



PROANTIC
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British-russian Geopolitical Satirical Lithograph, 1885



180 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Paper

Length : 36 cm

Width : 36 cm

Description

This image depicts a late 19th-century British political cartoon (circa 1885) related to the geopolitical conflict known as the Great Game (The Great Game), which pitted the British Empire against the Russian Empire in Central Asia. The figure with the high collar and sideburns represents the British Prime Minister of the time, William Gladstone. The bear is the traditional symbol of the Russian Empire in Western political satire. In 1885, Russia annexed the Panjdeh oasis near the Afghan border and threatened to seize Herat, which the British considered the "key to India." Faced with the threat of a Sino-Anglo-Russian war, Gladstone's government negotiated a diplomatic compromise (the "arrangement") to delineate Afghanistan's northern borders and avoid direct armed conflict.

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with Russia. This illustration criticizes Gladstone's foreign policy, which was viewed as too pacifist, naïve, or hesitant in the face of Russian expansionism. The caricature ironically suggests that Gladstone believes he is "calling the shots" or controlling the Russian bear with the help of a simple agreement on paper (Arrangement), while the bear makes noise and continues to advance toward the strategic borders of India and Afghanistan.