being ready to obey and sacrifice their lives to protect him and his interests. The image of the British soldiers as his servants is also reinforced in the scene of reward and gift-giving after the battle. As the chronicle states, the Nawab generously bestowed ranks, horses, robes of honor (*khilat*), gold, and precious stones to all his brave sardars. Such followed the usual custom of a Perso-Islamic ruler dealing with his subjects after defeating the enemy. However, the receivers here were not only local soldiers but British officers, too.[32] The use of Europeans to eulogize the Nawab was not limited to the British. His European rival, the French, were also often used in the *Tuzak-i Walajahi*. A good example is the clearly fictional conversation between two of the Nawab's sworn enemies during the early 1750s, in which, the French Governor Dupleix stated his admiration for the Nawab to Chanda Sahib:

> War against Muḥammad 'Alī Khān will bear no fruit. The striving in that direction will not bring any advantage. For he is a *sardar* possessing great wisdom and sagacity. He is a commander (endowed) with understanding and power. He is most experienced in every manner of attack, and engagement. He is skilled in the

[30] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 160.
[31] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 160.
[32] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 163.

> methods of war; the master of subdues the kingdom; the king who wields an experienced sword. […] In opposing him the enemy loses his head and becomes helpless. I had occasions to know his method of fighting, and regretted having opposed him.[33]

On other occasion, Dupleix supposedly reported to the king of France that, in the whole country of Hindustan, there was now no ruler who could oppose the power of the French, with one exception:

> but in the Carnatic, Nawwāb Muḥammad ʻAlī Khān is a blood-shedding sword; he is a storm on every battle-field […] he is a fire that will quickly catch the heap of the enemy's army. In opposition to him there is neither a place to stand on the battle-field nor a way to flee from it.[34]

4.3 People of the Sword

I will begin the investigation into the men of the sword by attempting to reconstruct the earliest military household of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan, those individuals and groups who were attached to him when he was still a prince struggling for the Karnatak throne and in the earliest period of his reign. Then I will move on in time, to people who were recruited into his network of patronage later.

Indo-Irani Nobles from the Deccan

During the time of their father Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan, a conflict had broken out between the future Nawab, Prince Muhammad Ali Khan, and his older brother, Prince Muhammad Mahfuz Khan. The princes were in competition over who would eventually acquire Trichinopoly from their father. Details of this conflict will be discussed elsewhere. But from this one event can be traced the names of some of the leading individuals who were attached to and supported Prince Muhammad Ali Khan (against his brother) in his pursuit of power during this early period. They seem to have been Indo-Iranian nobles from the Deccan in the service of Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan. The most prominent among them was Saiyid Ali Khan Safawi al-Musawi. He is said to have been a companion of the previous Nawab at least from the time of Chicacole, and when Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan became ruler of the Karnatak, this person was "distinguished in the duty of deputing the Nawab (*mumtaz-i ahdeh-yi*

[33] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 3.
[34] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 186.

niyabat-i khas)."[35] Moreover, he was also the maternal uncle of Khadija Begam, the chief consort of Prince Muhammad Ali Khan. Saiyid Ali Khan played a leading role, both strategically and financially, in assisting his nephew-in-law to defeat his half-brother and eventually gain the province of Trichinopoly.[36] When the mission had succeeded, as reward for his help the Saiyid was appointed the prince's deputy and charged with taking care of the Trichinopoly fort. In the early period of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's reign, the Saiyid continued to occupy this position and played a crucial military role in Muhammad Ali's army. This relative was clearly considered by the Nawab to be one of the two most trustworthy individuals, shown by the fact that, during at least two critical times in the Nawab's life, as mentioned previously, the Nawab expressed his wish that, if he died, his full brother Abd al-Wahhab Khan was to be the regent for his eldest son while Saiyid Ali Khan was also trusted to raise and take care of his sons.[37]

Ghazandar Ali Khan of Hyderabad, who had been a military leader during the reign of Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan, was another prominent figure in this group. He came from the same Indo-Iranian family as Bibi Fakhr al-Nisa Begam, the second wife of Nawab Anwar al-Din and the mother of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan. Ghazandar Ali Khan was thus another relative of the young Nawab on his mother's side. He also appears in the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* as having been one of the closest supporters of Prince Muhammad Ali Khan since the reign of his father. Ghazandar Ali Khan is also mentioned as the only one of Muhammad Ali Khan's followers to have accompanied him when he made a secret and daring escape from Arcot to Trichinopoly in 1749, after his father had died and the whole army had dispersed.[38] He was also the Nawab's right-hand general during the aforementioned desperate fight with the Mysore prince in 1755,[39] and during Muhammad Ali Khan's reign he was commander of the cavalry.

We have already seen how the matrilineal links from both his mother and his wife (Khadija Begam) greatly benefited the Nawab ideologically (through blood-ties to both the Saiyids and the Iranian Safavids). The cases of Saiyid Ali Khan and Ghazandar Ali Khan are evidence of how these marital links benefited the Nawab's power in practice, too, through improving his military capability. The Deccani-Iranian maternal networks thus played a

[35] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi Part I*, 24, 108; for the Persian version, see: Burhan Khan Ibn Hasan Handi, *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, ed. T. Chandrasekharan (Madras: The Superintendent Government Press, 1957), 116.
[36] I will discuss this event in more detail in Chapter Five (5.3).
[37] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 108, 130-131; Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 158, 212-213.
[38] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 108, 131; Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 59.
[39] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 160.

crucial role in strengthening Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's profile as he developed his core military strength.

Earlier Mughal and Asafjahi Warbands

The next group consisted of former residents of northern India who had been the companions and colleagues of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's own father, Anwar al-Din Khan. Many of them, like Anwar al-Din Khan himself, had been warriors in the service of the Mughals, and, later, of Nizam al-Mulk Asaf Jah, before following Anwar al-Din Khan to Karnatak when the latter was appointed Nawab. They seem to have played the most significant role in Anwar al-Din Khan's military household and in helping him to gain control of Karnatak. When the old Nawab was killed in battle, the warband dispersed and many of them returned to the Deccan. Later, when Muhammad Ali re-established the Walajah banner, they gradually returned to serve the new Nawab. The most significant figure in this group was, without question, Muhammad Najib Khan, along with his family. He had been a resident of Ajmir [Ajmer, Rajasthan?] and was said to have been in the company (*rekab-i khas*; royal riding) of Anwar al-Din Khan from their time together in Delhi. He became a servant of Nizam al-Mulk, was appointed as a diwan, and later, after 1743, moved to Karnatak with the previous Nawab. He was said to have been the latter's most intimate companion (*nadim-i hudur*) and his counsellor (*mushir*) in all matters, and to have been appointed the highest military commander in the Karnatak army.[40] Muhammad Najib Khan died in 1749, fighting alongside his master and companion in the First Carnatic War.[41] After that, his three sons went on to serve Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan. The eldest, Muhammad Najib Khan Bahadur (who had previously had the name Muhammad Saiyid), appears in various documents from the early 1770s at least until the early 1780s as commander-in-chief of the Karnatak forces, just as his father had been. He was usually entrusted with leading the main army of the Karnatak Nawab (*lashkari ferozi*) in all major wars and was evidently one of only a few individuals in whom the Nawab placed significant trust and respect. To illustrate, in 1773-1775, at an extremely delicate time, when many factions around the Nawab—his sons, his officers, and various groups of British—were vying for control of the recently-conquered region of Tanjore, the Nawab chose Muhammad Najib Khan to take care of the fort.[42] During war with Mysore in 1782, when the Nawab temporarily handed over management of Karnatak's revenue to the

[40] Gurney, "The Debts of the Nawab of Arcot," 18; Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 108; for the Persian version, see: Handi, *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, 115-116.
[41] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 147.
[42] Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic*, 147; Gurney, "The Debts of the Nawab of Arcot," 310; TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 65, *Ruznama*, 22 Jun, 4 Oct. 1773, bundle 68, 31 Oct. 1774; IOR, Mss Eur E/379/8, DGP, Jun. 1774, 124.

EIC, it was again that general to whom the Nawab entrusted his royal seal, with full power to apply it to any required order.[43]

There are other examples of North Indians occupying prominent roles within "the sword" group at the Karnatak court. Saiyid Nasir Ali Khan, another companion (*rafiq*) of the senior Nawab from his time in Hindustan, was, in Karnatak, entrusted with looking after the *bandars* (men who throw "iron rockets" in war).[44] Then there was Saiyid Muhammad Musawi Waleh, said to have been the son of a renowned Saiyid from Khurasan (Iran) who migrated to India during the reign of Emperor Shah Alam. He became a follower of Nizam al-Mulk Asaf Jah, a former comrade of Anwar al-Din Khan, and was entrusted with the position of lieutenant-governor of the Trichinopoly fort.[45] The *Tuzak-i Walajahi* also mentions another "Mughal of Turani origin," who was a distinguished military commander in the Karnatak army, named Muzaffar.[46] The three aforementioned individuals and some of their offspring fought for Karnatak into the reign of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan. Saiyid Nasir Ali Khan was fort governor and military leader of the Nawab's armies as late as the early 1770s.[47] Saiyid Muhammad Musawi Waleh was appointed by Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan the commander of the infantry forces that had been organized and trained by the British officers. He was said to have been the first South Asian officer to have worn a western-style military uniform.[48] There are various other Muslim names among the Nawab's military commanders on whose backgrounds there is no information. Many of them had the title Begh, such as Arshad Begh Khan, Amin Begh Khan, and Muhammad Begh Khan.[49] Begh or Beg was a title or surname that was usually used in Mughal times to indicate someone's Turani origin, although this was not always the case.

Gopamau Residents

Another prominent group of northern warriors who formed part of the Walajah military household were those who came from Muhammad Ali Khan's ancestral hometown of Gopamau, in Awadh. It seems that sharing the same, faraway hometown as the Walajah rulers played a significant part in improving their profile in Karnatak. As an illustration, Masih al-Zaman, who was appointed the bakhshi of the whole army, had "the proud claim of

[43] PC, VI, Nawab to Eyre Coote, 6 Jun. 1782, 184.
[44] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 109; for the Persian version, see: Handi, *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, 116.
[45] Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic*, 163.
[46] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 54.
[47] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 131; Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 193, 238; IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Nov. 1771, 37.
[48] Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic*, 163.
[49] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 215, 237.

being a fellow townsman of the Nawwāb (*muftakhr-i nesbat-i ham waṭani-yi khwod be doulat*)." Muhammad Abrar Khan, the commander of all the infantry (who was also an envoy for the Nawab on a number of diplomatic missions), was also referred to as "the Nawwāb's country man (*ham watan-i khaṣ*)."[50] He was another individual who was in the military household of Muhammad Ali Khan from the earliest period and played an important role in the Nawab's struggles during the 1750s, as did the Nawab's maternal relatives. As the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* points out, during the war with Mysore in 1755, while his maternal relative Ghazanfar Ali Khan was on the Nawab's right, Muhammad Abrar Khan was on his left.[51]

Both Persian and English documents demonstrate that, throughout his reign, the Nawab maintained connections with and paid a great deal of attention to the welfare of his hometown and the relatives who were living there. As mentioned in the *Sawanihat-i Mumtaz*, many of his relatives moved to Madras, some in accordance with the Nawab's wishes, others of their own accord. The Nawab arranged for the marriage of his sons and daughters to some of them and placed them under his protection.[52] The *Ruznama* reveals that people from Gopamau occasionally came to the Karnatak court to meet the Nawab and discuss its affairs with him. Furthermore, the Nawab often requested that the EIC's Governors in Bengal assist him in sending his money to help charities in the town, to negotiate with the Nawabs of Awadh to grant or rent Gopamau to him, and to solve conflicts between his relatives and the Awadh rulers.[53] The Nawab's motives in so doing, as he often explained, were his wish to express his respect to his ancestors and his desire to support his relatives and friends. I would also suggest that the military situation was of central importance in this regard. As has been discussed in Chapter Two, the recruitment of manpower from older political centers was key for the Mughal successor states in the South. The Nawab's attempts to extend his patronage to Gopamau may partly have been to demonstrate to his countrymen his generosity and the promising careers they could have in his court as a means of stimulating them to migrate south. This supposition seems to be supported by the fact that many regions of Awadh, especially those around Lucknow and Kanauj, had been among the main military markets for the Mughal Empire from the reign of Emperor Akbar onwards. The Mughal emperors had

[50] Naiar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 108; for the Persian version, see: Handi, *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, 116.
[51] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 160.
[52] Nainar, *Sawanihat-i Mumtaz, Part II*, 59.
[53] See, for example: TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 66, *Ruznama*, 24 Aug. 1773; *CPC*, II, Governor of Bengal to Nawab, 22 Mar. 1767, 53; Nawab to Governor of Bengal, 16 Oct. 1767, 163-164; *CPC*, IV, Nawab to Governor-General, 5 Sep. 1773, 92, 19 Oct. 1775, 348; *CPC*, V, Governor-General to Nawab, 11 Apr. 1776, 12, 6 Apr. 1780, 429.

repeatedly recruited large numbers of talented soldiers, especially infantrymen and musketeers, from those areas.[54]

Nawayats from the Old Regime

A large number of military men from the Nawayat community, many of whom had been officers and relatives of the previous dynasty, were also recruited by the first two Walajahi Nawabs. Like the marriages of Walajahs to Nawayat women, this reflects their efforts to develop links between themselves and the old regime.

As the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* suggests, Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan showed great kindness to the Nawayat people from their earliest encounters. In 1743, when Nizam al-Mulk appointed Khwaja Abd Allah Khan as regent for the last Nawayat Nawab, Khwaja Abd Allah Khan requested that the Nizam imprison the Nawayat nobles and take them to the Deccan, since they were a source of trouble in Karnatak. After Khwaja Abd Allah Khan's sudden death, the position of Karnatak regent was taken by Anwar al-Din Khan. The new regent promptly freed the imprisoned Nawayats and took them "in his happy company" back to Arcot.[55] In fact, while, during his reign, Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan sent his sons and relatives to govern some strategically important places—such as Arcot, Trichinopoly, Nellore, Madurai, and Tirunelveli—he left many other districts, both large and small, undisturbed, in the hands of the killadars from the Nawayat community who had changed their allegiance and now acknowledged the sovereignty of the Walajahs. However, the sources state that many of these Nawayat officers would later cause great difficulties for Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan when Chanda Sahib returned to the region. According to the *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, when Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan summoned all the zamindars and jagirdars to help fight Chanda Sahib, none responded except his sons, for the rest were all relatives or great friends of that Nawayat prince.[56] In the early period of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's reign, the situation was no different from the time of his father. During the 1750s, after the Nawab had subjugated a province there were only a few strategic places within it to which he was able to introduce direct control through representatives of his court; most districts were retained by their original governors, who sought pardon for their past "rebellious" acts, although a number of them repeated the same mistakes. The EIC expressed great concern about the Nawab's position during this time, mainly because the Nawayats "are

[54] Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, 146.
[55] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 56, 83.
[56] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 138-139.

very numerous in the province."[57] A few illustrations can help demonstrate the relationship between the Walajah court and various prominent Nawayat servants at the start of his reign.

The first is that of Mir Asad Allah Khan, a noble from the Nawayat community (*az ahul-i nawayaṭ*) who became one of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's provincial governors. Mir Asad Khan was one prominent military general of Nawab Dost Ali Khan (r. 1732-1740) and Nawab Safdar Ali Khan (r. 1740-1742). He also occupied the post of Karnatak diwan in the latter's reign. During the Nawayat civil war in 1740, he was a rival to Chanda Sahib. Later on, during another conflict, he was imprisoned by Murtaza Ali Khan, the Nawayat governor of Vellore. During the siege of that town in the early 1750s, Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan released him from captivity. The Nawab brought this former member of the Nawayat elite into his service, gave him commander of a fort, and in 1755 appointed him to a very important position: governor of Arcot province. During the late 1750s, when the Nawab fought against the son of Chanda Sahib, according to the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* almost all the nobles originally from the Nawayat community who were in possession of jagirs and forts in Karnatak allied themselves with that Nawayat prince in Pondicherry and rebelled against the Nawab. However, Mir Asad Allah Khan proved loyal to the new dynasty and, after the war, was re-appointed as governor of Arcot. He also received Pondicherry, which the Nawab had managed to take from the French, as a jagir.[58]

The aforementioned Murtaza Ali Khan (d. 1762) was another important case. He was a prince of the Nawayat dynasty and a close relative of both Nawab Safdar Ali Khan and Chanda Sahib, while the fort town of Vellore, situated not far from Arcot, had been ruled by his family since the 1710s. After the Nawayats were ousted from the Karnatak throne, he was one of many provincial governors who chose to collaborate with the Walajahs in order to retain their positions and possessions. Yet when Chanda Sahib and the French invaded Karnatak, Murtaza Ali Khan performed acts that seemed, to the new Nawab, rebellious: strengthening his fort, failing to send tribute, and refusing to send military aid when it was demanded. According to the EIC's records, during the early 1750s Murtaza Ali Khan was the most powerful zamindar in the Karnatak region. If he had chosen to side with the enemy, that rival party would have been truly formidable. However, despite rumors of him secretly negotiating with the French, Murtaza Ali Khan never openly took their side nor did anything

[57] IOR, P/240/9, MPP, Madras Consultation, 19 Mar. 1753, no page.
[58] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 174, 188-189, 237, 272; *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, I:119, 198, 209; IX: 9, 11, 104-105; Fox, *North Arcot*, 49.

except defending his own domain.[59] And, eventually, in the mid-1750s, he decided to confirm his peace with the Nawab and the EIC. The Nawab embraced his proposals and the Nawayat prince retained his position for another decade.

Next is Muhammad Taqi Ali Khan, the brother-in-law of Nawab Safdar Ali Khan and the killadar of Wandiwash (Vandavasi). In 1752, the Nawab requested that the khan show his allegiance and pay tribute. At first, the khan arrogantly refused, so his town was seized by the Nawab's forces. He eventually sought pardon from the Nawab and agreed to pay a large amount of money as a penalty. Hence, the Nawab permitted him to keep his position. Yet, later on, when the Nawayat khan failed to send payment and a solution proved impossible, the Nawab expelled him from his position and imprisoned him.[60]

As such cases suggest, although Nawayat officers often caused problems, the Nawab followed the same policy as had his father, rather optimistically attempting to integrate them into his government, especially as provincial governors. The sources give us a good idea of the situation at the beginning of the new dynasty. First, they seem to confirm my previous assertion that a shortage of human resources was a serious problem that both the Nawabs faced, something that was also seen in the Deccan at the time. The situation was probably worse at the beginning of Muhammad Ali Khan's reign than it had been at the time of his father, because many of their relatives and servants had died or left the region during the series of wars that began in the late 1740s. As a consequence, the new Nawabs were not strong enough to eliminate potential insurgents and rule the entire country themselves. Hence, making compromises with elites of the old regime was probably the most practical choice. One further reason that pushed the Walajahs to rely heavily on Nawayat officials at the start of their reigns would have been the latter's greater expertise in and influence on local society compared to newly-arrived elites like the Walajahs' followers. The Nawayats, long resident in the region as zamindars, could allow the rules and the revenue collections to continue uninterrupted. This argument can be well illustrated by an anecdote in Ananda Ranga's diary about Mir Asad Allah Khan, the former Nawayat military general and diwan. According to Ananda Ranga, during the Nawayat civil war in the 1742, Prince Murtaza Ali Khan could capture Mir Asad Khan and was going to kill him, but the prince was stopped from doing so by one of his officer. Murtaza Ali was warned by this officer that if Mir Asad Khan died, "the finances of the state would fall into utter confusion," and that "he alone had knowledge of the

[59] Fox, *North Arcot*, 62, 71; IOR, P/240/9, MPP, Madras Consultation, 19 Mar. 1753, no page.
[60] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 140-142.

actual arrears of pay due to the mounted troops and infantry; that their present ignorance of particulars might involve them in endless troubles."[61] Therefore it was by his exceptional expertise in local affairs that the life of Mir Asad Khan was spared by his Nawayat rival. Supposedly it was by the same reason that the Walajah Nawab quickly promoted him to the important position of governor of Arcot province after his recruitment.

Public opinion should also be seen as something that shaped the Walajahs' policy towards the old regime. Although the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* depicts the Nawayats as troublemakers in the region—both before and after the arrival of the Walajahs—there is evidence suggesting that the period of Nawayat rule, especially that of their first two Nawabs, was remembered very positively by many locals.[62] Showing too strong an antipathy towards their legacy would not only risk arousing more rebellions but could also create negative attitudes among the Karnatak population towards the new ruler. In contrast, by embracing and promoting former Nawayat servants to high positions at court the Walajahs would project an image of themselves as generous rulers who welcomed every capable individual. This representation not only eased the minds of the population but could help attract more talented people to the court, too.

However, Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan's approach changed significantly in the early 1760s, the time that he began to subjugate his rebellious brothers, as discussed in the previous chapter. At this time, he took a much harsher stance towards the Nawayat insurgents. Many of them were now removed from their positions and imprisoned. One such example was Murtaza Ali Khan, in Vellore. He was the father-in-law of Riza Ali Khan and, in the Third Carnatic War of the late 1750s, had helped the latter. In 1761, after negotiations had fallen through, the Nawab captured Vellore and, this time, took more direct control. Murtaza Ali Khan and his family, who had ruled the region for half a century, were removed from the fort and detained in Arcot.[63] However, according to the later diarist Paterson, despite being held captive the Nawayats were generally "not close prisoners"; they were instead allowed to live comfortably in various places around Karnatak. Such was the case up to 1769, when the result of the First Anglo-Mysore War (the British-Nawabi alliance against Hyder Ali Khan) drastically changed the situation for the Nawayats in Karnatak. This conflict ended with a peace treaty in which Hyder Ali Khan, who had gained the upper hand, was able to make

[61] *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, I: 202-203.
[62] IOR, H/94, HOME, Brief Relation of the Succession of Nabobs in the Province of Arcot from the Year 1700, 295-296; Fox, *North Arcot*, 48, 52; Ramaswami, *Political History of Carnatic*, 38.
[63] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 283; IOR, P/251/48, MP, MMSC, 4 Jan. 1762, 8.

various demands of the EIC and the Nawab. In one article, the sultan requested that all the Nawayat people in Karnatak be sent to him because of his friendship with the family of the late Chanda Sahib. The EIC Governor agreed to this, against the Nawab's wishes. Detachments of troops were sent to remove all the Nawayats from the region, although, according to the Nawab, "many of them had become useful and were unwilling to remove [sic]."[64] After this, the number of Nawayats in Karnatak must have fallen dramatically, although it is possible that not all of them migrated to the Mysore state. According to Paterson, Hyder Ali Khan's reason for making this demand was to humble and dishonor the Nawab, and indeed the Karnatak ruler had been deeply hurt, declaring that "Mr. Du Pré [the Madras Governor] would ruin him and blast his honor forever."[65] However, the Nawab's concern may have gone beyond the issue of honor. As the Nawab once claimed, one of Hyder Ali Khan's plans was to enter Karnatak and support the claim of his son, Tipu Sultan, who would then immediately be married to a daughter of Chanda Sahib.[66] Thus, the Nawab was afraid that Hyder Ali could use the remnants of the Nawayat elite to cause trouble for him in the future, just as the French Company and the son of Chanda Sahib had done previously.

Deccani Afghans

Another group of swordsmen in Karnatak that merits discussion here is the Deccani Afghans, many of whom had settled in the region during the reign of Nawab Da'ud Khan Panni. Throughout Nawayat rule and the early period of the Walajah dynasty, the crucial roles played by Afghan officers and mercenaries, in both internal and external conflicts, are clear. Yet most of the evidence concerns their treachery. For instance, Chanda Sahib was caught by the Marathas in 1740 primarily because he was betrayed by an Afghan soldier in his force. In 1742, when the Nawayat Nawab Safdar Ali Khan was murdered by his cousin Murtaza Ali, the executioner who concocted the plan was an Afghan officer at the Nawab's court. Similarly, in 1744, when the final young Nawayat Nawab was assassinated as the result of a plot by an unknown individual, the person who was hired to commit the act was also an Afghan soldier, named Yadul Khan, who claimed that the Nawab had refused to pay his warband for its service to the former's late father.[67]

The Afghans were an exceptional case in Walajah history. Unlike other groups of warriors, Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan seemingly did not want to recruit them into his army. In

[64] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/2, DGP, Dec. 1770, 123.
[65] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/2, DGP, Dec. 1770, 124.
[66] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/2, DGP, Dec. 1770, 144.
[67] Ramaswami, *Political History of Carnatic*, 62, 65-66, 74-75; Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 110-111.

fact, there is evidence in the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* that, after the last Nawayat Nawab was killed by Yadul Khan, Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan not only punished the murderer but also expelled all the Afghans from Karnatak "with great disgrace, unspeakable molestation and troubles."[68] Ananda Ranga also referred to the old Nawab's order for his troops to storm the houses of the Afghans in Arcot after this event.[69] It is said further in the *Tuzak-i Walajahi* that, out of fear of the severe punishment and imprisonment threatened by the Walajah Nawab, the Afghans changed their dress, names, and manners to avoid detection. Despite this, their accent could not be disguised, and so "in a short period [of time] there was not even the name of Afghan in Payanghat [Karnatak]." [70] Yet, in reality, the Afghans did not completely disappear from Karnatak, since mention is made of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan sending his army to expel the rebel "Patans" (i.e. Afghans) from Madurai in the mid-1750s.[71] However, there is every reason to believe that the relationship between the Walajah Nawab and the Afghans never improved, especially considering the fact that the murderer of the Nawab's father was an Afghan soldier of Chanda Sahib, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Furthermore, the Walajahs' Deccan master, Nizam Nasir Jang, was also treacherously killed by the Afghan Nawabs of Kurnool and Cuddapah. Considering all this, it is not a surprise to see the *Tuzak-i Walajahi*, composed in 1780, still depicting the Afghans in the blackest terms, referring to them as "the wicked people of the day."[72]

Local Hindu Lords

During the Nawab's struggles for the throne in the first few years of his rule, most of the local Hindu zamindari lords in Karnatak behaved in similarly treacherous ways as did the Muslim Nawayat governors. As an EIC officer noted in the early 1750s, there was scarcely any Poligar in favor of the Nawab.[73] It was not attachment or loyalty to the Nawayat dynasty that meant these petty Hindu chieftains did not agree terms with the Walajah Nawab, rather that they did not want to risk having their territory ruined by the enemies of the Nawab while they still did not see the latter's success as guaranteed. However, after the Nawab and his British ally had applied many carrots and various sticks, some of these Hindu rajas, such as

[68] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 110-111.
[69] *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, I: 258.
[70] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 111.
[71] Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic*, 8-9.
[72] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part I*, 111.
[73] IOR, P/240/9, MPP, Madras Consultation, 18 Jun. 1753, 92.

the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai and the Maratha raja of Tanjore, began to send troops to aid the Karnatak forces.[74]

In the two subsequent decades, the Nawab gradually managed to make other Hindu zamindars throughout Karnatak acknowledge his power, either voluntarily or by force. The most important of them, who appear frequently in accounts of the Nawab's reign, were the Maratha raja of Tanjore, the Tondaiman Poligar of Pudukkottai, the Sethupathi Poligar of Ramnad (or the Great Maravar Poligar), the "Naalcooty" Poligar of Sivaganga (or the Little Maravar), the "Colastry" Poligar [of Sitarampur?], and the Poligar of Vencattygherry [Venkatagiri?]. In general, the Nawab followed the same policy towards these Hindu lords as he had with regards to the Muslim zamindars: those who accepted his sovereignty, paid tribute, and fulfilled their military obligations were allowed to retain their positions and possessions. Their estates and dynastic titles, such as Tondaiman or Sethupathi, were passed hereditarily from father to son.[75] The Tondaiman, Colastry, and Vencattygherry Poligars proved to be relatively good zamindars and useful military forces. The rajas themselves and their warbands were usually to be found in the Nawab's armies in the most significant battles.[76] An anecdote by Paterson from 1772 on one "Rajahwar Elmiwar" of the "Commiwar Caste" of Vencattygherry is one example of how these rajas were an important part of the "Nawabi sword" group. According to him, the people of this Hindu caste "are all soldiers and who always have a most sacred regard for their honour."[77] This raja had furnished the Nawab with a large number of men for his wars and even took to the field himself, fighting alongside the Nawab. In Paterson's words: "those people are his [the Nawab's] soldiers in time of war; and they cultivate the ground in time of peace."[78]

So far, I have not been able to determine the size and type of force that each of these Hindu Poligars sent the Nawab, yet I assume it would have been a few thousand each, most of whom were infantry. When the Nawab sent his army to subjugate Sivaganga in 1772, its ruler, the Naalcooty Poligar, was said to have had around 1,400 peons (irregular infantry) who fought to protect his fort.[79] These Poligars also possessed some warhorses, but probably

[74] IOR, P/240/9, MPP, Madras Consultations, 14 Dec. 1752, no page, 17 Mar. 1753, no page, 21 Mar. 1753, 141, 25 Jun. 1753, no page, 30 Jul. 1753, no page, 13 Aug. 1753, no page, 27 Aug. 1753, 174.
[75] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/1, DGP, Jan. 1771, 153.
[76] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Jun. 1772, 191; E/379/6, DGP, Sep. 1773, 132; E/4/879, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, 25 Jun. 1793, 621. It was only at the beginning of 1790 that the Nawab was in conflict with a Colastry raja over the possession of some lands in Siterampur, and requested that the EIC move a troop to subjugate him. For this conflict, see: E/4/876, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, 5 Mar. 1790, 140; Court of Directors to Madras, (no date) 1790, 474, 481-483.
[77] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Aug. 1772, 234.
[78] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Aug. 1772, 234-235.
[79] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Jun. 1772, 193.

no more than a few hundred each. As a source from 1773 indicates, when the Nawab sent his 1,500 cavalrymen to war, they were expected to meet, on the way, 400-500 more that had been sent from the three Poligars of Colastry, Vencattygherry, and Pudukkottai.[80] The Tanjore raja was an exceptional case. According to a 1773 estimate by the Nawab, the raja had 1,000 to 1,500 warhorses.[81]

In terms of military skill and technology, in the 1770s the Poligars were generally presented in European accounts as fearless forest warlords who fought in relatively traditional and primitive styles. Their main tactic was the skirmish, and their chief weapons were pikes 30 or 40 feet long.[82] However, it is reported that, in a battle of 1771, the people of Ramnad fought to protect their fort by firing artillery and small-arms fire into the Nawab-EIC army. Susan Bayly also mentions the Poligars' use of cannon and matchlocks—in addition to traditional swords, bows, and boomerangs—in the eighteenth century.[83] These accounts reflect the fact that the Poligars also possessed some firearms and tried to adapt themselves to the new mode of warfare and recent changes in the military market.

In contrast to the Tondaiman, Colastry, and Vencattygherry rulers, the Tanjore raja and the Poligars of Ramnad and Sivaganga proved to be perpetually troublesome for the Nawab. The Tanjore raja was the most powerful Hindu zamindar of Karnatak. From the time Vyankoji Bhonsla had founded a Maratha dynasty in the 1670s, Tanjore had been able to maintain a high level of autonomy. Some previous Karnatak Nawabs had been able to force the Tanjore rajas to accept the status of vassal and fulfil tributary obligations, but such occasions were the exception rather than the rule. During the early 1750s, Nawab Muhammad Ali was able to force the raja to send him military assistance, yet the raja paid no tribute whatsoever during that decade. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1760s, the Nawab was determined to bring Tanjore under his direct control, as he had managed to do with his siblings and many Nawayat zamindars. The Nawab also expected that the ten-year Tanjore tribute that he was owed, worth millions of rupees, would pay off a large part of his debts to the EIC and that such a fertile region would bring significant revenue into his treasury. Yet the Nawab's ambitious plan was thwarted by the EIC, who did not accept his demands on this occasion. For one thing, the Tanjore raja protested that he had, as a good subject, sent the Karnatak court significant assistance in previous difficult times and an attack on his country

[80] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/6, DGP, Sep. 1773, 151.
[81] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/6, DGP, Aug. 1773, 122.
[82] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/2, DGP, Nov. 1770, 102.
[83] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, 50.

would, therefore, be a great injustice. Another reason was that, recently, the EIC's Directors in London had given the Madras Presidency firm instructions to stop fighting and resume trading. Eventually, as a result of the EIC's influence, the Nawab was obliged to sign a peace treaty with the Tanjore raja in 1762 to which the EIC was guarantor. According to this treaty, the Nawab was to receive a large sum of money to cover that owed to him for past tribute as well as yearly payments in the future. However, the amount agreed was much lower than the Nawab would have received if the region had been complete subjugated to him. Furthermore, the Nawab was bound by the treaty not to disturb the sovereignty of the Tanjore ruler as long as the latter fulfilled his vassal obligations.[84] However, a decade later, in 1771, the raja of Tanjore sent his forces to invade the two Maravar Poligars of Ramnad and Sivanganga, which were also tributaries of the Nawab, something that gave the latter a good excuse to resume his attempt to take over Tanjore. This was followed by two attacks on Tanjore by the joint Nawab-EIC army, in 1771 and 1773, as previously mentioned. The Nawab put an end to the Tanjore dynasty in 1773, and officials were immediately sent from his court to establish direct rule over the area. However, the victory was very short-lived. Only a few years later, Tanjore was restored to its former raja by the EIC, something that led to bitter conflict between the Nawab and his British allies in the late 1770s and 1780s. As many issues related to the conquest of Tanjore can provide important insights into the relationship between the Nawab and the British, these events will be further elaborated on in Chapter Nine.

The Sethupathi of Ramnad and the Naalcooty of Sivaganga were no less unruly. They were always looking for an excuse to neglect their tributary obligations and thereby increase their independence, often cooperating with one of the Nawab's provincial governors who had been sent to rule the southern regions and who could become rebellious in certain circumstances.[85] Only when the Nawab's forces were sent to their lands did they seek pardon and offer submission. In 1771, the two Poligars sent petitions to the Nawab requesting that he punish the raja of Tanjore, who had invaded their regions. This led to the Nawab's first conquest of Tanjore, but, after the nawab sent troops there in order to do so, and summoned military assistance from the two Poligars, the Sethupathi and Naalcooty rajas were reported to have behaved "very ill."[86] As a result, after the Tanjore conquest the Nawab ordered his army to invade these two Poligars. Before the siege, as was customary, the queen regent (*rani*) of

[84] Charles U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, vol. X (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1983), 81-83; Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic*, 98; IOR, Mss Eur E/379/2, DGP, Jan.-Feb. 1771, 150, 169-170.
[85] The two most notorious cases during the 1750s-1760s were the Nawab's half-brother Muhammad Mahfuz Khan and the EIC's local mercenary commander, Muhammad Yusuf Khan.
[86] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Nov. 1771, 40, Jun. 1772, 190-191, Aug. 1772, 248.

the late Ramnad Poligar requested that the Nawab's troops return home, promising to fulfil the tributary obligations and pay a huge indemnity for the war. But this time the Nawab was in no mood to compromise, as he wanted to put a permanent end to the two ancient dynasties and take direct control of their lands. The battles between the two sides proved that the Poligar forces were no match for the Nawab-EIC troops. According to reports, for example, the army of Karnatak was able to capture the forts easily, with few losses. The Naalcooty raja, who had tried to escape, was killed, while the rest of the two Poligar families were imprisoned. After this, the Nawab sent various amildars and killadars to govern those regions and manage the revenue collection.[87]

However, afterwards, the Ramnad and Sivaganga dynastic families were both restored to their former positions and status as Poligars. For the Sivaganga, this occurred a decade later, in 1781; such was probably also the case for the Ramnad.[88] These restorations were likely not the wishes of the Nawab but were instead heavily influenced by the EIC. This is because, in 1781-1785, during a conflict with Mysore (the Second Anglo-Mysore War), the Nawab was forced by the EIC to temporarily assign the administration and revenue collection of the whole of Karnatak to the Madras Presidency. This will be discussed further in Chapter Nine, but what I want to note here is an event of 1784. As recorded in the EIC's documents, the Nawab alleged that one Chinna Murdar, the "sherigar" of Sivaganga, (in the British translation: "the minister"), had rebelled against his government.[89] It was claimed that he was the son of a former Poligar of Sivaganga and thus a member of the local elite. Having initially displayed goodwill to Karnatak court in 1781, this nobleman was appointed by the Nawab as district minister. But later, the Nawab claimed, Chinna Murdar owed a large sum to the Nawab's treasury, and he had also captured and treated with great cruelty the family of the Naalcooty raja (now headed by the rani of the late raja). The Nawab thus requested the EIC's military assistance in subjugating him. However, after the British had investigated the case, their officers discovered that the charges against Chinna Murdar were fake, and had been invented by his rival, the raja of Ramnad. The former was, in reality, a man of great ability and punctual in his financial engagements. Local public opinion was also in his favor. The EIC therefore used its influence to secure his position.

[87] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, May 1772, 182-184, Jun. 1772, 192-194, Jul. 1772, 209-210, E/379/8, DGP, Jun. 1774, 122-123, E/4/876, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, (no date) 1790, 524.
[88] IOR, E/4/876, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, (no date) 1790, 503.
[89] The term "sherigar" is probably corrupted from "Servaikkarar." It was a title of high military officer. The title appeared in the court of Ramnad, so it was probably also used in Sivaganga.

In 1784, the Nawab was still under the EIC's revenue obligations, so he could not move further in the Sivaganga affair.[90] But, after the Nawab had regained full control of his country in 1786 and found the opportunity, in 1789 he again moved against Chinna Murdar, with similar charges. Claiming that it was necessary to secure justice for the ancient raja family and restore peace in the region, this time the Nawab successfully got the EIC to help him remove Chinna Murdar. However, several years after his conquest of Sivaganga and despite many protests from both the Sivaganga rani and the EIC, the Nawab had evidently not restored the Naalcooty Poligar's family to its former position, attempting to establish direct management of the area himself instead. This eventually caused many of the petty Poligars in the surrounding areas to withhold their annual tribute in protest at this encroachment by the Nawab. Their rebellion made the EIC concerned that renewed warfare would soon follow, which would mean the interruption of the Nawab's debt re-payments to them. Consequently, it pushed the Nawab to restore the raja's family and re-appoint Chinna Murdar, as the latter was very popular with the local inhabitants.[91]

The case of the Sivaganga house and Chinna Murdar shows that the influence of the local Hindu rulers over their societies was both broad and deep, much more so than that of the Muslim rulers, who were recent immigrants. The cooperation of these Hindu rulers could have benefited the Nawab's consolidation of power greatly. Unfortunately, not until late in his reign was the Nawab able to achieve the total subjugation of many of these Hindu zamindari warlords. Although they were not powerful enough to cause him much harm, they often obstructed his centralizing tendencies and forced him into compromises in order to maintain the flow of revenue from and peace in the various regions of Karnatak.

The integration of Hindu notables into military service and ruling positions was not confined to the important dynastic zamindars. There were many other Hindu elites who were recruited directly into the Nawab's court circles and appointed provincial governors and sub-district officers. The number of Hindu provincial officials increased from the 1760s onwards after the Nawab had subjugated or eliminated most of his rebellious relatives and the provincial governors from earlier times, foremost among whom were the Nawayat Muslims. As such, the local Hindu elites were probably employed to fill some of these gaps. The clearest example of a Hindu provincial governor is that of Raja Beerbar Bahadur (aka Raja Peria/ Rayoji/Acchana Pandit), who is referred to in the sources as either the Nawab's na'ib

[90] IOR, E/4/876, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, (no date) 1790, 498-507, 512, 514, 517.
[91] IOR, E/4/876, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, (no date) 1790, 520-521; E/4/ 877, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, 6 May 1791, 504-515, 519-522.

or the amildar of Arcot for around fifteen years from 1765/1767-1780/1782.[92] Although it is stated that he held the position of revenue collector, he was, in practice, the supreme governor of the large province of Arcot, the person the Nawab would contact first in all matters, both military and civil, related to the region. Persian and English documents both indicate that Raja Beerbar was one of the Nawab's favorite servants, someone to whom he paid the highest respect. According to the *Ruznama*, once, when Raja Beerbar came from Arcot to meet the Nawab in Madras, the latter ordered two other high-ranking Hindu courtiers, Rai Rayan and Rai Venkatesh Das, to go out with a procession to receive this provincial governor. After the raja's audience, the Nawab also paid him a visit at his residence in return, a sign of high esteem.[93] Paterson's diary also records that the Nawab once praised this Hindu raja as "one of the most sensible" of all his counsellors.[94] According to Paterson, this raja became the Nawab's favorite mainly because he maintained and increased the flow of revenue from Arcot into the Nawab's treasury. Moreover, he had good connections with local *sahukars*—the largest money-lenders in the region—so he could usually send huge sums of money when the Nawab was in need.[95] Other examples of provincial Hindu governors include: Raja Hukumath Ram, who was referred to as "the Executive Officer" of Tirunelveli; Ram Row [Rao], the fawjdar of Nellore (1780); Ram Sita, the amildar of Nellore (1782); and Serrenewas Row [Rao], the amildar of Trivady (1786).[96] There was also Raja Damarla Venkata Naidu Bahadur, whose official position is not known but who was likely to have had significant power because when the Madras Governor required a large number of people to repair a fort—50 masons and 2,000 laborers—the Nawab entrusted this to the raja.[97] Many other Hindu servants were also appointed to subordinate positions within district governments.[98]

A number of further observations about the Nawab's military officers and provincial governors can be made here. First, it is likely that there was no discrimination on the grounds of religion or ethnicity, since Muslims and Hindus seem to have had equal chances to serve the Nawab. For example, Ram Sita appears in a source as the amildar of Nellore district in 1782: a few years earlier, in 1777, the same position had been occupied by a Muslim, Nur al-

[92] Phillips, "The Development of British Authority in Southern India," 46; Rajayyan, *Administration and Society in the Carnatic*, 31-32; Fox, *North Arcot*, 82, 120.
[93] TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 67, *Ruznama*, 2 and 3 Feb. 1774.
[94] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/6, DGP, Jul. 1773, 27.
[95] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/7, DGP, Dec. 1773, 136-137; TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 67, *Ruznama*, 7 Jan. 1774.
[96] IOR, P/240/51, MPP, Madras Consultation, Nov. 1780, 1050; PC, VI, Fawdjdar of Nellore to Nawab, 16 Mar. 1782, 145; IOR, P/240/63, MPP, Madras Consultation, Jun. 1786, 818
[97] TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 67, *Ruznama*, 28 Jan. 1774.
[98] TA, Catalogue of Persian Records, bundle 67, *Ruznama*, 2 Jan. and 5 Apr. 1774.

Din Khan. In 1780, the position of Nellore fawjdar was occupied by the Hindu Ram Rao, but two years later, in 1782, it was in the hands of the Muslim Mir Qutb al-Din Khan.[99] The fact that Raja Beerbar Bahadur and Raja Damarla Venkata Naidu Bahadur, both Hindus, received the Indo-Muslim honorific "bahadur" also indicates that Hindus could be promoted to very high positions at the Nawabi court. Hindu-Muslim communal conflict has long been a subject of heated debate in South Asian studies; eighteenth-century Karnatak may be able to shed light on such discussions. I will elaborate on this issue further in subsequent chapters when exploring other pillars of the state.

Secondly, it seems that, during the latter part of his reign, the Nawab's officers could no longer expect their post in a particular area to be long-term, and there was no question of it being a life-long or hereditary possession. Instead, shifts in position were frequent and dependent on the Nawab's whim. The aforementioned cases of the Nellore amildars and fawjdars are good examples. Other examples can be seen in the governors of Tirunelveli and Arcot. Before 1772, Tirunelveli was held by Ali Nawiz Khan; in 1781, by Fidvi Ali Khan; and in the early 1790s, by Eitabar Khan.[100] In 1752-1753, the Nawab appointed to Arcot one of his generals, Mir Madina Ali Khan; around the mid-1750s, the latter was replaced by Mir Asad Allah Khan, a former diwan of the Nawayat court who had proved his allegiance to the new dynasty;[101] after a decade, around 1767-1768, Raja Beerbar was appointed; and in the early 1790s, the office was occupied by another servant, Nizam al-Din Ahmed Khan Bahadur.[102] Whatever reasons the Nawab had for moving his servants around so often, these easily-managed transfers of specific positions, such as regional governor, may allow us to infer that he had a certain degree of success in centralizing his authority and controlling his courtiers.

Thirdly, the sources rarely provide much information about the backgrounds of the Nawab's Hindu provincial governors, with the exception of their names and roles. We can probably assume from this that their profiles were not as high and distinguished as those previously-discussed ancient Hindu dynastic Nayakas and Poligars. However, the fact that the Nawab held in high esteem Raja Beerbar, someone who could increase the levels of revenue collected in Arcot and who was able to make the money-lenders cooperate with him,

[99] IOR, P/240/43, MPP, Madras Consultation, 13 Jun. 1777, 462; P/240/51, MPP, Madras Consultation, Nov. 1780, 1050; PC, VI, Fawjdar of Nellore to Nawab, 16 Mar. 1782, 145.
[100] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Jul. 1772, 220-221; PC, VI, Nawab to Manuel Marting, 29 Sep. 1781, 91; IOR, P/241/55, MPP, Madras Consultation, 24 Mar. 1795, 1547.
[101] Nainar, *Tuzak-i Walajahi, Part II*, 137, 174, 189.
[102] IOR, Mss Eur E/379/7, DGP, Dec. 1773, 136; IOR, P/240/45, MPP, Madras Consultation, May 1778, 560; P/241/35 MPP, Madras Consultation, 20 Nov 1792, 3272; P/241/38, MPP, Nawab to Governor of Madras, 6 Apr. 1793, 1460.

suggests that this Hindu was a very influential figure in local society. Both he and other Hindu provincial officers were likely to be, at some level, local lords, nobles, or owners of large tracts of lands, and their social status as petty rulers may have been a crucial factor in the Nawab's recruitment of them. While they—the petty Hindu rulers—had some influence over the population and elite networks at a local level, meaning that they could serve the Nawab well by controlling or administering local society and collecting the revenues (qualities that might be lacking in the recently-arrived Muslim servants), they were not powerful enough to, and had little dynastic prestige or military support with which they could, cause any real harm to the Nawab's government if they rose in revolt. This was especially true when compared to those larger, ancient Hindu dynastic zamindars.

Lastly, I would like to highlight an interesting development regarding the character of the Karnatak provincial governors. In a province, the Nawab could still appoint both a fort commander (fawjdar or killadar) and a chief civil administrator and revenue collector (the amildar). But, as the sources reveal, the individuals who were essentially regarded as the supreme governor of the domains by the Nawab, especially from the 1770s onwards, were the amildars. This was because the main skill most required of a provincial governor in the later period was proper management of the revenue collection, not military valor. The case of Arcot province is the best such example. In the early period, the Nawab appointed his general Mir Medina Ali Khan as governor; yet, later, it was given to Raja Beerbar, who was praised by the Nawab primarily for his ability to make revenue flow. The changing character of the Karnatak governor from sword-based to pen-based was, I would argue, directly related to the establishment of the Nawab-EIC joint force, a topic which I will now discuss.

Europeans: The Nawab- EIC Joint Force

It could be said that, compared to many other contemporaneous South Asian hinterland rulers, Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan had a rather "special" position as regards the military revolution that had recently occurred in Western Europe and was beginning to enter the South Asian market. First, he was among the earliest to witness the Europeans' formidable power directly, in the many battles involving the EIC and CIO that occurred in Karnatak during the 1740s and 1750s. Secondly, his position as the overlord of the southern Coromandel Coast allowed him to have relatively convenient access to the European arms and military men that came by ship to various South Asian ports. Nevertheless, the Nawab was also in a more precarious position, since one wrong move may have resulted in the powerful European

forces threatening his position. This is precisely what had happened to his father Nawab Anwar al-Din Khan, whose army had been destroyed by a small troop from the French Company in the First Carnatic War. It was that battle with the French, in fact, that had led Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan to pay any price to procure the troops of the EIC to fight for him as mercenaries in the 1750s. In the mid-1760s, the political stability of Karnatak sharply improved, largely thanks to the performances of this EIC mercenary-*cum*-ally. The Nawab's financial situation also swiftly improved during this period, due to an increase in revenue that resulted from his country's more peaceful state. This is reflected in the opinions of EIC officers during this period, as they believed that, consequently, the Nawab would be able to repay his debt to the Company quickly.[103] The Nawab also repeatedly attempted to improve his military capacity. For example, instead of dissolving his troops at the end of Third Carnatic War to reduce costs, he recruited even more soldiers with the intention of building a large, centralized army that he controlled directly. According to several European eyewitnesses, it was impossible to know for certain the size of the Nawab's forces during this time as they were divided and kept in different places across Karnatak.[104] His eagerness to supply his indigenous forces with new European technology is clear; for example, he frequently requested that the British, as well as other European nations on the Coromandel Coast, provide him with thousands of European weapons, especially firearms such as chest muskets, pistols, flints, and blunderbusses, as well as gunpowder.[105] In 1765, at the time that the Nawab was improving his military capacity, he made a very important move: he established a permanent military force that I have labelled "the Nawab-EIC joint force." The creation of this joint force marked the beginning of a very complicated relationship between the Nawab and the EIC and significantly shaped the history of Karnatak and British India. As such, its origins should be explored here.

Before 1765, the army of the EIC's Madras Presidency was very modest in size. It had started in 1652 with 33 Europeans, and had increased to no more than 250 Europeans and 400 well-trained local sepoys by the early 1700s. Increased warfare during the twilight of the Mughal Empire and the growth of the French CIO in the Coromandel Coast forced the EIC to increase its number of sepoys to 3,000 by the time of the First Carnatic War in 1747.[106] It probably employed a few thousand more during the long decade of war in the 1750s.

[103] Gurney, "The Debts of the Nawab of Arcot," 67.
[104] IOR, P/251/49, MP, MMSC, 12 Jul. 1763, 68-69.
[105] IOR, P/251/49, MP, MMSC, 15 Nov. 1763, (no page); Z/E/4/863, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, 4 Jan. 1765, 49-50; P/240/24, MPP, Madras Consultations, 28 Jul. 1766, 371, 8 Sep. 1766, 424, 431.
[106] Phillips, "The Development of British Authority in Southern India," 8.

However, after peace was concluded between Britain and France in 1763, the EIC decided to let most of its sepoys go in order to reduce its expenses, and to keep only 2,000 to 4,000 men to protect both the Madras settlement and the jagirs it had received from the Karnatak Nawab as reward for their help.[107] Learning of the EIC's intention in 1764, the Nawab promptly suggested to the Madras Presidency that it not reduce the number of sepoys, but instead increase it to 10,000 (or more). According to his proposal, these soldiers would be mainly sponsored by the Nawab but organized and trained in the European style by the Company's officers. They would be formed into ten battalions, each consisting of a European captain, lieutenant, and ensign. A battalion would be sub-divided into ten companies of a hundred men, each of which would have one European sergeant and numerous native officers, as required.[108] This massive European-style army was to be used for the defense of both the Nawab's and the EIC's territory in Karnatak.

The EIC was very enthusiastic about this proposal, since it could see various advantages. First, it would be saved from the huge expenses that would otherwise have been required to maintain its own troops in the region. Secondly, the friendship between it and the Nawab would become even stronger as the ruler would be required to increase his military dependence on the Company. Thirdly, having this large joint force, the Nawab would no longer need to maintain large numbers of private troops, which, according to a 1766 report, numbered no less than 15,000 men. As such, he would be able to use the money saved to repay his debts to the Company.[109] To further convince the EIC to agree to his plan, the Nawab also promised that, soon after the establishment of the joint force, he would discharge most of his own troops and keep only a few *sibandis*—low quality soldiers—to facilitate revenue collection. After several rounds of negotiation, an agreement on the numbers of the joint force was reached: 12,000 sepoys, divided into twelve battalions. As for the expenses, seven battalions were to be paid for by the Nawab and five by the EIC. From 1767, the Nawab began to request that parts of this joint force, trained and led by the EIC's officers, be stationed in various strategic locations around Karnatak to help his provincial governors maintain the peace and collect revenue. For example, 100 Europeans and 500 sepoys were sent to Arcot. The EIC was very happy about this situation, saying that "the Nawab began to

[107] IOR, P/251/55, MP, MMSC, 24 Feb. 1766, 90.
[108] IOR, Z/E/4/863, DM, Court of Directors to Madras, 19 Feb. 1766, 332-343; 4 Mar. 1767, 599-601.
[109] IOR, P/251/56, MP, MMSC, 17 Nov. 1766, 652.

wear himself off his jealousy" and showed himself ready to place the protection of his country in the hands of the Company.[110]

By strengthening Karnatak's central army with European technology and establishing a joint military force with the EIC in the mid-1760s, the Nawab was able to significantly reduce his military dependence on various unreliable locals. Furthermore, he was able to integrate into his army the most advanced elements of the South Asian military scene. The European-led army did indeed (mostly) bring him victories over many of his indigenous rivals and help him maintain the Karnatak state against many powerful neighbors during the next three decades. Nevertheless, it came at a very high price for the Nawab, not only financially but also politically. As may be inferred from some of the examples in this chapter, the role of the EIC in the later period of the Nawab's rule—from the 1770s to the 1790s—was not confined to simply providing or training these European-style mercenaries. It seems that the Nawab needed to consult with and ask the permission of the EIC whenever he wanted to move his military forces. Often, he had to compromise or even disregard his own wishes when the EIC vetoed him or suggested other ideas (e.g. the aforementioned cases of Tanjore and Sivaganga). Did the Nawab's policy of embracing European military elements go wrong? Did the Nawab really allow the EIC to control his military decisions? And how did the Nawab try to solve such problems, which were seemingly generated by his idea of a joint-force? Such questions—related to the complicated military relationship between the Nawab and the British—require much more detailed discussion and analysis, which will be provided in Chapter Nine. For now, I would like to underline the fact that the Karnatak Nawab was on the front line of the second military revolution in South Asia, that based on European infantry and weapons. He was one of the first South Asian rulers to experience directly military developments in the Western world. Moreover, he took the initiative and played an active role in stimulating their spread throughout the South Asian military market and their integration into his own military and political systems. Therefore, it is strange that, thus far, historians who have discussed the military changes that came about in many South Asian states during the second half of the eighteenth century in response to Western military innovations (such as Barua, Oak, and Swamy, as mentioned in the Introduction) have generally omitted the case of the Karnatak Nawab in their studies.[111] I will give more

[110] IOR, P/251/56, MP, MMSC, 17 Nov. 1766, 652; P/251/58, MP, MMSC, 16 Feb. 1767, 125-128; P/251/59, MP, MMSC, 5 Aug. 1767, 652; Mss Eur E/379/3, DGP, Sep. 1771, 14.
[111] Barua, "Military Developments in India," 599-616; Oak and Swamy, "Myopia or Strategic Behavior?," 352-366.

thoughts on their works after the discussion of Nawabi-British military relations in the final chapter.