THE FASHODA CRISIS: A SURVEY OF ANGLO-FRENCH
IMPERIAL POLICY ON THE UPPER NILE QUESTION,
1882-1899

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Early and recent interpretations of imperialism and long-range expansionist policies of Britain and France during the period of so-called "new imperialism" after 1870 are examined as factors in the causes of the Fashoda Crisis of 1898-1899. British, French, and German diplomatic documents, memoirs, eye-witness accounts, journals, letters, newspaper and journal articles, and secondary works form the basis of the study.

Anglo-French rivalry for overseas territories is traced from the Age of Discovery to the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, the event which, more than any other, triggered the opening up of Africa by Europeans. The British intention to build a railroad and an empire from Cairo to Capetown and the French dream of drawing a line of authority from the mouth of the Congo River to Djibouti, on the Red Sea, formed a huge cross of European imperialism over the African continent. The point of intersection was the mud-hut village of Fashoda on the left bank of the White Nile south of Khartoum.
The Fashoda meeting, on September 19, 1898, of Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand, representing France, and General Sir Herbert Kitchener, representing Britain and Egypt, touched off an international crisis, almost resulting in global war. The territory in dispute was the Bahr-el-Ghazal, a province in the Egyptian Sudan which lay in a vast triangle between the White Nile, the Bahr-el-Arab, and the Nile-Congo watershed.

Egyptian authority in this region had vanished some thirteen years earlier with the fall of Khartoum to the Mahdist forces. France claimed that the Bahr-el-Ghazal was res nullius, derelict land belonging to no one, and, since Marchand reached Fashoda ahead of Kitchener, he was there by right of priority in cast-off fragments of the former Egyptian empire.

The British insisted that the Bahr-el-Ghazal belonged to the Khedive of Egypt, who was under their domination, by historical right and that, because of the victory of the Anglo-Egyptian forces over the Mahdists at Omdurman in 1898, it also was Anglo-Egyptian property by right of conquest.

The British further insisted that there would be no talks on the question as long as Marchand remained at Fashoda, and this fact, plus the failure of France to secure the aid of her Dual Alliance partner, Russia, caused the French to
withdraw. Oddly enough, this move did not ease the tension and lead to a settlement. Britain continued to prepare for war, and the French, who were burdened with serious domestic problems, were in no position to fight Britain in the face of overwhelming odds.

The initiative of the French diplomat, Paul Cambon, moved the crisis toward a settlement, and when diplomacy began to function in January, 1899, the menace of war began to fade. The final settlement in March of that year marked the formal passing of the Fashoda Crisis, and further talks led to the Entente Cordiale of 1904, which made Britain and France virtual allies on African questions.

Some historians have minimized the significance of the clash over Fashoda by calling it an affair. A day-by-day account of the diplomatic correspondence concerning the issue clearly shows that the Upper Nile question brought France and Britain to the brink of global war and that one rifle shot fired in the mud-hut village of Fashoda could have touched it off. The amazing thing about the story of Fashoda is that such a shot was not fired.
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The clash of Anglo-French interests over the region of the Upper Nile in the last decade of the nineteenth century is of particular interest to those who are concerned with the origins of World War I. As Professor William L. Langer has so aptly put it, "more than perhaps any other great international problem in the pre-war period this question of the control of the Nile had the quality of an epic."\(^1\)

"You have here," says Langer, "issues of primary importance, you have grand conceptions, and you have a rivalry drawn out over more than a decade and marked at every stage by drama, daring and heroism."\(^2\) In short, the researcher in the field has every ingredient necessary for holding his attention and interest over a long period of time.

The present writer was introduced to this era in a graduate seminar several years ago. After a thesis


\(^2\)Ibid.
on the subject, which was little, if anything, more than a short voyage of exploration, research has continued, and hopefully, an in-depth study of the problem will result.

There has never been an adequate study made of the Fashoda Crisis in all of its many-sided aspects, and the present attempt is no exception. For one thing, the epic proportions of the entire story do not lend themselves to the monographic approach, which has become so popular in recent years.

The present study is a survey of Anglo-French imperial policies on the Upper Nile question and the Fashoda Crisis which resulted, and it is an attempt to place this conflict within the framework of the "new imperialism" after 1870. Its limitations are many. Time and distance problems are not easily met by using the facilities of inter-library loan, and to deal with European history without doing research in the archives of Europe can only result in a poor production at best.

If the present study makes any contribution at all, it is in the use of some documentary source material, principally from the first series of Documents diplomatiques français, concerning the Egyptian Question. Hopefully, the bibliography will be of use to those who are doing research in the field.
One last admonition, again from Professor Langer, does a great deal to explain one of the major difficulties in writing on the Fashoda Crisis. The complexity of the problem, he says, "is simply baffling and the many contradictions on all sides only serve to enhance the confusion."\(^3\) It is to be hoped that, in some small way, the present study enables the reader to overcome these barriers.

Within the framework of the few studies that have been made and published on the Fashoda Crisis, very little attention has been given to the imperialistic setting in which the conflict and the settlement of the Upper Nile Question took place. Like all historical events, the Fashoda Crisis is always subject to re-interpretation, and this needs to be done by taking a broad view of the imperial policies of the disputants, France and Britain, and by applying those policies to the recent scholarship on the term *imperialism*.

\(^3\)Ibid.
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CHAPTER I

MODERN EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM: AN ASSESSMENT

The practice of one group of people in setting their political and economic dominance over their weaker neighbors appears to be as old as mankind itself. While there are no written records with which to substantiate this claim for the early life of man down to about 4000 B.C., there are, nevertheless, various indications of such power extensions during the pre-literary period that have been brought to light as a result of archaeological research.

The empires that were built and destroyed during the course of ancient history are well-known. Imperialists such as the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans set examples of long and successful authority over conquered peoples, and this experience was used by the new nation-states of early modern Europe in the creation of strong government at home and in collecting foreign holdings after the Age of Discovery began in the late 15th century.

Imperialism, in one form or another, has continued to be a part of modern history down to the present day. Since about 1500, European expansionism has passed through three distinct phases, and a fourth stage has yet to be concluded. These eras are usually recognized by sharp changes in governmental policies where overseas holdings are concerned. The first segment of modern European imperialism, commonly called the "old colonial" period, began with the early Portuguese voyages along the coast of west Africa in the late 15th century and ended with Britain's loss of the thirteen American colonies in 1783. The second phase, during which there was a marked decline in colonial competition, extended from this point down to the close of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. After this settlement, a new scramble for colonies and spheres of influence brought about one international clash after another and ushered in an era of "new imperialism" which lasted through the close of World War I in 1918. From the Treaty of Versailles until the present day, imperialism has shown a marked decline, except for the Marxist-Leninist notions of

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breaking down nationalism and placing the world under communist domination.\(^3\)

During the period of "old colonialism" the foundations of European dominance over most of the world were firmly laid, and sea-faring adventurers began to visit remote areas of the globe. Three branches of technical development at the time hastened the meeting of European culture with those of the far-flung civilizations of the world.\(^4\) The application of new knowledge in both geography and astronomy to the problems of practical navigation and growing skills in ship design, ship construction, and seamanship allowed the mariner from Europe to explore the open oceans with increased safety. New advances in the use of firearms, especially the art of naval gunnery, simplified the process of asserting authority over the more primitive peoples with whom Europeans came in contact.

At first, the principal objectives of the Europeans in visiting the newly-discovered "backward areas" included the establishment of trading posts and the exchange of manufactured goods for raw materials, but mounting rivalries between nations


at home and abroad forced the contestants to protect their respective interests by laying claim to vast amounts of territory, even though no great effort was made to develop and improve the virgin lands. For the most part, lines of authority were drawn in order that rival nation-states would be discouraged, at least, from moving into declared spheres of influence. To be a great power in western Europe, it became necessary to follow an expansionist foreign policy that led to aggression. Since all rivals for empire understood the motives of their opponents, every move of a nation-state was regarded as a thrust toward more prestige in the race for aggrandizement. 5

"It is a notorious fact that the history of colonial expansion is also the history of incessant warfare." 6 Military conflicts, which had been primarily a matter of local contention in Europe during the Middle Ages, now expanded overseas in the form of complex land and naval contests, and the nation-states having access to the Atlantic Ocean profited most from the new spoils. 7 As a result, the Mediterranean, long the


6 Ibid., p. 13.

leading waterway of European commerce, assumed a secondary role in maritime importance.

At the same time, the use of money began to replace the barter system, and there was a growing belief that a "balance of trade" was necessary in order to maintain the security and prosperity of a nation-state. It was assumed that a country needed to sell more commodities on the world market than it purchased. Success was measured by the amount of silver and gold reserves accumulated in the treasury of a nation. This theory has sometimes been called "mercantilism" or "bullionism."  

The concept became one of the standard policies of states of Europe engaged in expansionist imperialism during the "old colonial" period, and it placed the economic lives of the people, both residents of the metropolitan country and its colonies, at the disposal of power politics directed by the state.  Some trans-oceanic settlements served as sources of raw materials; others were set up as buffers against the encroachments of rival colonies in the area; all were used as bases for military operations against international piracy.

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9 Dorn, *Competition for Empire*, p. 7.
and the disruption of trade; and none were allowed, by law, to engage in commerce with any nation except the mother country.

Mercantilism represented a reaction of the merchant classes against the old system of feudal landlordism. Support was given to a very strong central authority over the landed nobility, well-known for their resistance to crown supremacy and for their local barriers to trade. Gold and silver in the coffers of such a monarch allowed the growth of military might and its use for protection of merchandise on land and sea. A merchant fleet, armed and ready when needed for combat, supplemented the royal navy and was considered to be an excellent training school for both branches of the maritime service. When policy decisions were made, therefore, first considerations were given to the economic strength of the central authority.  

Adherents to the mercantile theory believed that the total volume of world commerce remained at about the same level at all times and that the demand for goods was unlikely to show any drastic increase. In order to weaken the gross

national strength of any one nation, the quickest course was to deny that country a part of the world's trade.

No nation-state was inclined toward full reliance on the carrying trade alone for moving ahead in the race for economic dominance. The acquisition of sovereignty over trans-maritime sources of supply, together with a constant struggle for world trade, gave some margin of security to a nation in an age of fierce rivalries. By owning territory that supplied raw material, an imperial power was sometimes able to establish a quasi-monopoly of a product and assert some control over its price. Portugal, for example, manipulated the sugar market after acquiring Brazil, producer of more than half of the world's sugar in the late 16th century.

The trade in molasses, rum, and sugar became so lucrative that most cultivatable acres in tropical colonies were planted in sugar cane. The pressing need for cheap labor to clear the land and till the soil was met by transporting slaves from west Africa to these colonies, mostly in the Americas, and the sea captains who were willing to traffic in human

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12Ibid., p. 51.
lives were able to turn handsome profits. The Portuguese were the first merchantmen to engage in trans-oceanic slaving, but the English, French, and Dutch were not slow in following their example.\textsuperscript{13}

Missionary societies and anti-slavery associations, usually independent of religious affiliations, sought every possible way to combat the practice of human bondage. It was their idea that "backward" peoples of the world should be peacefully and compassionately brought within the same folds of faith and within the same manner of life as the Christians of western Europe.\textsuperscript{14}

On the other hand, another point of view of an opposite persuasion influenced the relationships between Europeans and the remote peoples of the world during the "old colonial" era, and later. As early as the eighth century, popes and kings had encouraged the use of mailed fists and swords in bringing the infidel into the Christian fold.\textsuperscript{15} The pagans of Europe had been the first to feel the cold steel of this force, and it was used against the Seljuk Turks in the 12th


century. Conversion by arbitrary means, tempered to some degree by humanist thought during the Renaissance, remained an influence in the thinking of modern Europeans. Uplifting the savage became the "white man's burden," and the means justified the ends, for without conversion as the major goal, it was thought that the European had no legal claim or rightful control over newly-discovered lands and peoples.\footnote{Knorr, British Colonial Theories, p. 31.}

The first effort by Europeans to secure authorized dominion over "backward" peoples came in 1494 when Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Tordesillas and accepted papal arbitration, which divided the unexplored world between the two powers. Spain's chief interests were in the Americas, while Portugal was primarily concerned with the East Indies, the coasts of Africa, and Brazil, but little effort was made to transport Portuguese nationals to these areas. Instead, the fortified trading post, set up by state monopolies, was used as a center of control in each region acquired. Spain, on the other hand, specialized in military occupation and colonization; Mexico, Peru, Panama, the Philippines, and the West Indies came under Spanish authority before the 17th century.
The imperial pre-eminence of Spain and Portugal was not a lasting one. Spain annexed Portugal in 1580, allowing the Madrid government to direct the colonial policies of a state that was already too weak to build a great empire. Spanish power, too, began a decline because industrial growth did not keep pace with colonial expansion. The gold and silver derived from American mines was spent for manufactured goods imported from other countries, and industry in Spain was discouraged; colonial administration, clogged by endless procedural functions, lacked the capability of making necessary decisions. In 1557, Spain began to repudiate her debts, and the defeat of the Armada by the English in 1588 marked a sharp downward turn in the imperial fortunes of a nation that had once enjoyed an early lead in the race for overseas acquisitions, military superiority, and monetary wealth.

As Spain assumed the role of a secondary power, the Dutch, the French, and the English became the leading contenders for leadership. The Dutch, holding very few overseas properties of any importance, relied heavily on the carrying


trade in improving their position. For a time, they were able to monopolize the grain trade in the Baltic area, compete favorably with other nations in European coastal commerce, and build a brisk business with the Spice Islands, denying rival merchantmen a large share of profits in these regions. A growing increase in the use of high protective tariffs by the nation-states of Europe and the loss of New Amsterdam to the English in 1664 encouraged the Dutch to accept a minor role as an imperial power.19

France was the first European power to take issue with the terms of the Treaty of Tordesillas and probably reached the shores of Newfoundland before the close of the 15th century. Records of early French exploration are scant, for France sought secrecy in order to avoid rivalries. In North America, the French penetrated and claimed the Mississippi country, the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence Valley. New Orleans was established at the mouth of the Mississippi; fishing villages dotted the coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia; and French traders exchanged European goods for furs in Canada.20


England planted a permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in the year 1607, and subsequently colonized the eastern seaboard of North America. Clashes between the French and the English were frequent in this area, especially along the Alleghenies, a mountain chain forming a natural barrier between the rival zones. 21

Spanish authority in the West Indies was challenged by both the French and the English during the first half of the 17th century. In seeking naval bases and sugar plantations, England secured Jamaica, the Bahamas, and the Leewards; France took possession of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and part of Santo Domingo. Both nations maintained posts along the Gold Coast of west Africa, the center of slave procurement.

In India, both the French and the English forced the Dutch to center their operations on the island of Ceylon. The first English trading post on the mainland of India was established in 1612, and by 1661, Bombay came under their control.

By the Utrecht settlement of 1713, at the close of the War of Spanish Succession, England secured the exclusive right to furnish slaves to the Spanish colonies in America, taking the contract away from France. The loss of Hudson

21 Ibid., pp. 244 ff.
Bay territory, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland to England in the same settlement further weakened the French expansion overseas.

After 1763, France no longer possessed a foothold on the North American continent. In that year, at the close of the War of Austrian Succession, France ceded Canada and Cape Breton Island to Britain, and Spain gave the English a title to Florida. France was able to retain a small assortment of islands in the Western Hemisphere. In Africa, Britain took French territory on the Senegal River, and, in India, France was allowed to keep several trading posts with the understanding that they were not to be fortified.

In the course of the war, Britain had broken French power in India, gained earlier by using native troops, and had occupied the province of Bengal, which became the future nucleus of Asian empire. French dreams of expansion in India were permanently blighted. 22

Despite material advantages, such as excellent harbors on both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, navigable rivers, and a favored geographic position, France had lost an extensive colonial empire. The British had emerged victorious in

both power and economic greatness, but within thirteen years a reaction to the mercantile system set off a turbulent revolution in the American colonies that caused Britain to reassess her relationships with trans-oceanic possessions.

When the American colonists declared their independence from the authority of Britain, France saw an opportunity to assist in making the separation a reality. In 1778, France signed a treaty of alliance with the Continental Congress and declared war against Great Britain. Within two years, both Spain and Holland had joined with France and anticipated the disruption of British imperial greatness. When the war was over, in 1783, Britain recognized the independence of the American colonies, returned Florida to Spain, and ceded the Senegal and several islands in the West Indies to France. From the Dutch, who signed a separate treaty, Britain obtained trading posts in India.

The Treaty of Paris, 1783, marked the end of the "old colonial" period. The self-sufficiency of the British Empire was seriously impaired by the successful revolt of the thirteen colonies. The British West Indies, greatly in need of imports, especially foodstuffs, could not be adequately supplied by the

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remaining British colonies in America. Before an adjustment could be made, Britain found herself involved in a war with France and Napoleon which lasted, except for a brief intermission, from 1793 until 1815. During this period of great storm and stress, very little attention was given to any reorganization of the British Empire, and when the disturbance was over it was impossible to return to the old order of mercantilism.

For one thing, the British were wary of any future policy which called for the establishment of "white colonies" that would grow to maturity and fall away from their imperial system. For another, it was evident that too much local autonomy and not enough central authority tended to hasten a separation.

Whatever the cause or causes, the plain fact stood out that the statesmanship of the English had failed to unite the American colonies to the motherland on anything like a permanent basis, and "no desire was felt to repeat an effort which after so much exertion and expense had collapsed so ignominiously."  

Attention, in so far as the war with the

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French revolutionists would allow, was turned toward creating a much better relationship with the colonies that were left, for an example had been set for all subject peoples to observe, an illustration that was "more pleasing to the philosopher than the statesman." The king of France found, too, that demands for liberty in America could be asked for closer to home.

The remarkable progress in technical skills, sometimes called the Industrial Revolution, was also supplanting the mercantile age, and this development was in the process of making Britain the "industrial workshop" of the world. Raw materials, by 1783, were more in demand than ever before, and Europeans began to look toward Asia, Africa, and the Antipodes for the supplies that were needed.

In their struggle with Britain, the French began to realize the importance of Egypt, situated as it was on the more direct route to the Far East. In an attempt to disrupt what was later to be called the "lifeline" of the British Empire, Napoleon organized and led a military expedition to Egypt in 1798. Taking control of the island of Malta as he

26 Ibid., p. 3.
27 Knorr, British Colonial Theories, p. 155.
went, Bonaparte intended to add new territories to the dwindling list of French possessions, recoup former imperial prestige, and build closer ties with anti-British forces in the Middle East and Asia. Military occupation of Egypt meant little to the French, for the British destroyed the French fleet at Aboukir in August, 1798, and kept watch to prevent the arrival of reinforcements from France. By the summer of 1801, Napoleon's army in Egypt capitulated to the English.\(^{29}\)

At the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805, Britain defeated a combined French and Spanish fleet and established a naval superiority that was not seriously challenged in the remaining years of the 19th century. At the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, France had all but dropped out of the race for overseas possessions.

By September, 1816, France recovered five trading posts in India and began to repossess several islands in the West Indies. The labor situation on the sugar plantations in this area was becoming acute, for Britain had abolished the

slave trade in 1807, and France had agreed to the same policy, effective in 1820.  

In 1833, the British took another step and totally abolished the institution of slavery. "The chains had to be struck from the African's neck." It was 1844 before France gave up this element of her economy, and the Spanish government, after losing most of its Latin American colonies to the independence movement, took the final step in 1880.

The lowest level of European overseas expansion between 1500 and 1900 was reached during the first sixty-five years of the 19th century. France was the only power on the continent of Europe to undertake any serious colonial ventures for at least fifty years after the close of the Napoleonic Wars, and these few efforts, in Algeria, in Tahiti, and in Cochin China, brought small gains. Britain, in this same period, secured a large amount of territory—the Punjab, New Zealand, central Canada, and western Australia—but most of these lands


were contiguous to area's already occupied by the English, and all but the Punjab were being colonized by people enjoying almost complete freedom to govern themselves.

The tempo in land-grabbing began to quicken after 1870, and the so-called era of the "new imperialism" began. Lasting until after the turn of the century, the new period of expansion witnessed the addition of over ten million square miles of land and approximately half a billion non-Western people to the imperialist control of European powers. Two new nations, joining the Concert of Europe by 1871, brought additional contention to the scramble for overseas empire. The unification of Germany at the close of the Franco-Prussian War and the final amalgamation of Italian states in 1870 opened the way for their membership in the family of nations, and both countries made extensive gains in overseas possessions before the age of the "new imperialism" was ended.

In an effort to be in closer touch with their colonial holdings, the Europeans developed faster transportation and communication after 1870. The building of railroads and

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telegraph lines and the increased use of steamships amounted to a revolution in commerce, travel, and the dissemination of news. The Suez Canal, opened in 1869, shortened the travel time from England to India, and by 1875, the year that the British government purchased forty-four per cent of the ordinary shares in the Suez Canal Company, four-fifths of the ships using the canal facilities flew the British flag.35 To the English, the strategic importance of this new route to Asia was even greater than the commercial advantages it afforded. The remote possibility that Russia would expand into the Middle East and India made the canal a key factor in the military security of the most prized possessions in the British Empire. Furthermore, the move to control the Suez Canal "was symbolic of a change in British policy toward the Eastern Question."36

In 1875, the Turks ruled over a polyglot empire covering most of the Middle East and reaching far into Europe. Modern Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Greece were all subject to the Sultan's corrupt regime. Egypt was a part of the same empire, and the Khedive was a vassal of the Turkish monarch.


Turkey, the "Sick Man of Europe," was on the verge of total collapse, but it "survived because of the dissensions of the great powers."37

In the summer of 1878, at the close of an armed conflict between the Turks and Russia, a European war over the partition of Turkey was an immediate possibility. Russian soldiers were encamped within ten miles of Constantinople; Austria was prepared to move into the Balkans; and the British fleet was lying outside the Dardanelles. "Everything was ready for a great catastrophe."38

British policy in the matter revolved around the idea that Constantinople was the key to India and that Turkey, as a buffer between the direct route to Asia and Russian expansion in a southerly direction, must be bolstered and propped up for as long as possible. Russian moderation and self-restraint brought about an agreement to modify the Russo-Turkish Treaty of San Stefano, and a meeting of the powers at Berlin in June and July resulted in a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

British representatives came away from the conference with a secret agreement, a firman signed by the Sultan on

37 Blake, Disraeli, p. 576.
38 Mowat, The European States System, p. 82.
July 6, 1878, giving the British government title to the island of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{39} As compensation, France was given a free hand in Tunis, and by 1881 the French marched in and took possession of the city.\textsuperscript{40}

Cyprus became a military and naval stronghold used in the protection of the Suez Canal, and the British abandoned their policy of using Turkey as a buffer state. Instead, their attention now turned to Egypt as the first line of defense for the Asian route through the Mediterranean. On July 11, 1882, the city of Alexandria was shelled by a British naval squadron; on September 13, 1882, a British army defeated the combined forces of Egypt at Tel el Kebir; and a wedge had thus been opened in Africa, setting off an "undignified scramble" for territory on the Dark Continent.\textsuperscript{41}

In seeking to determine the true nature of European expansion, one thing stands out in bold relief. There is no consensus of opinion among interested scholars as to the


\textsuperscript{40}Norman D. Harris, \textit{Europe and Africa} (Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), pp. 267-275.

\textsuperscript{41}Snyder, editor, \textit{The Imperialism Reader}, p. 4.
"meaning, causes, results, definition, or even the time
span of modern Imperialism."\(^{42}\)

Generally speaking, all literature on the subject falls
into two categories or basic types. The so-called liberal-
bourgeois view usually denies any connection between
imperialism and capitalism, and the writers who follow this
line of thought are likely to stress nationalism, national
prestige, security of the state, the desire for larger social
units, and self-sufficiency as the underlying motives in the
race for empire. The so-called Marxian view, on the other
hand, is that imperialism may be explained, primarily, in
terms of economic motives and that all such expansion is
an "inevitable phase in the evolution of capitalism."\(^{43}\)

Surplus money, accumulated profit from an expanding industrial-
isrn, brings less and less return, say the Marxians, when it
is invested at home. This capital is therefore exported
to the colonies, where the profit is much greater, where
labor is cheaper, and where money can be used to develop
new sources of raw materials and new markets for manufactured
products.

\(^{42}\)David Healy, Modern Imperialism, p. 1; William L.
Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York: Alfred A.

\(^{43}\)Ibid., p. 69.
Capitalist economy is forced to expand, according to the Marxist interpretation, because it cannot absorb its own production, and competition in the race for colonies is the consequence. Combines of capital and powerful monopolies guide the state in its quest for territory, and the real stake in any clash between two or more powers is actually the division of the earth between them. All imperialist powers anticipate a day when there will be no more land available in "under-developed" areas; the time to secure and hold overseas real estate is before this day comes. The Marxists warn, too, that when "surplus capital has transformed the whole world and remade even the most backward areas in the image of capitalism, the whole economic-social system will inevitably die of congestion."^45

Oddly enough, the so-called Marxist interpretation of imperialism is not original with Karl Marx, who appears not to have been concerned with colonialism except to speak of it as a movement that had already outlived its usefulness and was a thing of the past. It has been the objective


of the neo-Marxists to revise the doctrines of Karl Marx to include imperialism as one step in the capitalist ruination of the world.

All writers on imperialism, regardless of widely diverse opinion, return again and again to the classic study on economics, The Wealth of Nations, written by Adam Smith.\textsuperscript{47} Published first in 1776, some forty-two years before Karl Marx was born, Smith's work inaugurated the study of economics as a separate discipline, and it contained a scathing indictment of the mercantile system.

Smith advocated free trade as being the only decent economic policy for the nations of the world to follow, and he maintained that imperialistic wars could be eliminated by doing away with monopolies and all barriers that hindered the movement of goods. Ignoring, for the most part, any discussion of economic causes of imperialism, Smith suggested that the expansion of Europe after 1500 arose from no real necessity; colonies were not appreciated for their utility when they were settled; and "folly and injustice" seemed to

have been the uppermost principles involved in the foundation of colonial enterprise.\textsuperscript{48}

In one respect, Smith indicated that he was an imperialist; he saw no reason for allowing the British Empire to fall apart because of independence movements in the colonies. He would counter these rebellious activities by making colonists full partners in the total economy of the empire and by allowing overseas possessions to thrive as a part of the free-trade system. He was certain that the greed of merchants and manufacturers could be curbed by the natural laws of economics if these rules could but be allowed to operate freely.

Adam Smith's \textit{Wealth of Nations} stimulated all phases of economic thinking after 1776, and his investigation of practices in the mercantile system produced two schools of thought on economic imperialism.\textsuperscript{49} One group of scholars, influenced by the thinking of economists J. B. Say and David Ricardo, have concluded that capitalism can remain in perfect equilibrium and that underconsumption is not a threat to the capitalist system. On the other hand, Simonde de Sismonde and another economic theorist, Thomas Robert Malthus, have

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 254.

\textsuperscript{49}Winslow, \textit{The Pattern of Imperialism}, p. 77.
taken an opposite position, and their tenets inspired John A. Hobson to write his classic work, *Imperialism: A Study*, published first in 1902. "No other book has been so influential in spreading the doctrine of economic imperialism."[51]

Hobson, who lived from 1858 until 1940, was a native of England. In his thinking he stood somewhere between orthodox economics and socialism, and many of the neo-Marxist ideas of imperialism have come directly from his scholarly efforts. He revised his classic work on imperialism twice, first in 1911 and again in 1938. Within this span of time, Hobson had become extremely cautious about definitions of any "ism" term where meanings can shift with subtlety and rapidity.[52]

To pin these words down and mark them out so that the definition would remain unchallenged seemed impossible to him; but before the latest revision was finished Hobson interpreted

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[52] Hobson, *Imperialism*, p. 3; for an excellent discussion of the pitfalls encountered in the use of the term imperialism, see Winslow, *The Pattern of Imperialism*, pp. 60-64.
imperialism as being "the endeavor of the great controllers of industry to broaden the channel for the flow of their surplus wealth by seeking foreign markets and foreign investments to take off the goods and capital they cannot sell or use at home."53

To Hobson, imperialism is motivated, principally, by economic forces, and the most important of these is the necessity to invest surplus capital abroad. The great banking houses, Hobson charges, are the real promoters of imperialistic projects, and they are guilty of using the state to implement their schemes. According to Hobson, there is one sure way to eliminate imperialism, and that is to require industry to pay the workers more money.54 If this were done, there would be no more surplus capital to invest overseas, and, since workers would spend their new earnings for goods, the problem of surplus commodities would be solved.

Throughout his study on imperialism, Hobson implies that the great nations of the world, if they are sincere about wanting to raise the standard of living in backward

53 Hobson, Imperialism, p. 85.

areas, may do so without the necessity of placing their domination over these lands and peoples. What he seems to favor is some form of foreign aid, the use of both capital and technical assistance in bringing backward areas closer to civilization; the return to metropolitan countries, in the form of escalating trade and better relations, would be more rewarding than imperial ownership with its costly colonial administration.

The first important neo-Marxist reaction to Hobson's study came in 1916 when Nikolai Lenin published an essay on imperialism. While he was primarily concerned with the economic aspects of expansionism, Lenin recognized that other factors existed, a view that Hobson had not taken, and yet he declined the opportunity to enumerate and discuss them. In his economic analysis, Lenin characterized imperialism as being:

the monopoly stage of capitalism, or, capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by the international trusts has begun; and in which the


partition of all the territory of the earth by the great capitalist countries has been completed.\textsuperscript{57}

Imperialism, to Lenin, was mature capitalism in its last phase of historical being. He interpreted World War I, in progress at the time he was writing, as being an imperialist clash between the powers and a sure sign that the end of capitalism was at hand. He maintained that capitalism would not collapse automatically; socialist leadership was needed to direct the final blow and see that the transition along Marxist lines came swiftly and surely.

Joseph Schumpeter, a native of Austria and a noted economist, was the first authority in the field to advance a counter-declaration to the neo-Marxist claim that capitalism is inherently imperialistic. A short essay, first published in 1918, set forth the Schumpeter thesis.\textsuperscript{58} It is not in the market places of the world, Schumpeter implied, that one is likely to find the reasons for imperialism. Admittedly, there are economic reasons why states attempt to expand, but other factors of equal importance must be taken into account. Imperialism, he said, is a throw-back to a primitive form

\textsuperscript{57} Lenin, \textit{Imperialism}, p. 72.

of man's behavior. The nature and history of man provide excellent starting points from which to proceed toward a well-rounded theory of imperialism.

The atavistic nature of imperialism, according to Schumpeter, involves such things as the necessities of man's social structure and his inherited dispositions, the whims of leaders and the classes that rule, the need for rulers to have military successes in order to remain in power, and the urge for military strength to avoid extinction. Then, too, it is a mistake to overlook the forces of nationalism in any assessment of what imperialism actually is.

National aggression, Schumpeter explained, is related to national interests. The great national interest of the Russians has been a drive for warm-weather ports; the people of the United States assumed that it was their "manifest destiny" to take over western lands. All generations are greatly influenced by the past experiences of their forefathers, and this heritage is a strong force in the decision-making of a nation.


60 Schumpeter, Imperialism, pp. 11-12.
Schumpeter defined imperialism as being "the objectless disposition on the part of a state to unlimited expansion."\(^{61}\) The only motive force behind any given territorial acquisition may be the simple desire of a people to expand, but the urge to magnify the holdings of a state will likely grow less intense as mankind moves forward in time, for:

"the structure that brought it to the fore goes into a decline, giving way, in the course of social development, to other structures that have no room for it, and eliminating the power factors that supported it. It tends to disappear in an element of habitual emotional reaction, because of the progressive rationalization of life and mind, a process in which old functional needs are absorbed by new tasks, in which heretofore military energies are functionally modified."\(^{62}\)

By 1918, at the close of the so-called period of the "new imperialism," two well-defined theories had emerged, both attempting to explain the base causes of the expansionist movement. Although the Schumpeter theme has been extremely influential, subsequent historiography appears to indicate a majority opinion favoring the Hobson-Lenin thesis.\(^{63}\) A select bibliography of the most important studies on imperialism published in the western world since 1920 reveals that

\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 6.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 65.

even the most conservative of scholars have failed to give full acceptance to the conclusions of Schumpeter.

First, in point of time, came Leonard Woolf's two studies, *Empire and Commerce in Africa* and *Economic Imperialism*. In what amounted to a reiteration of the neo-Marxist position, Woolf contended that imperialism is nothing more or less than economic exploitation. Business interests, he said, exploit labor at home and overseas, and they rob backward peoples of their natural resources under the protection of the central governments. Woolf gained wide recognition for his work when the British Labor Party endorsed his two publications shortly after they came from the press.

Taking much the same view as Woolf, P. T. Moon, in 1928, published a one-volume history of imperialism and international politics covering the period after 1870. Moon was certain that economic factors far outweighed other reasons for the new wave of imperialism after the Franco-Prussian War. Many important diplomatic documents, released after Moon wrote his *Imperialism and World Politics*, make subsequent studies in the field more valuable than this publication, but it

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should not be overlooked for its value as a source of information, excellent style, and sound judgement.

As new documentary source material became available, monographs on various phases of the new imperialism began to appear. One excellent example is William L. Langer's published dissertation, The Franco-Russian Alliance 1890-1894. His research showed that this treaty system did not include any agreements concerning military aid outside continental Europe, nor was the alliance directed against Britain, contrary to suspicions widely held before the first World War.

Langer's next effort, European Alliances and Alignments, moved the author out of the monograph field into a wider area. First published in 1931, a new edition of the work in 1950 brought the bibliography up to date, but no changes were made in the original text. This in-depth study of international politics is concerned with the Age of Bismarck, and a continuation of the inquiry, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, carried the narrative down to 1900.

original edition, printed in 1935, was in two volumes, but a
one-volume revision, with no changes in the text, appeared
in 1951, and it included new bibliographical listings.

Until a new assessment is made of imperialism which
covers the same ground on the same scale as does the Langer
trilogy, there is nothing printed in any language, since
1951, or before, to equal these publications. The Langer
studies are essential to anyone doing research in this area.

Several features of the Langer trilogy make them
extremely valuable. First, the chronological approach
eliminates confusion of detail, and the reader is able to
comprehend the relationship between one event and the others.
Secondly, each study is carefully indexed, making it an
excellent reference book. Annotated bibliographies are
conveniently placed at the ends of chapters, so that each
era of the new imperialism is set apart as a self-contained
unit of the entire study.

Thirdly, Langer consistently adheres to a balanced
viewpoint in his assessment of imperialism, suggesting that
no one school of thought on the subject should be allowed
to obscure others that are worthy of consideration.\textsuperscript{69} In

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 95.
his opinion, the psychology of nationalism has been too long
overlooked as one of the basic causes of imperialism. 70

Not long after the first printing of the Langer trilogy,
Richard Pares, an English scholar, researched the motives of
the British in building empire and concluded that the economic
reasons far outnumbered all others. 71 This concept of all
imperialism had met with such wide approval that, after the
second global conflict began, many writers in the field began
to drop the adjective "economic" as a qualifier for the
noun "imperialism" on the assumption that all imperialism
is economic and that "the reader cannot but think of special
economic interests whenever the word imperialism is brought
out." 72

As time began to improve perspective, historians at
the close of World War II began to make new evaluations of
the neo-Marxist theory of imperialism based on the historical
record since the Hobson-Lenin pronouncements had been made.


71 Richard Pares, "The Economic Factors in the History
of the Empire," The Economic History Review, second series,
VII (May, 1937), 144.

72 Richard Koebner, "The Concept of Economic Imperialism,"
The Economic History Review, second series, no. 1 (January,
1949), 1.
Raymond Aron, for example, found that conflict over colonial possessions had little, if anything, to do with causing either of the preceding global wars. He pointed out that clashes over territory outside of Europe had been settled by diplomatic negotiation, leading him to the conclusion that the powers were unwilling to risk a world conflict over African and Asian real estate. 73 Other scholars were saying that it was quite obvious why there had not been any general wars over colonial holdings. The real imperialism, they maintained, is to be found in the exploitation of areas acquired before 1870; after that time, the powers argued over land that was of relatively poor quality, "scraping the bottom of the barrel." 74

After 1950, the historians who followed the neo-Marxist theory of imperialism insisted that there was still a close association between government and business interests. Conservative writers, they said, represented capitalist combines, thus allowing these trusts to evaluate the role of business in imperialism. 75


The rise of nationalism and the decline of colonialism after World War II gave historians another aspect of imperialism to dissect. What caused the independence movement, and why had it appeared at this particular time in history? A. P. Thornton suggests that the French Revolution internationalized the idea of democracy and that imperialism and democracy are incompatible. 76

Historian John Strachey sees the recent turn away from the colonial system as the beginning of a new era of imperialism. When new governments are formed after colonial independence, he says, the merchant classes take control, and this group maintains close co-operation with the business interests in metropolitan countries. Therefore, a withdrawal of colonial administration does not mean that the former owner of a colony has abandoned all rights to influence the destiny of the newly-created nation. Present world opinion is opposed to formal annexation as a tool of imperialism, but the imperialist powers are aware that annexation and colonial rule are costly, and economic control can be maintained without this expense. The British, for example, are in virtual command of the oil-bearing

areas of the Middle East, and they spend no money to administer over local governments.  

A. P. Thornton agrees with Strachey, up to a point, but he is inclined to believe that powers control their former possessions by the manipulation of prices on the world market, holding the new nations under economic subservience and keeping the monetary values of raw materials in line with what they were before independence. "In these circumstances a charge of exploitation is not only easily made but genuinely felt."  

In contrast, another recent study attempts to show that the powers have a relatively good historical record for bringing many improvements to the territories brought under their control. Separation by independence movements, leading to political severance, does not mean that all contact between the two countries involved is gone, or that it should be gone. There was a time when large areas of the world were isolated and remote from civilization, but this period


78Thornton, Doctrines of Imperialism, pp. 218-219.  

is in the very distant past. In the modern world, no nation, whether it be a major power or an island kingdom in the South Seas, can afford to seal itself off from other peoples of the earth. To do so is to invite economic stagnation. Such things as plagues and famine are the concern of all peoples, regardless of any man-made political divisions. It is to be remembered, however, that new nations, coming out from under the control of imperialist countries, seek to attain rapid economic and technical growth, but they resent the influx of foreign workers and technicians required to make this dream a reality. 80

Imperialism, then, is now, and always has been, a part of the history of man. What imperialism is cannot be adequately defined in any set of words that will satisfy either one of at least two schools of thought. One might blend the economic and the non-economic reasons for imperialism and come close to a reasonable definition, one that would be accepted by some of the scholars who delve in this field, but catechistic phrases do little to promote understanding, and the real meaning of the term is to be had from an exploration of the historical records dealing with imperialistic policies and practices.

80 Ibid., p. 339.
Modern imperialism began during the Age of Discovery, starting in the late 15th century. As new lands were found, the nation-states of western Europe became rivals in a race for colonies and for superiority in world trade. Portugal, Spain, France, England, and the Dutch were the principal contenders in the early years of the old colonial period, but France and England gradually took the lead. By the last half of the 18th century, Britain emerged as the greatest of the imperial powers, after obtaining most of the French colonial empire as spoils of war.

The year 1783 marks the end of the old colonial period. The mercantile system, one of the major causes of the American Revolution, fell from the lofty position it had previously held, and a new era of free trade and revised colonial policies came into view.

Shortly after the American Revolution, the nations of Europe became involved with the Napoleonic Wars, and little attention was given to overseas acquisition, except for Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which was a failure for the French. It did, however, call attention to the importance of Egypt as an important way-station between Europe and India. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave further impetus to imperial ambition in the area, and caused Britain to rely
on Egypt rather than Turkey as the first line of defense for the "life-line" to India.

The unification of both Germany and Italy and the Franco-Prussian War were all events of the early 1870's which ushered in the period of the "new imperialism." For one thing, two nations had joined the Concert of Europe and shortly became rivals for overseas territories. Then, too, the era of free trade was over, and the doctrine of protectionism called for high tariffs and trade barriers.

The new race for colonial possessions was quickened after Britain occupied Egypt in 1882. Old rivalries were renewed as the powers began to carve the continent of Africa.

These events have been, and will continue to be, interpreted as being caused by either economic motives or atavistic tendencies inherited from the past. The majority of the writers in the field, both early and late, believe that the economic motives outweigh all others. Imperialism, we believe, contains both ingredients. There is something in the nature of man that produces an urge to explore and conquer unknown areas. If the new territory has natural resources that can be sold for a profit, so much the better. Man will fight to keep it. If it is a worthless desert area, it still seems important enough to defend and hold on to.
CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH DRIVE TO FASHODA: PHASE ONE,

THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE IN EGYPT

In the Sudan, south of Egypt, the village of Fashoda
is shown on maps as a tiny dot on the left bank of the
White Nile just north of the confluence of the Sobat River.
At this insignificant point, two lines of imperialist
authority, those of the British and the French, came in
conflict with each other in the year 1898; the territory
in contention was the Bahr-el- Ghazal Province of the Egyptian
Sudan.

Sudan, an Arabic word meaning "black people,"\(^1\) has long
been used to describe "the region of Negro Africa north of
the great equatorial forest belt and south of the Sahara and
Libyan deserts and west of Abyssinia and Galaland."\(^2\) This
belt of forest and black people extends from the Atlantic
Ocean on the west to the Red Sea on the east, and it is the
very heart of the "dark continent." The Egyptian Sudan, it

\(^1\)Johnston, *The Opening Up of Africa*, p. 64.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 255.
must be understood, is only that part of the Sudan that has come under the influence and control of the various governments in Egypt.

The Egyptian Sudan is a land long wedded to Egypt by geography and ethnography, for the Nile River binds them together as a diver is connected with the surface by his air-pipe. Without it there is only suffocation.

Although this mighty stream does not originate in the Egyptian Sudan, the river flows the full length of the region in a northward direction from its Equatorial sources, passes through Egypt, and finally empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The northeastern quarter of the continent of Africa is drained and watered by the Nile, which rises about twenty-four feet in flood season and brings new life to an otherwise languishing terrain.

Just south of Fashoda, the Nile is hampered in its passage by the sudd, a "broad green belt of forest and papyrus through which the stream wanders wildly, like an animal caught

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3 J. C. McCoan, Egypt (New York: Co-operative Publication Society, 1882), p. 3.

in the meshes of a net."  

A more formidable swamp is not to be found on the face of the earth. The sudd becomes so thick and dense in places that people, and even large animals, can walk upon it, and attempting to traverse the marsh aboard a river steamer is like living on a floating sponge.  

Needless to say, the sudd is a great hindrance to the navigation of the Nile, but there are six other barriers that cause an equal amount of inconvenience for the same mode of travel—the six cataracts of the Nile numbered from north to south.  

These hard ridges of sandstone and granite form immutable obstructions to river traffic in low-water seasons when ships must be unloaded and dragged, by manual labor, across the rocky impediments. In time of flood, however, a river steamer may pass with a minimum of effort.  

Four important affluents of the Nile enter the main stream in the Egyptian Sudan. The Atbara is the most northerly

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junction. It rises in the Abyssinian Mountains, flows in a northwesterly direction, and reaches the Nile just north of Ed-Damer. The next convergence south of the Nile-Atbara union is with the Blue Nile, called the River of Ethiopia, or the Astapos, by the ancient Greek geographers. This meeting is just north of the city of Khartoum and just south of Omdurman, the Mahdist capital. The Blue Nile rises out of Lake Tsana, in Abyssinia, and flows first in a southerly direction. It eventually turns and courses northwesterly into the main stream of the Nile. In the extreme southern limits of the Egyptian Sudan, the Sobat River enters the Nile immediately east of Lake No. The Bahr-el-Ghazal flows from the west into Lake No, where the principal watercourse of the Nile begins, and from this point to its junction with the Blue Nile at Khartoum, the main stream is known as the White Nile.  

Among and about the headstreams and tributaries of the Nile River are the nine geographical divisions or provinces of the Egyptian Sudan. Atbara is the eastern basin region

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 McCoa, Egypt, pp. 350 ff.
of the Atbara River, a tableland, broken in some areas by low ranges of hills. Immediately north of Atbara lies the Dongola province, the most fertile agricultural land in the Egyptian Sudan because of the unusual amount of Nile overflow in that particular region. Situated in the Great Bend area north of Khartoum, Dongola is noted for its excellent grassland, and it is the home of nomadic herdsmen who tend their sheep, goats, and camels. Just south of Khartoum is the northern frontier of Sennaar, which is, for the most part, a great undulating plain with an increasing elevation toward the southern extremity of the province. In the neighborhood of Khartoum, the soil is mostly sand, mixed with Nile mud, but to the south it blends into a deep bed of clay mixed with calcium carbonate, an argillaceous marl. Sennaar is, indeed, a dismal territory during the dry seasons, but early autumn rains bring forth abundant crops.  

Due west of Sennaar, beyond the White Nile, is situated the province of Kordofan, an area, in physical characteristics, much like its neighbor to the east. A limited supply of water is available from wells, and some grain crops are irrigated from these sources. West of Kordofan, the Darfur province

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 352.\]
is a large oasis completely surrounded by desert. In the late 19th century, this fertile land was an entrepôt and a point de départ in the slave trade of central Africa.  

South and east of the small city of Berber, the agrarian province of Taka extends to the Bahr-el-Chazal provinces of Donga and Darfertit, two portions of monotonous terrain. The entire region is a grassy plain with some bush, furnishing adequate protection for an abundance of wild game.

Fashoda, sometimes known as Kodok, is located in a thin strip of land, about two hundred miles long and hardly a dozen miles wide, called the Shilook country. Wedged between Kordofan and Sennaar on the west bank of the White Nile, it is the home of the Shilook tribesmen who fish and hunt in the marshes along the river. The overflow of the Nile supports what little agriculture there is to be found in this long and narrow political unit. Recurrence of the rainy season is a general contribution to the entire Egyptian Sudan, and precipitation, being more abundant in the southern extremities, near the Equator, causes the territory in the vicinity of Fashoda to be "moist, undulating, and exhuberant."

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13 Ibid., p. 352.
14 Ibid., p. 354.
15 Churchill, The River War, p. 5.
Winter is an unknown season in the Egyptian Sudan, one reason why civilizations have inhabited this approximately 950,000 square miles of Africa for an estimated thirty thousand years. The result, in modern times, is a tribal culture forming a loose collection of pastoral clans. In the northern reaches, there is a blending of the Negro natives with the Arab settlers, and the more powerful newcomers have imposed their customs and language on the older culture. The faith of Islam appears to possess a strong attraction for the people of this area, and the Arab has met with little difficulty in making Islam the predominant religion in the Egyptian Sudan.16

The homes of the Negro tribes are huts built of straw and reeds enclosed by high walls of elephant grass. Tribesmen are armed with long spears, and they protect themselves with shields made of crocodile skin decorated by weird markings. The men wear their unkept, stringy hair hanging over the shoulders, ending in blobs of mud covered with cow excrement soaked in urine. Some of the hunters wear their hair cut like a hedge, solidified with mud and manure into a consistent mass resembling felt.17 The British soldiers

16Ibid., p. 11.
17Hoyningen-Huene, African Mirage, p. 15.
who fought the Mahdist forces in the late 19th century called these tribesmen "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," a term that has been immortalized by Rudyard Kipling, the Victorian poet and author.

Over the entire Egyptian Sudan the spoken language is bewildering in that it changes from village to village, with only a few hundred or a few thousand people speaking one tongue. Arabic is the basic language in the north, and Hausa is the best known and most generally understood speech south of Khartoum. 18

The Egyptian Sudan is, therefore, a land of contrasts. In the Arabic-speaking north, the terrain is largely sandy desert with some scrub brush. South of Khartoum, the population is mostly negroid, and the unusual amount of rainfall produces swamps, forests, and dense tropical grass. Camels abound in the Arab tract, but they cannot exist in the south because of the biting flies that swarm there and because a camel cannot walk on muddy ground. 19

As the 19th century dawned, Egypt had no claim to territory in the Sudan; what had once been a part of the

18 Johnston, The Opening Up of Africa, pp. 130-133.

ancient Egyptian empire was neglected by the successors of the Ptolemies, and Egypt itself had become a fiefdom under the control of the Sultan of Turkey. After 1815, however, the vassal ruler of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, challenged the authority of the Sublime Porte and expanded the frontiers of Egypt toward Constantinople in the Middle East and toward the Equator in Africa.  

By 1831, the Egyptian army, under the leadership of Mohammed Ali, his son, Ibrahim Pasha, and his son-in-law, Mohammed Bey Khusraw, had advanced as far north as Syria. All of the European Powers, with the exception of France, supported the Sultan's position and forced Mohammed Ali to better use his talents in "establishing good local administration in Egypt."  

In a settlement with the Sultan, Mohammed Ali agreed to continue tribute payments to the Sublime Porte, but he was able to amputate Egypt "from the decaying body of the Ottoman Empire, thus giving it a separate administrative

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existence." A firman issued by the Sultan recognized Mohammed Ali as Viceroy of Egypt and gave him the right to pass both title and position to his heirs.

Since Louis Philippe, the King of France, had supported the cause of Mohammed Ali, the French nation inherited a reputation in the Middle East as being the protector of this newly-founded Egyptian dynasty. Great Britain, on the other hand, had followed a policy of bolstering the Sultan at all costs in order to discourage Russian advances into the area, and this attitude gave the British government succès d'estime in the Turkish world as the principal European defender of the Sublime Porte.  

Mohammed Ali, in leading his troops toward Constantinople, evidently hoped to become "mayor of the palace" at the Sultan's court, but the strong opposition voiced by a majority of the Powers was more than he wished to challenge, and he therefore reversed his position and sought military glory in the opposite direction. His armies were ordered to invade the Sudan, south of the first Nile cataract, and

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23 Dicey, The Story of the Khedivate, pp. 15-17.
limit the activities of a "singular aristocracy of brigands" who preyed on caravans of trade moving to and from Egypt.\textsuperscript{24}

A military occupation of the region, and subsequently an administration of Egyptian civil government, were both designed to give the Viceroy dominion over the African shores of the Red Sea, as well as control of the trade and pilgrim routes across north Africa to Mecca. There was a ready market for slaves in Egypt, and the Sudan could supply that need. The Viceroy had heard that there was an abundance of gold in the Sudan, and the search for this treasure became his "constant obsession."\textsuperscript{25} He also had an "honest intention to introduce commerce and civilization into the midst of Negro tribes."\textsuperscript{26}

After annexing the Sudan, Mohammed Ali found that there was no gold to be mined there and that the Negro, if brought to Egypt as an adult, could not survive in the climate along the lower Nile. He therefore established Khartoum as a center for the procurement of young slaves destined for work.

\textsuperscript{24}Pierre Crabites, Gordon, the Sudan, and Slavery (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1933), p. 2.


\textsuperscript{26}Crabites, Gordon, the Sudan, and Slavery, p. 3.
in the irrigated fields of Egypt. At the same time, the
city became the principal market for ivory.

When Mohammed Ali died in 1849, his son, Ibrahim, ruled
Egypt for only a few weeks. He died, "very shortly after
his accession, of pneumonia, brought on, it is said, by
drinking two bottles of highly iced champagne at a draught
when he was very hot."\(^\text{27}\) His son, Abbas, inherited the leader-
ship, announced a policy of hatred for Christians, and swore
allegiance to the cause of Islam.

The new regime promoted the slave trade in the Sudan
and formed a partnership with the local chieftains for this
purpose. New revenue was brought into the coffers of the
Viceroy from taxes imposed on the traffic in human lives.\(^\text{28}\)
Combination forts and penal colonies were constructed at
various locations south of Khartoum where Egyptian criminals,
political enemies of the Abbas government, and soldiers sent
to duty stations for punishment served lengthy terms.
Fashoda was the location of one of these outposts.\(^\text{29}\)


\(^\text{28}\)Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 101.

With the death of Abbas in 1850, his brother, Said Pasha, took control of the Egyptian helm of state, and, after some twenty years of French dominance, British diplomats came to be favored over their French counterparts at the Egyptian court. This influence may have been responsible for Said's declarations against the slave trade and for domestic reforms in Egypt that were designed to please European governments.

The story is told of Said that he learned of an article in a European newspaper which had questioned the Viceroy's courage. To prove himself, Said ordered a kilometer of road to be built, covered with gurpowder one foot in thickness. "He then walked solemnly along the road smoking a pipe." His courtiers were ordered to light their pipes and follow Said Pasha down the road, dire threats being made against those who finished the promenade with unlighted tobacco.

Said displayed a degree of courage, this time of a more sane nature, when, in 1854, moving against strong British opposition, he announced his intention to co-operate with the French in the building of a canal through the straits of

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Suez which would, when completed, connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The plan for such a project had previously been submitted to Abbas by Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat, but the idea had fallen on deaf ears.

The lack of British enthusiasm for such a canal centered around the fact that London bankers had financed the building of a railroad from Alexandria to Suez, and the line had been in operation since 1849. The proposed canal threatened this enterprise, and the British attempted to show the Viceroy that it was the railroad that had made important ports of Alexandria and Suez. A canal through the straits of Suez would greatly lessen the amount of trade entering Egypt at Alexandria, not to mention the potential loss of revenue passing to the Viceroy's treasury from taxes on goods crossing Egypt by land.

Britain was far more concerned with keeping France from sitting astride the Mediterranean route to the Far East than in having access to a Suez passageway that had been built under French supervision. Most of the trade between Britain and the Far East went by way of the Cape route which had


33 Halford L. Koskins, *European Imperialism in Africa*
served for years as the principal highway of empire. The rail route across Egypt was vital, too, in that most business and government mail went by way of Egypt, and there was a growing need to hasten this service. What the British feared most was that France might gain enough Egyptian prestige to wrest the railroad from British hands and force them to depend, solely, upon the Cape route as a "lifeline" to India. Any change in Egyptian leadership could be dangerous for the British position, and the death of Said Pasha in 1863 was a critical turning point in Anglo-Egyptian relations.

In Said Pasha the British had found a co-operative spirit, but the new Viceroy, Ismail Pasha, the youngest grandson of Mohammed Ali, began his reign by leaning heavily on French advice, much to the dismay of the British representatives in Cairo.

At his accession in 1863, Ismail was hailed, both in Egypt and abroad, as an able young leader who was destined to steer the Egyptian ship of state in a direction leading toward a better era. Within a short time, however, this

35 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, pp. 76-77.
36 Dicey, The Story of the Khedivate, pp. 50-51.
optimism began to fade into oblivion, and there was increasing concern lest the pilot at the helm should, by his reckless financial policies, dash the vessel against the rocks of bankruptcy and take his creditors aground with him. His predecessor left a national debt of only three million pounds; but Ismail, by the end of his reign in 1879, had parlayed this obligation into a liability of some ninety million pounds—an excessive sum for a country with an annual revenue of barely eight million pounds. 37

In the mismanagement of Egypt's fiscal affairs, Ismail gave the Europeans an opportunity to intervene in his country. A better pretext for European intrusion was not to be had; it is remarkable that Egypt escaped occupation until 1882. 38

By nature, Ismail was a speculator. 39 As a young prince he had had an almost inexhaustable income from his share of the family estates on the Nile, and with this money he had bought the pleasures of the Middle East and Europe. He had, therefore, built an early reputation for spending money with abandon and for reckless gambling. His early education was

37 Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 253.
38 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 76.
obtained in the harems of the viceregal palaces and on the boulevards of Paris, and when he became the ruler of Egypt he had little understanding of European politics and finance.

Ismail was thirty-two years of age when he assumed the title and position of Viceroy in 1863. Surrounding himself with flatterers, both European and native, he became convinced that, as the ruling monarch of Egypt, he held title to all the land; his subjects were tenants without tenure. One British diplomat observed that the new sovereign was a "true Oriental despot with a Parisian veneer."^40

One of Ismail's first pronouncements as Viceroy was to call for the total abolition of slavery within his domain. He was probably influenced by the outcries against the practice that were being voiced in both the United States and in Europe, but, in trying to appease public opinion abroad, Ismail turned a majority of the businessmen in Egypt against him. It counted for nothing that Ismail, himself, was one of the leading slaveholders in Egypt and that his own government reaped great benefits from taxation on the

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^40 Ibid., p. 13.

traffic in slaves. Ismail’s own government officials charged him with being something less than a true Moslem, and they reminded him that the savage was no better off even if the abolition decree could be enforced to the letter; captives taken in war were killed and eaten by their captors if they could not be sold on the slave market.

European critics of the Viceroy suspected, and rightly so, that Ismail, in abolishing slavery, was looking for a pretext to annex the entire Nile basin while attempting to enforce the decree. It was true that Ismail dreamed of extending his power through the Sudan to the Equator and eventually moving into East Africa and Abyssinia. He hoped to obtain money for these projects from European Powers who had their eyes on the same territories.

A turn of events in the American War between the States gave Ismail, for a short time, a small measure of economic independence. The blockade of Confederate ports caused the price of cotton to take a sharp and swift advance, reaching

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five times its normal level on the world market. Egypt became, almost overnight, the world's leading producer of cotton, and Ismail possessed more cotton acreage than did any other planter within his realm.

The sudden windfall allowed the Viceroy to make a number of lavish expenditures. Several costly military expeditions were sent up the Nile into Equatoria. In return for a gift of 60,000 pounds to the Sultan of Turkey, his nominal suzerain, Ismail received the title of khedive, a Persian adjective derived from the noun khiva a word for God. The new designation "satisfied the Sultan because he persuaded himself that it meant nothing; and it pleased Ismail because he led himself to believe that it implied everything." The new title was granted just in time to grace the festivities surrounding the formal opening of the Suez Canal, and Ismail spared no expense in purchasing Oriental fanfare and magnificence for the occasion.

On November 17, 1869, the first ships, mostly royal yachts from Europe, passed through the newly-completed

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waterway. The first toll-paying vessel to enter the Suez Canal was flying a British flag; within six years, four-fifths of the total tonnage accommodated by the new facility was under British registry. 47

Once the canal was in operation and the Third Republic emerged in France following the Franco-Prussian War, Britain and France moved toward a working entente in Middle East affairs. 48 A degree of rivalry remained, but prospects were bright for a balanced dualism in "a shared hegemony at Cairo and Constantinople." 49

This new partnership, based on nothing more than mutual trust, centered around the fact that Britain and France feared Russia far more than they feared each other. There was growing concern in both London and Paris about increasing tension between Russia and the Sublime Porte brought on by the nationalism of the Pan-Slav movement. Conflicts between the Russians and the Turks were no novelty; wars between them

47 Hoskins, British Routes to India, pp. 371-372; Blake, Disraeli, pp. 581-582.


49 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 79.
had come with regularity, about every twenty to twenty-five years, since the late 17th century. The question at hand was whether or not the Turks could survive an onslaught from Russia and a revolution in the Balkans at the same time.

The prospect of the Ottoman Empire being dismembered posed a threat to the British lifeline to India. France stood by and hoped to pick up part of the pieces, especially Egypt. For the time being, however, the two partners followed a policy of parity of influence at both Cairo and Constantinople; they advised the Sultan and the Khedive to bring about enlightened reforms in place of Oriental despotism; loans were made to the rulers in order that they might move toward modernization in an otherwise backward area; free trade was promoted to bolster the economy and allow the Sultan to divert adequate sums to military expenditures.

For some time, both the British and the French failed to recognize that far-reaching reforms were next to impossible to achieve in the Middle East, where inflexible conservatism was a part of the Moslem way of life. To make matters worse, any attempt on the part of Europeans to build a viable economy in the area was constantly offset by antique and creaky

50 Lange, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 121.
administrative procedures riddled with graft and corruption. Loans that were earmarked for specific projects vanished in a thicket of confusion. No fiscal policy existed for planned repayment of loans; and yet, there seemed to be no end to available credit. Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, has aptly described the situation in this manner:

... the maximum amount of harm is probably done when an Oriental ruler is for the first time brought in contact with the European system of credit. He then finds that he can obtain large sums of money with the utmost apparent facility. His personal wishes can thus be gratified. He is dazzled by the ingenious and often fallacious schemes for developing his country which European adventurers will not fail to lay before him in the most attractive light. He is too wanting in foresight to appreciate the nature of the difficulties which he is creating for himself.  

The first signs that Ismail was in financial difficulty began to appear as the price of cotton declined on the world market after the close of the War Between the States. In December, 1869, Sultan Abdul Aziz issued a firman directing the Khedive to cease raising taxes and borrowing money on the European market.  

In 1875, the Sultan defaulted on his payments and repudiated half of the accrued interest on a total debt of

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52 Dicey, The Story of the Khedivate, pp. 84-85.
200,000,000 pounds; within six years his European creditors had taken direct control of a major portion of his imperial revenues in order to insure payment. It was in 1875, too, that the Khedive, also in great financial difficulty, sold his shares in the Suez Canal to the British Government.

Ismail had offered his stocks to the William E. Gladstone ministry as early as 1870, but Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party then in power, declined to give the Khedive an "opinion on the matter." In the interim, however, the Tory Party, led by Benjamin Disraeli, emerged as the majority party in the House of Commons after the election of 1874. Disraeli charged that Gladstone and his followers were "Little Englanders" with no concern for the honor and strength of the British Empire, and he proposed to take steps to correct their mistakes.

In May, 1874, two months after he formed a cabinet, Disraeli learned that Ferdinand de Lesseps was trying to sell the canal stock owned by the Khedive to French interests

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without success. The British Prime Minister sent word to de Lesseps that the Queen's Government would buy the shares if suitable terms could be arranged. The mission was a failure; de Lesseps wanted the canal stock kept in France, if possible. His government was not interested, and French financiers were reluctant, for two reasons, to invest their money in the Khedive's shares.

For one thing, buyers of the stock would receive no dividends until 1895. The Khedive had borrowed on the shares, and dividends would be diverted to pay off this debt. To Ismail, his holdings in the canal were, therefore, non-productive, and this is the reason he wished to sell. Secondly, the Khedive held 177,642 shares out of a total issue of 400,000, about forty-four per cent of the stock, but he was allowed to have only three seats out of twenty-four on the directorate of the Suez Canal Company, and it was a rule that no one single stockholder could cast more than ten votes.

While de Lesseps tried to find investors, Disraeli began secret negotiations with the Khedive, who agreed, on

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57 Crabites, Gordon, the Sudan and Slavery, p. 11.
November 23, 1875, to sell his entire portfolio of stock in the canal to the British for 4,000,000 pounds. The shares were delivered to the British Consulate in Cairo within three days.\(^{58}\) When the French envoy to Egypt heard of the transaction, he was playing billiards, "and in his rage he broke his cue in half."\(^{59}\)

There was some apprehension in Britain lest Disraeli's investment should cause antagonism in France. The canal was part of the French bid for mastery in the Middle East; French money had financed the project; a Frenchman had promoted the construction of the waterway; and, until 1875, France was able to claim a vital stake in Egypt and an established right to intervene in that country.\(^{60}\)

Disraeli's master-stroke forced France to share the project with Britain and face, at the same time, the prospect of British naval power protecting the interest that Disraeli had bought. The French were aware that both the Jingo element and the Liberal Party in England openly suggested that Disraeli had taken the first step toward annexation of

\(^{58}\) Blake, *Disraeli*, p. 583.


\(^{60}\) Moorhead, *The White Nile*, p. 139.
Egypt, but the British Prime Minister denied this, on October 23, 1876, saying:

Many in England say, Why not? England might take Egypt, and so secure our highway to India. But the answer is obvious.... If the Russians had Constantinople, they could at any time march their Army through Syria to the mouth of the Nile, and then what would be the use of our holding Egypt? Not even the command of the sea could help us under such circumstances.... Constantinople is the key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal.61

The worst fears of a Russian thrust against the Sublime Porte were not long in becoming reality. Russia declared war on Turkey, April 24, 1877, and moved troops toward the Sultan's capital city.62 The remaining European Powers took a neutral position, but Britain tottered for days on the brink of war with Russia.

On May 6, Disraeli, persuaded by his cabinet that the situation was not as perilous as it appeared, warned Russia against either temporary or permanent military occupation of Constantinople, Egypt, and the Suez Canal.63 The French Ambassador to Russia, General Le Flo, sent word to Duc Decazes, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, that he had learned of Russian intentions to stop short of Constantinople; no

61Buckle, Disraeli, Vol. VI, p. 84.
62Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, pp. 121 ff.
63Buckle, Disraeli, Vol. VI, pp. 135 ff.
troops would be sent into the city. Decazes replied that Britain's warning, if heeded, should deter Russia from a full-scale invasion of the Ottoman Empire, with the possible exception of the Balkans.

Prince Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of Germany, anxious to settle the difficulty, suggested that the Ottoman Empire was not worth what an all-out European conflict would cost. He informed his diplomats that present circumstances could be turned in Germany's favor by encouraging England to annex Egypt as compensation for any territorial gains that Russia might make in the Middle East. If the Czar secured complete control of the Black Sea area and England took Egypt, then the two rivals should be content with the status quo for an extended period of time, thereby lessening the danger of an Anglo-Russian coalition against Germany.

Disraeli took advantage of Bismarck's suggestion, and he called Nubar Pasha, former minister of the Khedive, to

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65 Decazes to Le Flô, May 21, 1877, Ibid., no. 171, p. 175.

London for extensive talks with the British ministry regarding the possibilities of placing Egypt under British control. Count Münster, German Ambassador to the Court of St. James, confirmed these conversations with the added notation that they had led nowhere. The Empress Frederick, eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, suggested to her mother that England should follow the Suez Canal transaction with a formal annexation of Egypt. Victoria was adamant in her view that the purchase of the Khedive's shares had given Britain nothing more than a commercial interest in the canal; for Britain to take Egypt would be an outright act of "wanton aggression."

Victoria's conviction was based on the British hope that the Turks could contain the Russians, thereby eliminating the necessity for British acquisition of territory in the Middle East, but when the Sultan capitulated to the Czar on March 3, 1878, the event called for a re-assessment of British policy in the region. It was becoming apparent, by this time, that protection of the lifeline to India required much more than a British commercial interest in the area.

67 Münster to Bismarck, June 28, 1877, Ibid., no. 295, pp. 155-158.

68 Frederick Ponsonby, editor, The Letters of the Empress
There was growing evidence, too, that Turkey, without direct British military support, would be unable to form an effective bulwark against future Russian thrusts into the Middle East, leaving Egypt, the Suez Canal, and even India, in direct jeopardy. Consequently, the emerging British policy moved in the direction of building "another dyke behind the shattered Turkish breakwater."\(^{69}\)

Accordingly, on May 10, Sir Henry Layard, British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, was instructed to propose an entente with the Turks. The British would agree to give the Sultan military assistance in protecting his territories outside of Europe in return for the right to occupy and administer over the Turkish-owned island of Cyprus, which Disraeli perceived to be the "key of western Asia."\(^ {70}\) The Porte gave assent to the British terms, and the Cyprus Convention was signed on June 4, 1878. Very little was added to the original British proposal except that the Sultan further agreed to introduce necessary reforms in his Asiatic provinces.

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\(^{69}\) Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 148.

and to protect his Christian subjects living in these areas. 71

With the agreement closed, Britain had, therefore, abandoned Constantinople as the cardinal point in lifeline defense, secured a military alliance which gave easy access to the mainland of the Middle East, acquired a strategic army and naval base, and had moved one step closer to the Suez Canal and Egypt. The pressing problem of the Eastern Question was, however, still to be resolved.

As early as January 28, in the same year, Count Andrássy, the Austrian Foreign Minister, had suggested to Bismarck that a conference of the Powers be called to work out the details and set the difficulty at rest before Austria was drawn, unwillingly, into the Russo-Turkish conflict. 72 Bismarck agreed to host such a consultation at Berlin, and he invited Britain, France, Austria, Italy, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire to send representatives to begin their talks on June 13.


The British readily accepted the invitation. The French, evidently piqued by a flurry of diplomatic correspondence concerning the agenda, hesitated for days and finally agreed to attend the Congress of Berlin as mediators and disinterested parties, but the meeting began on schedule with all invited participants in attendance.  

Early in the session, all representatives were asked to pledge that they had come to Berlin unfettered by any secret agreements made by their governments concerning the Eastern Question. Both Disraeli and his British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury, cleared their government immediately, but, on July 8, Salisbury admitted to William H. Waddington, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, what the delegates from Paris were already aware of; Britain had signed the Cyprus Convention with the Sultan.  

Waddington threatened to withdraw his delegation and return to Paris, but Bismarck stepped in and smoothed the

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73 Salisbury to German Foreign Office, June 3, 1878, enclosure with Münster to Bismarck, June 2, 1878, Ibid., Vol. II, no. 426, pp. 324-325.

74 Waddington to Count Saint-Vallier, French Ambassador to Germany, June 8, 1878, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. II, no. 313, pp. 325-326.

75 Waddington to Jules Dufaure, interim French Minister of Foreign Affairs, July 8, 1878, Ibid., no. 325, pp. 352-353.
ruffled feelings of the French, bringing compromise and harmony by suggesting that France might annex Tunis as compensation for the British acquisition of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{76} In the course of the Anglo-French conversations that followed, it was agreed that the two countries would walk hand in hand on Egyptian questions; France would exercise an old claim as being the protector of Latin Christians in Syria, and France would be given a free hand in Tunis. Salisbury told Waddington that France should not leave "Carthage in the hands of the barbarians."\textsuperscript{77}

This was the signal for the partition of Africa.\textsuperscript{78} Britain would stand with France and help to hold the knife that dissected a continent, but there would be no written agreement covering the concert. It was Salisbury's opinion that time could bring changes in situations. In that case, Britain might want to push ahead, and written treaties could


\textsuperscript{77}Waddington to the Marquis d'Harcourt, French Ambassador to the Court of St. James, July 21, 1878, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. II, no. 330, pp. 361-363.

\textsuperscript{78}Blunt, Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt, p. 27.
become highly inconvenient. If documented, French and British parity in Egypt would be too "plain-spoken a claim to make the Khedive a vassal of England and France."\textsuperscript{79}

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH DRIVE TO FASHODA: PHASE TWO,

THE OCCUPATION OF EGYPT AND THE

RE-CONQUEST OF THE SUDAN

Ismail, at least three years before the verbal agreement between France and Britain at Berlin, had come to realize the full impact of Anglo-French co-operation and what it was capable of doing to Khedival authority in Egypt. Income from the sale of the canal shares was not enough money to solve his economic problems and only brought temporary relief to the precarious situation in which the harassed Khedive found himself. In spite of his difficulties, however, he was still borrowing some money, but he was having to pay thirty per cent interest and could no longer secure long-term loans.¹

Late in 1875, Ismail asked the British government to send an expert to Cairo to assist in setting his financial affairs in order. Stephen Cave, English paymaster-general, journeyed to Egypt, looked at the entire problem, and

¹Landes, Bankers and Pashas, p. 317.
submitted his report in March, 1876. Even though the Khedive had requested this service, he withheld as much information as possible from the Cave Mission. Cave, nevertheless, presented a thoroughgoing analysis of the Khedive's difficulties.

The debt, said Cave, should be unified, and the rate of interest should be lowered to a more realistic figure. The banking houses of Paris and London had discounted the loans they had handled for the Khedive, which amounted to fancy commissions for their services; to reduce the interest would be no loss to the lenders. Payments on these loans had been met by raising taxes almost fifty per cent, thereby placing a heavy burden on the Egyptian peasant who owned a few acres of land. It was clear to Cave and his staff that the situation had to change or else the entire nation of Egypt would shortly become bankrupt, in which case the bondholders stood to lose part, if not all, of their investments.

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3 Dicey, *The Story of the Khedivate*, p. 135.

On the credit side of the ledger, it was observed that not all of Ismail's borrowed money had been squandered. He had built a number of schools, irrigation canals, railroads, telegraph lines, bridges, and a new harbor facility at Alexandria. The fact that some of the European contractors on these projects had overcharged the Khedive as much as eighty per cent added greatly to his new difficulties. The Suez Canal, too, had become a liability. Built, in part, by money still owed by the Egyptian ruler, the waterway had diverted trade that had once crossed his country by land, taking away needed revenue at a critical time.

It was not difficult for the Cave Mission to determine where a great deal of Ismail's money had gone, but a full disclosure has "never yet been ascertained." The report, while somewhat optimistic, ended all credit that Ismail may have had, and, since borrowing was no longer possible, the Khedive suspended payment on his debts on April 8, 1876.

The first reaction of the French Government was to seek a way to protect the bondholders; the British bided their time and kept an eye "on the French for the sake of the

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5 Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 254.
Lord Salisbury explained the position of his government by saying:

As to our policy—the defence of it lies in a nutshell. When you have got a neighbor and faithful ally who is bent on meddling in a country in which you are deeply interested—you have three courses open to you. You may renounce—or monopolise—or share. Renouncing would have been to place the French across our road to India. Monopolising would have been very near the risk of war. So we resolved to share.

On May 2, 1876, Ismail announced his intention to form the Caisse de la Dette Publique, a debt commission comprised of invited representatives from Egypt's creditor nations, principally Britain, France, Italy, and Austria. The group was asked to function as a mediation agency and conduct the bankruptcy proceedings against Egypt. Within a week, the Khedive disclosed that the national debt of his country was 91,000,000 pounds and that the total indebtedness would be unified. Interest was fixed at six per cent, and a sinking fund of one per cent would be set aside to meet the payments.

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7 Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 287.
9 Moon, Imperialism and World Politics, p. 225.
The British Government was unwilling to officially participate in the Khedive's proposals. For one thing, the British Ministry saw no reason for "pulling private enterprises out of foreign fires." Secondly, the Khedive's plan to create a debt commission and unify his monetary obligations was initiated by French representatives in Egypt; British interests had not been consulted.

Disraeli came to see, however, that unless the British entered the Egyptian fray, the French were very likely to step in and take full control of the situation. For this reason, and not for the sake of their investors, the Disraeli ministry agreed to an arrangement whereby two Europeans, a Frenchman and an Englishman, would act as controllers-general in Egypt. The Englishman would supervise the Khedive's income; the Frenchman would audit all of the expenditures drawn from the Khedive's treasury. Ismail was required to pay sixty-six per cent of his yearly income to his creditors. The remainder, about 1,000,000 pounds, was all he had to meet a government payroll and pay an annual tribute to the Sultan.

11 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 84.

The so-called Goschen Decree, November, 1876, announced the arrangement and marked the first formal act of the Anglo-French condominium in Egypt. 13

The Khedive met these obligations for the year 1877, but a less than average flooding of the Nile, at the same time, caused low crop yields in the following year, placing both Ismail and the small farmers of Egypt in a precarious economic situation. In anticipation of this problem, the Khedive suggested that the members of the debt commission and the controllers-general sit together and plan a new system of finance. 14 By August of 1878 the first report of the joint sessions was circulated. It contained a scathing indictment of Ismail's personal rule, and it disclosed the discovery of a recent deficit in the Khedive's treasury accounts amounting to 9,000,000 pounds. 15 In order to cover the shortage, Ismail mortgaged his estates to the Rothschild banking interests. A supervisory staff took control of the Khedive's personal lands with instructions to make sure that all profit derived from the properties went to pay off the note.

13 Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 258.
14 Hallberg, The Suez Canal, p. 255.
At this point, Ismail was informed that Britain and France would be willing to suspend Dual Control in Egypt in favor of a constitutional monarchy. The Khedive would, if he chose this course, be required to form a new ministry, with the major portfolios being held by representatives from England and France; Egyptian nationals would be chosen to constitute a Chamber of Notables. This assembly and the European-dominated cabinet would then make all governmental decisions and hopefully lead Egypt out of the financial entanglements that the personal rule of the Khedive had brought about.\(^{16}\)

Ismail reluctantly agreed to this new scheme, but before it had had a chance to function there was a nationalist uprising in Egypt. The dissidents, for the most part, were civil servants and military men who had not received any pay for over eighteen months. Whether or not Ismail instigated the revolt, which was aimed directly at the European ministry, is still a matter of some conjecture, but the mounting discontent did allow the Khedive an excuse to notify his European masters, on April 8, 1879, that he was dismissing his European

\(^{16}\text{Ibid.}\)
ministers and would call Egyptian nationalists to fill all of the positions.\textsuperscript{17}

Two days later, French chargé d'affaires Montholon at Constantinople reported to Waddington that the Grand Vizier fully expected the Sultan to remove Ismail from power and concluded that France might take full advantage of the situation and secure full control of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance.\textsuperscript{18} The French Foreign Minister dismissed the idea and stated that he wanted no Turkish interference in the regulation of Egyptian financial affairs.\textsuperscript{19}

Now that the Khedive had freed himself from constitutional restraints, he announced, on April 22, 1879, a new plan that was designed to lose, once and for all, his European shackles. His intention, he said, was to return to his former position of power and meet his local obligations. This would be done by a reduction of interest rates on the combined debt, a new payment schedule, and an adequate budget for administrative expenses.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} French Consul-General Godazux, at Cairo, to Waddington, April 8, 1879, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. II, no. 405, p. 469.
\textsuperscript{18} Montholon to Waddington, April 10, 1879, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 407, pp. 473-474.
\textsuperscript{19} Waddington to Montholon, May 28, 1879, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 428, p. 507.
\textsuperscript{20} Langer, \textit{European Alliances and Alignments}, p. 260.
The first European protest, surprisingly enough, came from Prince Bismarck in Berlin. He sent a strong message to Ismail, saying:

"... the Imperial Government looks upon the decree of April 22, by which the Egyptian Government regulate at their own will the matters relating to the debt, thereby abolishing existing and recognized rights, as an open and direct violation of international engagements ... that it must declare the Decree to be devoid of any legally binding effect ... and must hold the Viceroy responsible for all the consequences of this unlawful proceeding."

Britain and France joined together in protest, followed shortly by Austria, Russia, and Italy. Lord Salisbury, himself convinced that Ismail must now abdicate, called on the French to assist in bringing pressure to bear in this direction. The Khedive was told that if he chose to abdicate and leave Egypt quietly he would be guaranteed a civil list and that his son, Tewfik Pasha, would succeed him; if, on the other hand, the Powers were forced to deal with the matter directly with the Sultan, neither of these things could be promised.

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Ismail hesitated and asked for time in which to make a decision. The united front of the Powers gave him little to hope for, but he continued to delay, in every way possible, the ultimate certainty that, in one way or another, his European masters would force him to step down from the Khedivate. The Sultan, after a consultation with his Council of Ministers, made the fateful decision for the reluctant Egyptian ruler. Abdul Hamid II, on June 26, 1879, sent a telegram to Cairo addressed to "Ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha." He told Ismail that his rule of Egypt had aggravated the present difficulties and that he had decided to name Tewfik Pasha to the Khedivate.

Tewfik assumed the Khedivate four days later under European sponsorship, and he was thought of in Egypt as a puppet in the hands of Anglo-French representatives. His new role was awkward, to say the least. He was determined to guard against a repeat performance of what had happened to his father, who had taken up residence in Italy, and he resorted to complete dependence on the advice of the French.

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24 Ibid., p. 140.
and the English, whose problem, now, was how to limit the personal authority of the Khedive without directly governing Egypt.25

The change of administration, brought about by the Anglo-French condominium, provided the opportunity to establish a joint financial arrangement whereby the Khedive was actually a ward of France and Britain.26 In September, 1879, the controllers-general came back to power, and it was provided that these officials could not be removed without the consent of the governments they represented. The Law of Liquidation, announced on July 17, 1880, arranged the national debt of Egypt into categories and reduced the interest payments. For all intents and purposes, the financial situation in Egypt had been settled by this law, which amounted to an economic charter.27

A new difficulty, however, soon presented itself. In the attempt to cut down government expenses, the Dual Control had reduced the military strength in Egypt from 45,000 to


27Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 262.
18,000 men, and this created a large body of malcontents who complained that neither European officials nor Turkish officers in the service of the Khedive had been reduced in number by the economy move. The self-appointed leader of this group was Arabi Pasha, an army officer of fellaheen origin who demanded military reforms and the recall of the dismissed soldiery. A nationalist movement, too, among the civilian populace, was gaining support at the universities and in the Egyptian press. They began to cast their lot with Arabi and the military; their combined goal was "Egypt for the Egyptians," but Dual Control and the Law of Liquidation stood in direct contradiction to such a dénouement, and a new crisis was next to inescapable.

The situation was further complicated by a change of government administration in London. The Liberal Party had come to power on April 28, 1880, and the new Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, was well-known for his view that the material greatness of Britain was to be found within

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the British Isles, not in the entanglement of empire-building. He and his party expressed their anti-imperialism in five cardinal principles: attention to empire diverted the government away from domestic issues; military needs placed above domestic needs would lead to socialism; democracy came from Christian ethics and not from Roman imperialism; imperialists did not understand democracy; and a Christian-democratic England could make herself the Athens, not the Rome, of the English-speaking world.

In line with this thinking, the first Gladstone reaction to the nationalist movement in Egypt was to suggest that the Sultan send troops to Cairo and restore order, but the French were unwilling to call in this help and set a precedent that might lead to Turkish intervention in Tunis, where a similar disturbance was threatening French authority in that area. Lord Lyons, British Ambassador at Paris, advised Gladstone to continue the Disraeli policy of close co-operation with France in the Dual Control of Egypt. His reasoning was that without this harmony, prosperity in the Khedive's realm


would be lost, and, in that event, the bondholders would become very difficult.³²

By late December, 1881, Léon Gambetta, French Prime Minister and also Minister of Foreign Affairs, called on Gladstone to join with him in making a joint declaration containing a strong warning to the Egyptian nationalists and reaffirming, at the same time, the close communion of the Powers in Egyptian affairs.³³ The result was the so-called Gambetta Note, which implied that combined Anglo-French military forces would take any necessary action to restore order in Egypt. This threat only added fuel to the fire, giving the nationalists an issue with which to build solidarity and appeal.

Gladstone was not prepared to go as far as the Gambetta Note indicated. He "regarded war as a produce of imperialism which he equated with jingoism, and he loathed all three."³⁴ As early as 1877, he had become concerned lest British


involvement in Egypt would lead to broader avenues of imperialism, and he predicted that:

... our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire, that will grow and grow until another Victoria and another Albert, titles of the Lake-sources of the White Nile, come within our borders; and till we finally join hands across the Equator with Natal and Cape Town, to say nothing of the Transvaal and the Orange River on the south, or of Abyssinia or Zanzibar to be swallowed by way of viaticum on our journey. 35

Gladstone's fears were well-founded. His imperialist opponents in Britain pinned their hopes on Cecil Rhodes, South African empire-builder, who planned to "maintain communication under the British flag across the African continent between Cape Town and Cairo." 36 It was generally known throughout the European diplomatic world that this English design was more than a passing fancy. 37

If Gladstone could prevent the Cape-to-Cairo scheme from becoming a reality, he was prepared to do so. He was in sympathy with the Egyptian nationalists and their cause,


36 Henry W. Lucy, "From Capetown to Cairo," Fortnightly Review, LXI (March 1, 1894), 410.

and he believed that difficulties in Egypt could be solved by allowing the Chamber of Notables to work out a new budget and by an Anglo-French understanding with the nationalist leader, Arabi Pasha, who had, by early 1882, forced himself into Tewfik's cabinet as minister of war.

The Gladstone ministry hoped that the Gambetta Note would amount to no more than a bluff and that it would have a sobering effect on the Egyptian nationalists, moving them to respect the authority of the Khedive. This position was explained to the new French Prime Minister, Charles de Freycinet, who had come to power on January 30, 1882, along with the statement that the British ministry did not consider the Gambetta Note as a binding agreement which held Her Majesty's Government to any definite course of action in Egypt. Bismarck, standing in the wings, found it hard to believe that Gladstone could display such a lack of forward motion and insight. Moving events in Egypt, however, called the Anglo-French bluff and forced a showdown within a short time.

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As minister of war, Arabi promoted native Egyptians above the Turkish and Circassian officers, causing a disturbance within the army itself. On May 2, 1882, forty of the dissidents were brought to trial by court martial, were found guilty of insubordination, and were sentenced to exile in the Sudan for life. Khedival approval was needed before this action could be carried out. Tewfik commuted the sentences after discussing the matter with the Sultan and with his French and British advisers, and the nationalists now demanded that he step down from the Khedivate. 40

As the crisis grew more intent, Bismarck let it be known to French Ambassador Courcel at Berlin that he was in favor of Turkish intervention in Egypt. 41 This pronouncement convinced the French leadership that the Sultan might be pushed into the fray on his own terms, and Freycinet began pressing Gladstone to join with him in sending an Anglo-French naval squadron to Alexandria, with the understanding that no troops would be put ashore. 42

42 Freycinet to French Ambassador Tissot at London, May 12, 1882, Ibid., no. 310, pp. 304-305.
ministry tentatively agreed to this arrangement, but they suggested that the step be taken if and when a sanction of all the Powers could be secured. The French, however, were adamant in their refusal, and Gladstone decided to cooperate without international approval.  

A general announcement was made, on May 15, that France and Britain were sending a joint flotilla to Alexandria to back the authority of the Khedive and bring law and order to Egypt. How this could be accomplished without landing troops was not explained, but it was clear that a show of force was expected to awe the rebel factions and prop up a weakened monarch who was dominated by the Anglo-French condominium.

The fleet arrived on May 25, and Tewfik, on the same day, was ordered by his sponsors to dismiss his nationalist cabinet, including Arabi Pasha, but within five days public demand forced the Khedive to recall the nationalist leader and place him in command of the Egyptian military. This step established Arabi in a position of virtual dictatorship, and


his first order was to begin construction of breastworks at Alexandria to defend the city from European invasion. He complained, at the same time, that he could not guarantee public safety as long as the foreign fleet remained a menace to the peace of the Egyptians. 45

Native riots ran rampant in Alexandria for two days, beginning on June 11, and some fifty Europeans lost their lives. This event lost Arabi some support in England and France from people who had, up to this moment, considered nationalism in Egypt to be a rightful reaction to European domination. In the words of Professor Moon, "nothing so stimulates imperialism as the killing of Europeans by natives." 46

The French called a conference of the Powers to meet at Constantinople on June 23 and deal with the problem, but the Sultan refused to participate, and the talks, lasting for days, amounted to nothing. Bismarck may have wrecked the conversations, for he had more influence with the Sultan than did either Gladstone or Freycinet, and he had advised the Sublime Porte not to become militarily involved in Egypt. 47


46 Moon, Imperialism and World Politics, p. 142.

Bismarck further instructed his representatives at the Constantinople Conference to block, if possible, any request from Britain and France that they be given a mandate in Egypt from the Powers. He was attempting, he said, to keep the difficulties in the Middle East from turning into a religious war between Christians and Moslems. He expected, however, to "look on quietly should the French and English locomotives happen to collide."

Lord Granville, British Foreign Minister, and Lord Hartington, Secretary for India, were the first of Gladstone's ministers to reach the conclusion that Britain must prepare to send invasion forces to Egypt, either in co-operation with the French or alone. The issue divided the cabinet, and John Bright, Secretary of the Board of Trade, and a Quaker, resigned rather than be associated with imperialistic militarism.

Granville and Hartington, nevertheless, continued to press for action. Granville feared that Turkish troops, once

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they were in Egypt, might join forces with Arabi. He
told Herbert Bismarck, son of the German Chancellor, that
the only advantage he could see in allowing Turkish troops
to put down the Egyptian rebellion was that the Concert of
Europe would not be disturbed by it.

In early July, 1882, the Arabi forces placed shore
batteries behind the breastworks at Alexandria, and, on
July 10, Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour, the British fleet-
commander, ordered the guns removed. The nationalists ignored
this demand, and, at dawn on the following morning, the
British opened a naval bombardment which lasted until late
afternoon. The city was heavily damaged by fire, and the
nationalist shore batteries were destroyed. European
nationals, those who had not left Egypt after the June riots,
began a mass exodus.

Admiral Seymour had invited the French fleet in the
harbor to assist in this engagement, but the Council of

51 Harold Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist (Boston:

52 Herbert Bismarck in London to Prince Bismarck, January 7,

53 Blunt, Secret History of the British Occupation of
Egypt, pp. 497 ff.
Ministers in Paris refused the offer and ordered their ships at Alexandria to hoist anchors and make a course for Port Said. In a speech to the French Chamber of Deputies on July 18, Léon Gambetta pleaded:

Let not France be shorn of her heritage; it is not for the sake of Egyptian nationality or the Egyptian national party that we ought to go to Egypt; it is for the sake of the French nation. What I dread more than anything is that you may hand over to England, for good and all, territories, rivers, and rights of way where your title to live and to trade is no less valid than hers.

Queen Victoria, no great admirer of Gladstone and his reluctant policies, urged him to take immediate military action against Arabi and his followers before they became more powerful. The military leaders in Britain agreed with this point of view, but Gladstone let it be known that he did not wish to "assume this authority." His critics retorted that authority had already been assumed on the day that Alexandria was shelled.

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54 Freycinet to Tissot, July 5, 1882, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. IV, no. 426, p. 400.


56 Queen Victoria to Gladstone, August 1, 1882, Philip Guedalla, editor, The Queen and Mr. Gladstone (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1932), no. 746, p. 547.


58 Ibid.
Arabi took full advantage of the European hesitancy to regroup his forces and proclaimed a holy war against the intruders. Riots, once confined to the city of Alexandria, now began to spread throughout Egypt. The nationalists publicized the fact that the Suez Canal was in danger of sabotage, and Ferdinand de Lesseps asked Freycinet to take steps to protect the waterway. The French Prime Minister was willing, he said, to send French troops to guard the canal area, but no move would be made into the interior of Egypt to police the country.

Both France and Britain notified the Constantinople Conference that they intended to protect the Suez Canal at all costs. Any other Power wishing to participate was invited to do so, and Gladstone made a special effort to interest the Italian Government in sending troops to Egypt, but the invitation was refused. Queen Victoria told Lord

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Granville that it was her hope that Italy would decide not to help; it was "better to act alone." 63

On July 24, 1882, Gladstone told the British House of Commons that it was necessary to launch a military assault against the forces of Arabi in order to protect the Suez Canal, and he asked for, and received, by a vote of 275 to 19, 2,300,000 pounds to defray the cost. Britain, he said, must substitute the rule of law for the rule of violence in Egypt; this would be done in a partnership with other Powers, if possible, but it would be done alone, if necessary. 64

The question of French participation in the projected military intervention in Egypt came before the Chamber of Deputies on July 29. 65 Freycinet asked for 9,410,000 francs, and he told the Chamber that the money would be spent in protecting a portion of the Suez Canal. The proposal was defeated by a vote of 416 to 75, and the Freycinet ministry was turned out of office. Eugène Declerc formed a new government.


Astute observers of this era have set forth some interesting reasons for this sudden turn of events. Firstly, it was known in France that the Triple Alliance had recently been concluded, and French politicians, not knowing the terms of the agreement, "were unwilling to embark on an overseas adventure."66 Secondly, in this same connection, there was fear "lest Bismarck might have a sinister motive in encouraging France to commit herself in Egypt at a time when large French forces were already committed in Tunisia and Algeria."67 Thirdly, public opinion in France has tended, generally, to favor protecting an imperial interest "so long as it involved neither expense nor the diversion of troops from Europe."68

Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador to France at the time, remarked that the French, themselves, could not give a valid explanation of the action in the Chamber of Deputies. He was inclined to think that Freycinet overestimated the total number of soldiers needed in Egypt, and this may have alarmed the membership.69


67 Magnus, Kitchener, p. 32; Morley, Gladstone, Vol. III, p. 82.


Regardless of the motives involved, the French Chamber had, in one stroke, relegated their country to the position of a mere bond-holder in Egypt. The Anglo-French condominium in Egypt was at an end and the equal "rights of France in Egypt became a memory."\textsuperscript{70}

After the French withdrawal, the British, alone, prepared to "bell the cat."\textsuperscript{71} Some twenty-five thousand British soldiers were landed at Ismailia, in the canal area, on August 21, 1882.\textsuperscript{72} They engaged and defeated the nationalists at Tel-el-Kebir on September 13, and Sir Garnet Wolseley, the British army commander, then ordered his troops to march across the desert to Cairo. "England stepped in, and with one rapid and well-delivered blow crushed the rebellion."\textsuperscript{73}

The British occupation of Egypt did not fail to accentuate the ill-feeling that already existed between France and Britain. "The French felt that they had been robbed of a sphere of influence essential to their position as a Mediterranean and


\textsuperscript{72}Churchill, \textit{The River War}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{73}Baring, \textit{Modern Egypt}, Vol. I, p. 300.
Far Eastern Power." Their vexation was not lessened when they realized that they had been placed in this position by their own timidity. What the French came to hope was that Britain would put down the disturbances and come out of Egypt. Failing this, they wanted compensation—something "to show that they had rights in Egypt and should be paid for surrendering them." 

Jules Ferry, who succeeded Duclerc as Prime Minister of France on February 21, 1883, expressed his reaction to the British take-over in Egypt, saying:

... the doctrine of effacement was consummated on the day the Chamber ... left England alone tête-à-tête with the Khedive. When the new vision of English greatness materialises, and the British flag, either as protector or conqueror, floats over the whole Nile valley from Alexandria to the Great Lakes and from the Great Lakes to the Zambezi, perhaps French levity will understand the irreparable damage that was done to our future and our race by short-sighted policy.

Ferry saw the possibility that the British Liberal Party might soon be turned out of power, and another Disraeli could advocate drawing a line of authority from Egypt to the Cape.

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of Good Hope. In that case, the French would be forced to seek some compensation to balance off the British grab for African land. At the moment, Gladstone appeared to be anxious to withdraw from Egypt, telling the Powers that the British occupation of the country was only a temporary arrangement. In this connection, it is interesting to notice that one French historian has documented sixty-six promises, made by British statesmen, between 1881 and 1922, giving assurance that they would soon evacuate Egypt and return the country to the Egyptians.\textsuperscript{77} 

The British found their position in Egypt to be a difficult one, and the fact that France constantly urged a settlement of the Egyptian Question did not make the British situation any easier. In fact, "Egypt was like a noose around the British neck, which any Great Power could tighten when it wanted to squeeze a diplomatic concession from the Mistress of the Seas."\textsuperscript{78} 

The only Power that did not press the British to come out of Egypt was Germany. Herbert Bismarck told the Gladstone ministry that "the friendship of the British Empire is much

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{77}Juliette Adam, \textit{L'Angleterre en Egypte} (Paris: Imprimerie du Centre, 1922), pp. 73-79.
\end{itemize}
more important to us than the fate of Egypt." This amity was of great significance to the British as the entente with France gradually weakened and faded away.

Since the British were in Egypt without a mandate from the Powers, it was not possible to formally annex the country, and they were obliged to set up a de facto government at Cairo. Under these circumstances, every action of the British in Egypt in the way of reform and guidance was strictly provisional. The suzerainty of the Sultan continued to be recognized, and all British orders were executed in the name of the Khedive. Evelyn Baring, as British Consul-General, became the chief administrator of his government's Egyptian policy. Sir Evelyn Wood was appointed Sirdar of the Egyptian army, and Colonel Valentine Barker commanded the Egyptian police force.

In the early months of 1883, there began a gradual withdrawal from Egypt of the British soldiers who had fought at Tel-el-Kebir and occupied the lower Valley of the Nile.

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80 Herbert Bismarck to Chancellor Bismarck, September 13, 1882, Ibid., no. 730, pp. 38-41.

British military instructors remained to train and equip the Khedive's armed forces, for a major problem in the Sudan had presented itself, and the need for troops was anticipated.

A revolt, under the cloak of religion, had started in the area south of Wadi Halfa in 1881. Mohammed Ahmed, the son of a boat-builder, quarreled with the Mudir of Fashoda over the collection of Egyptian taxes in the Sudan, and this dispute led to open defiance of the Egyptian government. In August, 1881, during the fast of Ramadan, Mohammed Ahmed proclaimed himself the Mahdi of Allah, an expected Mohammedan messiah. The tide of Mahdism began to rise swiftly in "impatient waves." Orthodox Mohammedans branded Mohammed Ahmed as a false Mahdi, but the ignorance of the Sudanese and the prevailing discontent with the Egyptian Government accounted for the large following that rallied around his leadership. There seems to be no evidence that Arabi and the Mahdi communicated with each other, but both revolts


found their opportunity "in the power-vacuum caused by the disappearance of Ismail's autocracy."^85

Between 1881 and 1883, the Mahdist forces, in numerous engagements, killed over 14,000 Egyptian soldiers in the Sudan, and the Khedive requested British assistance against the fanatic Dervish hordes, but he was told that the British Government would assume no responsibility in the Sudan.86

Tewfik, nevertheless, hired William Hicks, a retired British officer, and sent him into the Sudan at the head of 10,000 Egyptian soldiers with orders to clear the area of rebel bands. The Mahdists destroyed Hicks and his army, almost to a man, at El Obeid, on November 5, 1883.87

The Mahdi, after this massacre, was the master of the Sudan, even though several forts throughout the area were still being held by the Khedive's troops. Gladstone informed his Queen that he intended to ask for a withdrawal from all lands south of Wadi Halfa.88 Sir Evelyn Wood believed that


88Gladstone to Queen Victoria, November 22, 1883, Guedalla, editor, The Queen and Mr. Gladstone, no. 830, p. 586.
it would be more practical to abandon the Khedive's territory south of Assouan. 89

The British closed the frontier between Egypt and the Sudan in January, 1884, drawing the line at Wadi Halfa, but the official announcement of this policy was not made until May 11, 1885. Prime Minister Gladstone attempted to make it clear that, even though Khedival authority in the Sudan had ceased, the Sultan had not renounced any claims that he might have in the region. 90 At the same time, and with full knowledge that public opinion in Egypt was against abandoning the Sudan, Gladstone threatened to remove from office any Egyptian official who did not adhere to the British policy in the matter. 91

The stranded Egyptian troops garrisoned in the Sudan remained a serious problem. The British were unwilling to risk more soldiers and spend money on a major rescue operation, and the decision was made to send one man, General Charles


90Rose, The Development of the European Nations, p. 221.

George Gordon, to accomplish the difficult and hazardous task.

Gordon, by experience, was equal to the assignment. He had distinguished himself at Balaclava and in the British conflict with China in 1860. Khedive Ismail had employed Gordon in 1877 to put down the slave traffic in the Sudan and explore the upper reaches of the White Nile. As Governor-General of the Sudan until 1879, the former British officer had gained the respect of tribal leaders as far south as Lake Albert.

The Gladstone ministry located General Gordon in Brussels where he was in conference with King Leopold of Belgium, and they invited him to return to the Sudan under British sponsorship. He accepted the assignment and reached Cairo on January 24, 1884. From there, he journeyed by boat and camel to Khartoum, arriving in that city on February 22. He announced that he had a firman from the Khedive directing him to turn the Sudan over to the tribal chiefs, and within a matter of a few days he reached an agreement with the

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93 Crabitées, Gordon, the Sudan and Slavery, p. 62.
Ababdeh Arabs to escort Egyptian soldiers and refugees out of the central Sudan to safety.\(^{94}\)

Gordon informed his superiors that he planned to go south and personally lead the Khedive's men stationed in the Bahr-el-Ghazal to the safety of the Belgian Congo. This aroused the suspicion that Gordon intended to deliver the Bahr-el-Ghazal to the King of the Belgians and rule the area with the aid of Egyptian troops. Gladstone ordered Gordon to withdraw from the Sudan by way of Egypt, leaving the Sudanese people "struggling to be free, and rightly struggling to be free."\(^{95}\)

Gordon was well-aware of past mistakes and Egyptian misrule in the Sudan, and he thought that the territory was "a wretched country and not worth keeping."\(^{96}\) He was, however, unable to follow Gladstone's directive, for the Mahdists had surrounded Khartoum, and the telegraph lines to Cairo were cut before Gordon could explain the situation he was in.

Growing sentiment in both London and Cairo favored a relief expedition to Khartoum, and, on August 22, 1884, Gladstone,

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\(^{94}\)Butler, Charles George Gordon, pp. 203-204.


after delaying the decision in every way possible, selected Sir Garnet Wolseley to command an expeditionary force to effect a rescue.\(^{97}\) Despite great difficulties in transporting men and supplies up the Nile and in defending themselves from Mahdist attackers, the army of 10,000 men reached Khartoum on January 28, 1885, too late to save General Gordon. Two days earlier, the Mahdists had entered the city, murdered Gordon, and severed his head from his body.\(^{98}\) The relief expedition retreated into Egypt as rapidly as possible; the Sudan was ablaze; and the fire was spreading in the direction of the lower Nile.

The Mahdi, growing more secure, began to build a new capital city, Omdurman, across the White Nile from Khartoum. He did not live to see the completion of the project, for he fell victim to smallpox and died in June, 1885, after having appointed Khalifa Abdullah to carry on the crusade.

For eleven years there was sporadic fighting between the Khedival troops and the Mahdists along the Wadi Halfa frontier. Gladstone, in office until June 9, 1885, attempted to persuade the British people that Khartoum had fallen because of

\(^{97}\) Symons, England's Pride, p. 92.

treachery, but he continued to be denounced as the murderer of Gordon. The people in Britain and in Egypt instigated a recovery of the Sudan as soon as the proper moment presented itself.

In 1895, Lord Salisbury, after an election in which a coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists turned the Liberal Party out of power, became Prime Minister of Britain on June 25 of that year. He informed the French Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Baron de Courcel, that he would seek the proper instant to deliver a death blow to Mahdism, recovering what Gladstone had abandoned in the process. The initial thrust would be to Dongola, and Egyptian money and troops would accomplish the task that lay ahead.100

The renewed interest in the Sudan was caused by vague rumors that the French were advancing toward the Upper Nile from the west; King Leopold of the Belgians was thought to be moving an expedition in the same direction; and Italy, in control of Massowah since 1885, was making an attempt to take


Abyssinia. The defeat of the Italians at Adowa, on March 1, 1896, probably caused the Salisbury ministry to order a re-conquest of the Sudan sixteen days later. British diplomats said that a forward thrust toward Khartoum was to forestall the French, but the British public was convinced that it was to avenge General Gordon. The immediate reason was that the Mahdists had surrounded the Italians at Kassala, and it was rumored that a large body of Dervishes were on the way to Murat Wells, near Wadi Halfa, and to Kokreb, between Berber and Suakin. If true, this movement of fighting forces posed a direct threat to Egypt, itself.

In order to meet the challenge, the Egyptian Government asked the Caisse de la Dette for 500,000 pounds with which to finance a military operation in the Sudan, and the request was granted. Both France and Russia raised strong objections to the expenditure from Debt Commission funds, but Britain made


102 Alford and Sword, *The Sudan*, pp. 40-42.

the money available to the Khedive, and preparations went forward. 104

General Sir Herbert Kitchener, Sirdar of the Egyptian Army since 1892, was given command of the expedition. His plan was to build a railroad southward out of Egypt as his army moved toward Khartoum. It was to be the first section of a track that would eventually link Cairo with Capetown, and it would eliminate the problem of portage around the cataracts, one difficulty that had slowed the Gordon Relief Expedition. 105

By June, 1896, reclaiming the Sudan had become a fixed policy of the Salisbury program. 106 He told the House of Lords that

We shall not have restored Egypt to the position in which we received her, and we shall not have placed Egypt in that position of safety which she deserves to stand, until the Egyptian flag floats over Khartoum. 107

Fighting cholera and the Dervish, Kitchener supervised the building of the railroad and moved his men in the direction

104 Alford and Sword, The Egyptian Sudan, p. 43.
107 Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 537.
of Khartoum as rapidly as rails could be put down. Fifteen steam engines were sent from England, along with trained railroad crews. The pick of the Queen's officers became a part of Kitchener's staff. 108 Under his command, the Sirdar had 8,000 British infantry; 15,000 Egyptian infantry; two and a half batteries of artillery, including five-inch howitzers, forty-pounder Armstrongs, fifteen-pounders, and Maxim guns; the 21st Lancers, a British cavalry regiment; 1,000 Egyptian cavalry; 1,000 Egyptian camel corps; and ten gun boats. 109

Nearly all of the European Powers sent representatives to observe the fighting. On June 7, 1896, the Battle of Firket gave an initial victory to the Anglo-Egyptian forces. The Mahdist army fled southward before the steady advance of Kitchener's might. The entire Darfur province fell to Anglo-Egyptian control twelve days later, and, when this news reached the capital city of Omdurman, there was widespread panic among the populace. The advance continued. Another victory at Abu Hamed allowed the forces of Kitchener to move on to the city of Berber without resistance, and it was here


109 Ibid.
that the victors paused until July 3 while awaiting the arrival of railroad facilities. 110

Berber became a staging area from which to make a final thrust against the Mahdist troops concentrated at Omdurman and Khartoum. Kitchener attacked Omdurman first, and Khalifa Abdullah, the Mahdist leader, was killed in the encounter. The disorganized Dervish troops capitulated on September 2, 1898, and the way was open to Khartoum, which fell the same day.

As early as August 2, 1898, Lord Salisbury made the British representatives in Cairo aware that Kitchener was likely to encounter French military forces in the Sudan, probably south of Khartoum. The Sirdar was, therefore, ordered to launch flotillas on both the White and Blue Niles and seek out the French intruders as soon as Khartoum was taken. Kitchener, himself, was to lead the forces on the White Nile. 111

Five days after the fall of Omdurman and Khartoum, Anglo-Egyptian gunboats encountered and captured, on

110 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 358; Alford and Sword, The Egyptian Sudan, pp. 157-191.

September 7, 1898, the Mahdist freighter Tewfikieh and its crew. The captives told the British that they had just returned from the upper reaches of the White Nile, where they had been sent for a cargo of grain, and that as they passed Fashoda they had been fired upon by native troops commanded by Europeans, whom they could not identify.  

General Kitchner departed the next day for the Bahr-el-Ghazal with a flotilla of five steamers pulling barges and carrying a force of about 2,000 officers and men. When Emperor Wilhelm of Germany learned that the British had advanced south of Khartoum to investigate reports of European soldiers at Fashoda, he wrote in the margin of the incoming telegram, "Now comes the interesting incident!"  

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113 German Consul-General Oberndorff at Cairo to Foreign Office, September 10, 1898, Die Grosse Politik, Vol. XIV, part 2, no. 3884, p. 371; "Nun wird die lage interessant werden!," marginal.
CHAPTER IV

FRANCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UPPER NILE,

1882-1896

French colonial enterprises on the Dark Continent began as early as 1637, the year that Claude de Rochefort and his men erected Fort Saint Louis at the mouth of the Senegal River on the west coast.1 After this foothold was secured, French trading posts were established between the Gambia and Gaboon Rivers, but, like the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English, all of whom had enclaves in the area, the French made no effort to push inland and stake out land claims until the closing years of the Franco-Prussian War.

High falls and rapids, usually found near the mouths of the great African rivers, discouraged the use of these streams as highways to the interior, and, in order to reach the central African plateau on foot, it was necessary to traverse either malarious swamps or belts of desert, depending upon the choice of approach routes. The European trader was, therefore, long content to remain on the outer edges of the Dark

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1Harris, Europe and Africa, p. 125; Priestley, France Overseas Through the Old Regime, pp. 158-159.
Continent and bargain for goods delivered to the coasts by native porters. These conditions explain, to a degree, why Africa, the first continent outside of Europe itself to be outline-mapped, was the last of the world's great land masses to be penetrated and explored by Europeans.\(^2\)

By 1875, less than one tenth of Africa had been claimed by European nations.\(^3\) France had continued to confine her African interests to the outer rims of the continent and had, by this time, acquired Algeria, on the Mediterranean, and French Somaliland, on the Gulf of Aden, directly across Africa from her enclaves on the west coast. There was faint hope among the French imperialists that these holdings could somehow be linked with their possessions on the Atlantic coast, thereby constructing the framework of a new French empire that would eventually dominate all of Africa north of the Equator.

This scheme was greatly tempered, however, by the position in which France found herself at the close of the Franco-Prussian War. The conflict had cost France at least 150,000 men, an indemnity of 5,000,000,000 francs, the


\(^3\)Moon, *Imperialism and World Politics*, p. 76.
industries of Alsace, and the iron deposits of Lorraine. To make matters worse, the new Third Republic was unstable, and France was diplomatically isolated. In the aftermath of defeat, colonial expenditure was greatly curtailed in favor of internal revivification.\(^4\)

Furthermore, while France had a long and glorious tradition as a colonial Power, it was also true that the fortunes of France had always been determined on European, and not colonial, fields of battle. The Old Regime had recovered, to some extent, from losses sustained in Canada and India, but the First Empire did not survive Moscow and Waterloo, and the Second Empire did not last beyond Sedan. In fact, the ventures of Napoleon III had "left Frenchmen profoundly suspicious of overseas commitments."\(^5\)

The one possible exception was the Suez Canal project, a lasting monument to Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire. It was on the straits of Suez that French enterprise and technology combined to demonstrate French abilities to the world, and in accomplishing this feat, "the geography of world-power was revolutionized."\(^6\)


\(^5\)Ibid., p. 4.

\(^6\)Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 287.
The canal, which was opened to traffic in 1869, shortened the sailing distance between Europe and India by some 5,000 miles.\(^7\) This fact alone was significant enough to cause a reordering of Anglo-French relations in Egypt and the Middle East after Disraeli purchased the Khedive's canal shares in 1875.

France had created the Egyptian Question when Napoleon Bonaparte was sent, in 1798, to the Delta of the Nile as the commander of a French invasion force.\(^8\) Britain thwarted this French attempt to stand astride the Mediterranean line of communication between Europe and the East, but the British did not remain there to rule the country themselves. Again, in 1840, the British navy was sent to Egypt to aid the Sultan of Turkey in containing Mohammed Ali and his French allies. Once again, the British turned aside from an opportunity to rule in Egypt.\(^9\)

After this episode of gunboat diplomacy, the people of Egypt moved slowly toward modernization and began to draw very heavily upon French thought and French institutions in

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\(^7\) Hallberg, *The Suez Canal*, pp. 377 ff.

\(^8\) Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, p. 286.

\(^9\) Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 76.
the process. This was reflected in the country's legal and educational systems and in the social life of the Egyptian aristocracy, who usually preferred French fashions and French demeanor over all others. French became the official language of the Cairo court; street signs, and even postage stamps, were printed in both Arabic and French. In France, Egypt came to be looked upon as a protégé, a country open to French financial penetration, and something of a "cultural colony" in which the French mission civilisatrice was to be attained.

These French objectives were abruptly restrained in 1882 when the British occupied the country alone after France had refused to participate. To the French, "it was utterly inadmissible that France, the true center of Western culture . . . should permit her mission to be frustrated, and herself to be supplanted, by a rival whose culture was at best provincial compared with her own."12


Then, too, "the eclipse of France as a major political influence in Egypt was no ordinary political setback."\(^{13}\) It ranked, in France, just short of the loss of Alsace and Lorraine as a national humiliation, and, indeed, as hopes grew dim for an early recovery of these provinces, French chauvinists tempered their wrath that was directed against Germany and began to experience a new bitterness toward the British over the invasion of Egypt.\(^{14}\)

After nearly three months of attempting to soothe French feelings over this single-handed occupation of Egypt, British Prime Minister Gladstone decided that it was next to impossible to save the entente with France, which had worked so well up to this point. On December 4, 1882, he informed Queen Victoria that he expected to arrange matters in Egypt without inviting the opinions of France or any other Power.\(^{15}\) The French were instructed to consider the Dual Control in Egypt.

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\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 114.  
as a closed issue.\textsuperscript{16} This was followed by an announcement to the Powers that Egypt was under the complete control of the London government.\textsuperscript{17}

The Gladstone ministry, in this abrupt fashion, removed the French from the Egyptian scene, but, in doing this, they altered the balance of power in Europe, moved a step away from "splendid isolation," and increased the importance of Germany's pivot role in continental affairs. "Britain in Egypt became highly vulnerable to pressure from the Powers, since she could not set Egypt's finances in order without their consent."\textsuperscript{18} France took advantage of this situation to obstruct British plans in Egypt at every turn, and Bismarck's goodwill in these matters soon became a \textit{sine qua non} in British diplomacy.

Tension over the single-handed occupation of Egypt increased the importance of all international disputes, for Britain, "in stumbling into Egypt,"\textsuperscript{19} set off what amounted


\textsuperscript{17}Lord Granville, British Foreign Secretary, to British Ambassadors in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and St. Petersburg, January 3, 1883, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 592, pp. 571-575.

\textsuperscript{18}Robinson and Gallagher, \textit{Africa and the Victorians}, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}
to a chain reaction of land-grabbing in Africa and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{20} As long as Britain was busily engaged in Egypt, the Powers of Europe had the will and the opportunity to challenge what Bismarck chose to call the "British Monroe Doctrine."\textsuperscript{21}

The British had, since 1845, maintained, and validated with their strength on the seas, the right to set out spheres of influence and protect these areas from the encroachment of other Powers without drawing out specific boundary lines and without the expense of direct colonial rule of the territories involved.\textsuperscript{22} In 1884, two years after the British occupation of Egypt, Bismarck came to the conclusion that Germany and France, by working together, could equalize British sea power and break down the "unofficial" British Empire, particularly where Africa was concerned.\textsuperscript{23} He had


\textsuperscript{21}German Secretary of State Hatzfeldt to Bismarck, marginal comment by Bismarck, May 24, 1884, \textit{Die Grosse Politik}, Vol. IV, no. 742, p. 58; Bismarck to German Ambassador Münster in London, June 1, 1884, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 743, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{22}Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," 3-4.

already suggested that Germany and France form a League of Neutrals directed at Britain. 24 While no official agreement came out of these proposals, French feelings over Egypt had, by this time, hardened enough to drive them in Bismarck's direction.

Early in May, 1884, the German chancellor, wishing to show his new friendship for France, called a meeting of the Powers at Berlin to settle a dispute involving Britain, Portugal, and France over the right to control the mouth of the Congo River and the Congo basin. 25 The French explorer, Savorgnan de Brazza, had, between 1874 and 1884, mapped and claimed for his country an elongated strip of territory between the Gaboon and Congo Rivers, and it was through this corridor, with a doorway at the Congo estuary, that French men and supplies reached the eastern frontier of the French Congo, where France was attempting to extend an arm of authority through central Africa to the Red Sea. In order to protect this passageway, France was objecting to an Anglo-Portuguese

24 Courcel to Ferry, April 24, 1884, Ibid., no. 246, pp. 264-265.

treaty, signed February 26, 1884, in which the British had agreed to support an old Portuguese claim to the mouth of the Congo and an undetermined amount of hinter-land in the Congo basin.\textsuperscript{26}

The Powers responded to Bismarck's invitation, resulting in the Berlin West Africa Conference, which lasted from November 15, 1884 until February 25, 1885. The dispute that had brought the meeting about was not dealt with until the closing days of the session. Most of the time was spent in making far-reaching rules and regulations concerning the further dissection of the continent of Africa.\textsuperscript{27} It was agreed that no nation would declare territorial protectorates in the future without giving advance notice to the Powers. No nation was to secure a valid claim to any region until an effective occupation of the area was an established fact.

In the closing sessions of the Berlin meeting, the Powers, with fourteen nations represented, gave individual recognition to \textit{L'Association Internationale pour l'Exploration et la Civilisation de l'Afrique Centrale}, which had been


\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, Vol. II, no. 128, pp. 466-468.
organized in 1876 by King Leopold II of Belgium. Leopold was given verbal permission to declare the formation of a new nation, the Congo Free State, to be confined within the boundaries of the Congo basin as described in Article I of the Berlin Act. This new state was to control the Congo estuary on the north bank and was to allow free trade in the Congo basin, open to all nations. Portugal secured the right to control the south bank of the Congo as far inland as Noki. "It was Leopold's year for a miracle. The lions agreed to toss him the lion's share of the Congo basin, while contenting themselves with the scraps."\(^\text{28}\)

Leopold formally agreed to the General Act of the Berlin Conference on February 15, 1885.\(^\text{29}\) On August 1 of the same year he announced the organization of the Congo Free State with himself at the head of the government, but totally separated from the authority of the Belgian nation.\(^\text{30}\)

The arrangements at Berlin placed the Congo Free State and the French Congo side by side in central Africa with no


\(^{30}\)Ibid., no. 144, p. 551.
definite boundaries between the two. Both governments had claims to land which joined the Bahr-el-Ghazal district of the Egyptian Sudan, and both were taking advantage of the fact that Britain had abandoned the Khedive's holdings south of Wadi Halfa and were contending with each other as they pressed eastward. In what amounted to no more than a stand-off, France was able, in 1887, to secure an agreement with Leopold setting the south line of the French Congo as far east as the fourth parallel of north latitude. 31 "The whole region lying north of this line was regarded as being open to French enterprise and great efforts were being made to consolidate the French position about Lake Chad as well as further to the eastward." 32

By 1887, then, France had been able to obtain and hold an access route to central Africa from the Atlantic Ocean as far inland as the Bahr-el-Ghazal, even though the exact field notes of a delimitation with the Congo Free State were yet to be had. French forts were built north of the Congo and Ubangi Rivers, and established supply lines were maintained eastward from Loango, on the Atlantic Ocean.

31 Ibid., no. 156, pp. 568-569.
On the other side of Africa, both Germany and Italy were sponsoring missions directed at the Upper Nile region. The Italians were moving toward the Blue Nile from Somaliland, and Carl Peters, the German explorer, was reaching out toward Victoria Nyanza from the Zanzibar coast.

When Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury, became Prime Minister of Great Britain for a second time on July 26, 1886, he soon discovered that France, the Congo Free State, Germany, and Italy were all threatening to enter the Bahr-el-Ghazal and stake claims. France was still pressing the British for an early withdrawal from Egypt, but Salisbury made it clear that such a prospect was nowhere near and that the matter was not open to diplomatic discussion. Britain, he said, would remain in Egypt and complete the task which had been undertaken.

To follow this course, besides giving the French new determination to wreck his intentions, meant that Salisbury was forced to give new thought to a recovery of the Egyptian Sudan which had been left derelict in January, 1884. As

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long as the Mahdists were in firm control of the region, Salisbury had time to prepare for an invasion of the abandoned territory, for it was unlikely that they would tamper with the Nile waters, and they could hold out European exploration parties. If, on the other hand, the Mahdist regime became weak, allowing a hostile European Power to gain control, the construction of dams and barrages in the proper locations could deprive Egypt of Nile overflow and top soil from central Africa, so necessary to the well-being of the Egyptians. 35

Salisbury would have liked a quick military victory over the Mahdists to solve this problem, but the Cairo government did not have the necessary funds to pay for such an undertaking, and, even if the money were available, the Powers who dictated the retirement of the national debt of Egypt would need to be consulted. This included France, who was sure to use this request as an opening wedge to bring the Egyptian Question before a conference of the Powers. Salisbury was also reluctant to ask the British Parliament for funds and troops.

He decided, therefore, to protect the Egyptian Sudan as best he could by international diplomacy, drawing out

spheres of influence designed to seal off the entire Upper Nile region from would-be interlopers. He hoped, too, that as time passed, the Egyptian treasury would build a surplus that could pay for fielding an army against the Mahdist regime. In that case, he could resort to diplomacy in presenting Egypt’s case to the Powers.

The first calculated move in Salisbury’s plan was to seek a delimitation settlement with Germany, and, on December 22, 1889, he sent word to Bismarck that he wished to discuss African territorial differences with the German chancellor. No talks were forthcoming; the Kaiser removed Bismarck from office on March 20, 1890, and replaced him with General Georg Caprivi.

On April 29, Salisbury served notice on both France and Germany that Britain intended to protect Egypt’s claims on the Upper Nile. On May 13, he proposed a delimitation treaty with Germany in which he offered to cede the island of

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Heligoland in return for two concessions in Africa. Germany was to withdraw all claims to the island of Zanzibar and the hinterland behind the coast of East Africa from Witu to Kismayu, thereby affording Britain an access route to the Upper Nile by way of Mombassa. Next, Germany was to allow the British to mark off a narrow corridor between German East Africa and the Congo Free State, which Salisbury planned to use as a passageway through central Africa for the proposed Cape-to-Cairo railway. The first concession was easily agreed upon, but the idea of a corridor easement was firmly rejected in Berlin, where it was felt that the island of Heligoland, even though it meant a great deal to German naval strategy in the North Sea, was little enough to receive for one major concession.

Salisbury sacrificed the Cape-to-Cairo scheme for the more important security of the Egyptian Sudan, and the final draft of the treaty was signed on July 1, 1890. The fact that Germany agreed to place the Egyptian Sudan well within the British sphere of influence, and the reality that Germany was sealed away from the waters of the Upper Nile, gave added importance to the treaty in Britain.

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Then, too, French Foreign Minister Ribot registered an immediate protest to the Anglo-German accord, and this gave the Salisbury ministry an opportunity to open talks with the French and seek a delimitation of their sphere somewhere west of the Egyptian Sudan. Ribot was interested in such an agreement, but he wanted Salisbury to recognize French rights in Madagascar and Tunisia. Salisbury was willing to allow France this concession in return for the same rights for Britain in Egypt, but this was too high a price for Ribot to pay. He did agree, however, to recognize British protectorates over Zanzibar and Pemba in return for a free hand in Madagascar and the hinterland below Algeria as far south as an east-west line from Saye, on the Niger River, to Barruwa, on the western shores of Lake Chad.

No mention was made of a line of demarcation between the French Congo and the Bahr-el-Ghazal, for France had refused to discuss any phase of the Egyptian Question on Salisbury's stiff terms, but the British ministry met Ribot's counter offer. It appeared to them as if such an agreement would

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create something of an Anglo-French balance of power in North Africa.

The protocol, which was signed on August 5, 1890, gave Salisbury some hope that he had "set the seal on the strategy of buying off French threats to Egypt." He considered France, by 1890, to be partially contained in West Africa, and he told the British House of Lords that France was now in possession of a large expanse of very light soil—the Sahara Desert.

The next step for the Salisbury ministry was to seek out an agreement with Italy which would limit Italian expansion in the area of the Red Sea and along the upper reaches of the Blue Nile. Anglo-Italian discussions on these matters began at Naples on September 24, 1890.

Francesco Crispi, Prime Minister of Italy, doomed the talks to failure by insisting that all Anglo-Egyptian rights in the basin of the Upper Nile had lapsed with the closing


41 Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 304.

of the frontier at Wadi Halfa in January, 1884. By 1890, Crispi asserted, Egypt and Britain had nothing more than a mere claim to the territory in question, and he was unwilling to discuss the matter with any Power which did not have firm control over the region. The Salisbury ministry, to be sure, rejected this point of view and refused to debate the issue. The conference ended on October 10, and Salisbury told German Ambassador Hatzfeldt in London that he would not initiate further conversations with Italy on African questions until Crispi was out of office. 43

He did not have long to wait. Crispi fell from power on January 31, 1891, and was replaced in office by the Marquis de Rudini, who announced a policy of retrenchment in Africa almost immediately. New Anglo-Italian talks began on February 20, and on April 15 a delimitation agreement was concluded. 44 The Italian sphere of influence was defined as reaching from Ras Kasar, on the Red Sea, as far west as thirty-five degrees east longitude, thence south along this line. Abyssinia was well within this sphere, and so were


the headwaters of the Atbara and the Blue Nile, but the treaty prohibited the Italians from obstructing the normal flow of irrigation waters moving toward Egypt.

Once the Italian menace in the Upper Nile basin appeared to be contained, a new threat, this time from the Congo Free State, came to the attention of the British ministry. King Leopold II had, in 1890, secured an agreement with Sir William MacKinnon, chairman of the British East Africa Company, which permitted the Congolese to enter the Upper Nile valley. In September of the same year, Leopold launched an expedition, under the leadership of Colonel Van Kerckhoven, from the Congo Free State to Wadelai.

The British filed an immediate protest at Brussels, pointing out to the King of the Belgians that the so-called MacKinnon Treaty was not valid, for it had never been ratified in London. He was also told that recent treaties with Germany and Italy had placed the Upper Nile region well within the British sphere of influence. Leopold defended his actions by taking the position of an innocent bystander who had not been informed of these transactions.46


The French were alarmed at Leopold's thrust to Wadelai, for they saw in it an attempt to close the door on their eastward expansion. To make matters worse, the authorities in Paris did nothing to equip their troops on the Ubanghi frontier to meet Leopold's challenge. Leopold did not relish the idea of a quarrel with the British and the French at the same time, and he evidently expected, by co-operation, to draw closer to the British, for he constantly informed the London government of French plans and activities which were directed toward an early occupation of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, making the "British flesh creep with stories of French preparations."  

Moreover, these reports were not without validity. As early as May 3, 1893, Sadi Carnot, President of France, advocated an occupation of Fashoda by the French. His decision, no doubt, came as the result of a speech, delivered at the Egyptian Institute in Paris on January 20, 1893, by


48 Taylor, "Prelude to Fashoda," 54.

Victor Prompt, a French engineer who had seen service in Egypt. Prompt told his audience that, in his opinion, at least fifty per cent of the normal flow of Nile water could be withheld from Egypt by building inexpensive dams in the Egyptian Sudan.50

Carnot obtained a copy of the Prompt address and showed it to Major P. L. Montiel, commandant of French forces on the Upper Ubanghi frontier, and Théophile Delcassé, Under-secretary of State for Colonies, in his office on May 5, 1893. The time had come, Carnot told them, for France to force Britain to terms on the Egyptian Question. This could be done, he said, by sending a mission through the French Congo to Fashoda, the hydrological key to the control of Nile waters. France, Carnot maintained, had as much right to be there as did any other Power, for the Khedive had officially abandoned the entire Egyptian Sudan, and it was, therefore, res nullius.51 Delcassé was assigned the task of planning the expedition, and Montiel was designated as the leader of the group.

Delcassé recognized the importance of supporting the Montiel Mission with another expedition destined for Fashoda,

and he suggested that the second group enter Africa at Djibouti and go to the Upper Nile by way of Abyssinia and the Sobat River. It was an opportune moment to seek the aid of Menelik, Emperor of Abyssinia, for he was at odds with Italy over the translation of an Amharic version of the Treaty of Uccialli, dated May 2, 1889.\textsuperscript{52}

Oddly enough, the only valid copy of this agreement between Menelik and the Italians was written in Amharic, for it was the only document of the protocol ever to be signed. The Italian translation of Article XVII of the treaty called for Menelik to "avail himself of the Italian Government for any negotiations which he may enter into with the other Powers or Governments."\textsuperscript{53} The Italians took this to mean that Menelik had accepted their domination over Abyssinia, and, in fact, Britain had recognized such an arrangement, much to Menelik's displeasure, in the Anglo-Italian Treaty of April 15, 1891.\textsuperscript{54} Menelik would not, in any case, relinquish his sovereign rights, and he "made it

\textsuperscript{52} Hertslet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, Vol. II, no. 120, pp. 454-455.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., Vol. II, no. 120, p. 455.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., Vol. III, no. 289, pp. 949-950.
clear that Italy would never win an empire by mistranslating Amharic.  

Delcassé readily understood what this quarrel could mean to France, and he took immediate steps to draw the French Government closer to the throne of the King of Kings, now that both the Italians and the British had lost favor in Addis Ababa. The French, with Menelik's co-operation, would have no trouble in supporting the Montiel Mission from the eastern shores of Africa.

The Montiel Mission was, unfortunately, delayed in France pending the outcome of negotiations with Leopold II concerning disputed territory on the Upper Ubanghi frontier of the French Congo, lands through which the expedition would have to pass in order to reach the Nile from the west. At the same time, the Governor of the French Congo, Savorgnan de Brazza, advised the French Government to postpone the Fashoda project and called attention to the heavy concentration of Congolese troops on the Ubanghi frontier, evidently to prevent the French from entering the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

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Jules Develle, French Foreign Minister, attempted to reach an understanding with Leopold, initiating talks at Brussels in July, 1893, but by October they were hopelessly deadlocked. Discussions were resumed in January, 1894, and, in the following April, while pretending to work out a peaceful arrangement with France, Leopold leased the Bahr-el-Ghazal from Britain, a move designed to bar the French from the Upper Nile.

The final draft of the treaty was signed at Brussels on May 12, 1894. In return for Leopold's recognition of the British sphere of influence in the Nile Valley, as defined in the Anglo-German agreement of July 1, 1890, the Congo Free State received a "rectification" of frontier toward, but not actually reaching, the Nile and a two-part lease of the sphere of influence which had been recognized.

The first grant, made to Leopold and his successors, was the Bahr-el-Ghazal and a corridor, twenty-five kilometers wide, from the "watershed between the Nile and the Congo up to the western shore of Lake Albert." The second grant

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60 Ibid., Vol. II, no. 163, p. 579.
was the territory on the left bank of the Nile, south of ten degrees north latitude, as far west as thirty degrees east longitude, to be held by Leopold until his death, at which time it would revert to Britain. Fashoda was located immediately below the northern limits of the second lease, placing it well within Leopold's control.

Article III of the agreement gave Britain a north-south corridor through the Congo Free State to be used as a passageway for the projected Cape-to-Cairo railroad. Article IV denied Leopold the right to acquire sovereignty over the territories he had leased. In an exchange of letters, Leopold II and the British Government declared that they did not ignore the claims of Turkey and Egypt in the leased areas.

When the news of this unique understanding reached Paris, the French Government was suffering from one of its chronic ministerial crises. The fall of the Casimir-Périer ministry came on May 24, and there was a six-day lull in decision-making while the Dupuy cabinet was being formed, but this did not prevent the outgoing ministry from sending a stinging protest to Leopold II.61

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Gabriel Hanotaux, the incoming Minister of Foreign Affairs, made known his views on the treaty when he spoke in the French Chamber of Deputies on June 7. France, said Hanotaux, regarded the lease arrangement in Africa as a clear violation of the Berlin West Africa Convention of 1885, and it was, therefore, null and void. Steps had been taken, he continued, to increase French military strength on the Upper Ubanghi to prevent Leopold from occupying the lands that Britain had leased to him. 62

The reaction in Berlin was equally disturbing. The German Secretary of State, Baron von Marschall, charged the Congo Free State with having altered the status quo without consulting Germany, a signatory Power which had helped to create Leopold's empire in central Africa. If the Congo Free State continued to promote the aggressive designs of the British in Africa, then Germany would lose all interest in its existence, giving preference to France as a neighbor. 63


To the British, the Germans complained that the corridor, which ran parallel with and adjoining the Congo Free State border with German East Africa, would cut off their trade in the Congo basin. If this provision of the treaty was allowed to stand, they said, Germany would retaliate against the British on the Egyptian Question. 64

Leopold, who was evidently shaken by the combined threats of Germany and France, asked the British if he could count on their support in case his dispute with France turned to war, and the reply was negative. 65 He then requested that Britain return the corridor to the Congo Free State, and this was agreed to on June 22, 1894. 66

On July 16, Major Montiel left Marseilles for the French Congo with orders to drive the Belgians out of the territory north of the fourth parallel of latitude on the Upper Ubanghi frontier, and, when this task was finished, he was to lead an expedition to Fashoda. 67 By the time he reached the coast

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67 Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 139.
of West Africa, he was ordered to report to a French station on the Ivory Coast; French negotiations with Leopold II had made his instructions obsolete.  

The King of the Belgians, after calming troubled waters in Berlin by retrieving the Cape-to-Cairo passageway from the British, had turned toward Paris seeking a solution to differences, and a convention was concluded on August 14, 1894. After that date, the thalwegs of the Congo, Ubanghi, and Mbomu Rivers and a line from the headwaters of the Mbomu to thirty degrees east longitude separated the French Congo from the Congo Free State. In the same treaty, Leopold agreed not to accept the lease arrangement he had made with Britain, with the exception of the Lado enclave, situated south of the Bahr-el-Ghazal.  "The agreement of 12 May was now torn in a thousand shreds, and France triumphant held the field." 

The way to Fashoda was now open for the French by way of the Upper Ubanghi frontier, but Hanotaux moved in this

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direction with extreme caution. He had been willing to threaten the use of the Montiel Mission, but this outburst in the French Chamber of Deputies had brought forth a stern warning from London that a French advance to the Upper Nile could provoke a serious conflict between the rival nations. Hanotaux's reluctance to chance this possibility was a major weakness in the French posture.

Lord Dufferin, the British Ambassador in Paris, was not aware of Hanotaux's lack of courage when he initiated talks with him a few days after Leopold's capitulation. The British were not sure but that a French expedition had already entered the Bahr-el-Ghazal. They wanted assurances that France would recognize the British sphere of influence in Africa; in return for this concession, they would discuss all African questions with the French in a spirit of conciliation. Hanotaux viewed this offer as a one-sided proposal, but he agreed to present it to the French Council.

71 Keith Eubank, "The Fashoda Crisis Re-examined," The Historian, XXII (February, 1960), 146.
72 Taylor, "Prelude to Fashoda," 69.
73 Ibid.
of Ministers at the next meeting on August 30. In the interim, Lord Dufferin left Paris on holiday and placed Sir Constantine Phipps, British chargé d'affaires, in the difficult position of having to substitute for the Ambassador without having any authority to make decisions.

The French Council of Ministers evidently authorized Hanotaux to explore the possibilities of an entente with the British, for he and Phipps began talks in late August, 1894, covering a wide range of African questions. Phipps told the French minister that all difficulties, in his opinion, could be worked out as soon as France recognized the British sphere of influence as defined in the Anglo-German Convention of 1890. Hanotaux rejected this out of hand. He pointed out that the Germans had agreed to a set of field notes which described the British sphere as extending as far north "as the confines of Egypt."

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75 Memo by Hanotaux, September 5, 1894, Ibid., no. 234, pp. 348-350.


77 Ibid., p. 901.
Hanotaux, did the British consider this vague line to be? Phipps was unable to supply the answer, and a deadlock was reached on October 12.

Lord Dufferin returned to Paris at the end of October and re-opened negotiations. Hanotaux suggested a self-denying ordinance by which both countries would agree not to enter the Bahr-el-Ghazal, but this was rejected by both the British Ambassador and the French Council of Ministers, and the final session of the discussions took place on November 7, 1894. In parting, Lord Dufferin insisted that Hanotaux take steps to assure the British that the French sphere of influence would not be extended in an eastward direction. Hanotaux's refusal left nothing more to be said. 78

Within ten days, the French ministry had decided to suspend all discussions with the British concerning the Upper Nile region and had ordered Victor Liotard, French commissioner on the Upper Ubanghi, to prepare an expedition destined for the Bahr-el-Ghazal. 79 It was rumored in Paris


that the British had already started Sir Henry Colvile and an expedition from Uganda to Fashoda, and the French expected Liotard to win the race by reaching the Upper Nile within a year. 80

Anglo-British competition for control of this region was underway, and, by late 1894, French participation in the contest had become an official policy of the French Government. Speaking to the Chamber of Deputies on February 28, 1895, François Deloncle, colonialist deputy, called for vigorous action on the part of the French to reach the Upper Nile and persevere against the British occupation of Egypt, now that the way was open. 81

The Deloncle statement did not go unnoticed in the British House of Commons. On March 11, 1895, Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett asked the Liberal ministry, in view of the French threat, to define the British sphere of influence in Africa. The reply came from Sir Edward Grey, Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, who explained to the Membership that the Anglo-German Convention of 1890 described the extent of

80 Ibid.

81 French chargé d'affaires Constant in London to Hanotaux, March 12, 1895, Ibid., no. 404, footnote, p. 618.
this sphere and that British and Egyptian claims, together, covered the entire Nile waterway. 82

Ashmead-Bartlett sought more answers. On the afternoon of March 28, he raised the question of British preparedness in meeting the French challenge to this sphere. Sir Edward Grey took the floor again. He reminded the membership that Italy, Germany, and the Congo Free State had all recognized the rights of Britain and Egypt to the territory in question, and France had always maintained and consistently emphasized the rights of Egypt. He ended his speech by sounding a warning to France, saying:

Rumors have come with regard to the movements of expeditions in various parts of Africa, but we have no reason to suppose that any French expedition has instructions to enter, or the intention of entering, the Nile Valley. I will go further and say that, after all I have explained about the claims which we consider Egypt may have in the Nile valley, and adding to that the fact that those claims and the view of the Government with regard to them are fully and clearly known to the French Government, I cannot think it possible that these rumors deserve credence, because the advance of a French expedition under secret instructions right from the other side of Africa into a territory over which our claims have been known for so long would be not merely an inconsistent and unexpected act, but it must be clearly known to the French Government that it would be an unfriendly act, and would be so viewed by England. 83

This so-called Grey Declaration was a "delayed declaration of war." It almost certainly prevented any renewal of talks between Britain and France on their differences in Africa. The French had been warned off the Nile before, but these admonitions had always been made in private diplomatic conversations. This was the first time that the British had fallen back "on the threadbare resource of diplomacy by threats."

Official circles in Paris were somewhat surprised by the chauvinistic tone of the message, and it sounded to them as if the British were trying to pick a quarrel over a hypothetical offense. It was true that Liotard was poised on the Upper Ubanghi frontier, but the lack of sufficient troops and reports of Mahdist military concentrations in the Bahr-el-Ghazal had prevented him from moving eastward according to plan. In fact, the Grey Declaration was made during the time of a short pause in the race for the Upper Nile. The French Government had evidently placed their Fashoda

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84 Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 354.
85 Ibid.
project in cold storage. The British-sponsored Colvile Mission, which had been expected to reach Fashoda by way of Uganda, turned back south near Wadelai, and the British Foreign Office was no longer interested in this type of assault on the region of the Upper Nile.88

Grey himself was later to say that his speech was probably responsible for the French breaking this unofficial désistement mutuel by sending an expedition under the leadership of Jean-Baptiste Marchand "right from the other side of Africa" to the village of Fashoda.89 It is more likely, however, that the Salisbury ministry, which was formed after June 25, 1895, stirred the French to action by openly planning a re-conquest of the Egyptian Sudan, using British and Egyptian troops to wrest the area from Mahdist control.90

"This suggestion of renewed activity on the part of the rival

88 Ibid.
across the Channel determined the sending of Captain Marchand on his celebrated anabasis to Fashoda."^91

CHAPTER V

MISSION MARCHAND: THE FRENCH ARM OF THE AFRICAN CROSS

It is impossible to trace, with detailed accuracy, the inception and incubation of the Marchand mission, for many of the official documents and papers concerning the expedition are no longer available.\(^1\) There is evidence, however, that the prime mover behind the renewal of interest in the Nile project was a pressure group known as the Comité de l'Afrique française. This organization had been founded in 1890 by a Parisian journalist, Hippolyte Percher, who went by the name of Harry Alis, and Prince d'Arenberg, a wealthy French deputy. Both of these men, and their followers, were convinced that France was likely to fall behind in the competition for African territory unless the French Government took vigorous action to prevent it. They moved,

\(^1\)French Foreign Minister Delcassé selectively weeded out the documents concerning the Marchand mission from his office files in 1904; French Colonial Minister Mandel removed the entire Marchand file from his office in 1938 and 1939. None of these documents and papers have been recovered. See Avant-Propos, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIV, pp. viii-ix.
therefore, to prod their national officials in that direction.²

Prince d'Arenberg later admitted that he and his group purposely planned and instigated a French mission to Fashoda led by one of his staunch followers, Jean-Baptiste Marchand, an intrepid explorer-soldier of France.³ Marchand was born at Thoissey, Aisne, in 1863 and became a fighting-man by choice, enlisting in the marine infantry as a private in 1883. His abilities were soon recognized by his superiors, who sent him to military school at Saint-Maixent, where he was graduated and commissioned in 1888.⁴

Marchand's first duty assignment was in French West Africa, and he soon built an excellent reputation as a leader of native troops in back-country military operations. In the summer of 1893, after having been raised to the rank of captain, he went to Paris on furlough and convinced the colonial ministry that he was the logical officer to lead a proposed mission of exploration in the Ivory Coast possession.


³Ibid., p. 39.

Knowing that the Comité was interested in French colonial activities in Africa, Marchand called on Prince d'Arenberg at the organization's headquarters and discussed with him a wide range of topics, including the proposal to send a French mission to Fashoda. He left the meeting with full assurance that the colonial pressure group would continue and fight to get a French mission on the way to Fashoda and that he was the choice of the Comité to lead such an expedition. Prince d'Arenberg had sealed the bargain by making Marchand an active member of the organization.\(^5\)

It is evident that Marchand would have liked nothing more than to remain in Paris and assist the Comité in furthering the Fashoda scheme, but he followed orders and returned to West Africa and his mission of exploration, but by 1895 this assignment was completed, and Marchand returned to Paris eager to take part in making the Nile project a reality. At the suggestion of Comité leaders, Marchand secured an interview with French Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux and outlined a plan for reaching the Upper Nile by way of the French Congo.

\(^5\)Brown, *Fashoda Reconsidered*, p. 36.
Hanotaux was impressed, but he advised Marchand to put his proposal in writing and submit the manuscript to Minister of Colonies, Émile Chautemps. Marchand's plan was hastily drawn and was delivered to Chautemps without delay.\(^6\)

It was Marchand's opinion that the British intended to exclude France from colonial empire in Africa and that France should counter Britain by taking Fashoda and the Bahr-el-Ghazal. This would thwart British plans to connect Cairo and Capetown. At the same time, he argued, a disagreement between France and Britain over the Upper Nile region would probably re-open the Egyptian Question, ending, hopefully, by a settlement after a conference of the Powers. In any case, a French thrust into the Bahr-el-Ghazal would be one step in a long-range goal to extend the French empire in Africa from Loango to the Red Sea.

In reaching Fashoda, Marchand suggested that a small number of French officers and some two hundred native troops be used. The small number of men involved would not appear menacing to the natives they encountered, and the cost of the expedition would, at the same time, be kept at a minimum.

Marchand estimated that it would take thirty months to cross the center of Africa and reach Fashoda from the French

\(^6\text{Ibid., pp. 37 ff.}\)
Congo. Once he reached the Upper Nile, he would, he said, attempt to form an alliance with the Mahdists at Omdurman. His reasoning was that the Khalifa, as a successful opponent of the Anglo-Egyptians, would look with some favor on an entente with France, and, if such an agreement could be made, the French at Fashoda would have a friendly military force between them and the Anglo-Egyptians to the north.\(^7\)

This proposal was simply a review of earlier plans to capture Fashoda for France. Marchand did inject the new idea of a Mahdist alliance, and he pleaded for prompt action on the part of the French Government, stressing the importance of reaching Fashoda first and well ahead of the British. Chautemps evidently thought that Marchand’s plan had some merit, for he brought it to Hanotaux’s attention on September 21, 1895.\(^8\) The Ribot ministry fell before Hanotaux had time to consider the Marchand stratagem, and the decision was left for the incoming Foreign Minister, Marcelin Berthelot, who approved of the project on November 30.\(^9\)

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 39; for Marchand’s summary of his proposal see \textit{Note du capitaine Marchand}, November 10, 1895, \textit{Documents diplomatiques français}, First Series, Vol. XII, no. 192, pp. 278-280.

\(^8\)Chautemps to Hanotaux, September 21, 1895, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 152, pp. 206-207.

\(^9\)Berthelot to French Colonial Minister Guieysse, November 30, 1895, \textit{Ibid.}, no. 219, pp. 322-323.
What followed was an unexplained delay of almost three months, caused, perhaps, by bureaucratic inertia, high-level discussions, and planning sessions conducted by the defense ministry. Marchand's formal orders, issued to both him and Victor Liotard, the commissioner on the Upper Ubanghi, were released on February 24, 1896. Liotard's copy has survived. Marchand was to assemble and organize a peaceful mission of exploration bound for the French Congo. Brazzaville was to be the operational headquarters through which all supplies and communication would pass. As soon as the group reached the eastern frontier of the Upper Ubanghi, Marchand could announce to his men that Fashoda was his goal. In order to lend a civilian designation to what was actually a military operation, Liotard was named as director of Marchand's activities in Africa.

While these events were unfolding in Paris, the British ministry in London was discussing the possibilities of sending an Anglo-Egyptian army into the Egyptian Sudan as far south as Dongola. British Prime Minister Salisbury had forecast such an event as early as 1890. Now that he was back at

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10 Guieysse to Liotard, February 24, 1896, Ibid., no. 312, pp. 472-475.

11 German Ambassador Katzfeldt in London to Chancellor Caprivi, April 29, 1890, Die Grosse Politik, Vol. VIII, no. 1778, pp. 149-151.
the helm of his government, he had decided that diplomacy could no longer protect the Egyptian Sudan from European intruders, especially the French, and he envisioned a military campaign against the Mahdists paid for with Egyptian funds.

To take such a course required the sanction of the Debt Commission, and France was still a member of this organization. Salisbury evidently hoped to soften French attitude on this matter, for he discussed with Baron de Courcel, the French Ambassador in London, the British plan to send troops to Dongola. This conversation, in the fall of 1895, gave the French Government advance notice of a British request for Egyptian funds, which France was able to block, and it probably furnished the French ministry a definite reason to launch the Marchand mission.

In the early months of 1896, events in Abyssinia caused Salisbury to take the plunge and ask the British Parliament to underwrite the expense of sending General Kitchener into the Egyptian Sudan at the head of an Anglo-Egyptian army. The defeat of the Italian army at Adowa on March 1, 1896, alerted Salisbury and his ministry to the fact that the victorious Abyssinians had not only closed the era of Italian

hegemony in Menelik's kingdom, but they had, at the same time, opened the way for the French, with the aid of the King of Kings, to reach Fashoda by way of the Sobat River.

Sixteen days after the Battle of Adowa, Kitchener's army crossed the frontier at Wadi Halfa and moved toward Dongola; the first echelon of the Marchand mission cleared the port of Bordeaux on March 6, stopped at Dakar long enough to take a contingent of Senegalese troops on board, and moved on to Loango, the debarkation port near the mouth of the Congo River. The second and third echelons followed on April 25 and May 10, with Marchand in the third group.

To assist him in directing these operations, Marchand selected Captain Marcel Germain, marine artillery; Captain Augustin Baratier, cavalry; and Captain Charles-Marie-Emanuel Mangin, marine infantry. All three were chevaliers de la Légion d'honneur. The medical officer was the naval surgeon, Dr. Jules Emily, who kept a day-by-day journal of his experiences with the Marchand mission. There were thirteen other

15 Emily, Mission Marchand, pp. 1 ff.
subordinate officers, including two naval representatives to operate and repair the river boats, and an interpreter, who was to assist Marchand in negotiations with the Arabic-speaking Mahdists.

No sooner had Marchand reached the French Congo with the last shipload of supplies than he was faced with the possibility of another long delay. He needed to employ a great number of porters and canoeists, and he found, as he stepped off the ship at Loango on July 24, 1896 and moved inland to Brazzaville, that the natives in that area of the Congo basin were on the verge of insurrection. Rather than abandon his plans and return to France, Marchand sought and obtained full power from Governor de Brazza to restore order.\textsuperscript{16}

While the Marchand mission was stalled at Brazzaville, the French Government was busily engaged in putting one or more support missions in motion from Abyssinia to Fashoda. Emperor Menelik, even though he had successfully opposed the Italians with French arms and ammunition, was difficult to deal with.\textsuperscript{17} He no longer needed French aid after the Battle of Adowa, and he intimated that the French had waited until

\textsuperscript{17}Langer, \textit{The Diplomacy of Imperialism}, p. 273.
he was victorious to throw their full weight and support in his direction. Nevertheless, his heart was softened by French authorization to construct a railroad from Obok to the Abyssinian frontier, and, on June 3, 1896, French President Félix Faure instructed Leonce Lagarde, governor of French Somaliland, to offer Menelik a treaty of friendship and commerce.\footnote{Hanotaux to French Colonial Minister Lebon, November 30, 1896, annexe, instructions to Lagarde, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIII, no. 35, pp. 62-64.}

At the same time, French Foreign Minister Hanotaux, who had returned to office on April 29 with the incoming Meline cabinet, pressed for international recognition of Abyssinian independence. To accomplish this, he sought the support of Russia, the Dual Alliance partner of France, and Russian Foreign Minister Shishkin, while visiting in Paris during October, agreed to co-operate, promising, at the same time, to give Menelik a present of Russian arms.\footnote{Note du Ministre [Hanotaux], October 14, 1896, Ibid., Vol. XII, no. 474, pp. 788-791.}

On November 5, Lagarde was ordered to make a personal appeal to Menelik, closing the treaty negotiations with him and seeking the Emperor's support of two French missions to the White Nile by way of Addis Ababa. He took with him "large
sums of money to be used for strengthening French influence in Abyssinia. As a special present for Menelik he was given one hundred thousand Gras rifles and two million rounds of ammunition.^^

Lagarde, in dealing with Menelik II, was confronted almost immediately with the fact that the Abyssinian ruler insisted on an old claim to the so-called Equatorial Province, which included all of the territory on the right bank of the White Nile as far north as Khartoum. The Emperor was not kindly disposed, therefore, toward aiding a French mission to take control of what he already considered to be his.

When this problem was relayed to the Meline cabinet in Paris, French Colonial Minister Lebon insisted that the French should encourage Menelik to occupy the lands in question at once, obviously in the hope that Abyssinian troops would forestall the Anglo-Egyptian advance, leaving Fashoda and the territory on the left bank of the White Nile to France.^^ Hanotaux, on the other hand, was of the opinion that the arrival at Fashoda of the Marchand Mission should be awaited before handing over a vast amount of territory to Menelik.

^^Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 541.

^^Lebon to Hanotaux, March 5, 1897, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIII, no. 137, pp. 244-246.
The Foreign Minister evidently expected Marchand to secure a valid claim to lands on both sides of the White Nile.  

The Meline cabinet favored the Lebon point of view, but before their wishes were made known to Lagarde, he had concluded a treaty with Menelik which called for the region of the Upper Nile to be divided between France and Abyssinia. In return for French assistance in maintaining his claim, Menelik agreed to aid the French in reaching and holding the territory on the left bank of the White Nile.  

Captain Clochette led the first mission to leave Addis Ababa for Fashoda after this agreement was reached. It was principally composed of Abyssinian soldiers, "and in Menelik's eyes it cannot have been any other than a military expedition to take possession of the country up to the White Nile with French aid."  

A second group, which originated in France under the direction of Captain Bonvalot, arrived in Addis Ababa in April, shortly after Clochette's departure, but

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22 Hanotaux's written opinion, Ibid., footnote, p. 246.

23 Convention pour le Nil Blanc, March 20, 1897, Ibid., no. 159, pp. 278-279.

Bonvalot, after a bitter quarrel with Lagarde, turned his command over to the Marquis de Bonchamps and returned to France.²⁵

Bonchamps departed Addis Ababa on May 17 at the head of another Abyssinian column and overtook Clochette at Goré on July 1. The two missions were combined, and Bonchamps assumed full command after Clochette was kicked in the head by a mule, resulting in his death on August 24.²⁶

Meanwhile, Marchand expected to meet his support missions on the Upper Nile. He had settled the problem with the natives by January, 1897, and he began the arduous task of putting all phases of the expedition together and moving them eastward toward Fashoda in the proper order. Marchand had expected to walk the entire distance, using native labor to carry the heavy baggage, but Liotard instructed him to travel by boat, barge, and canoe up the Congo, Ubanghi, and Mbomu Rivers to the outer rim of the Congo watershed. The mission was then to travel overland to the western limits of the Nile

²⁵ Bonvalot to Hanotaux, July 24, 1897, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIII, no. 281, pp. 469-471

watershed and there resume their journey by water down the Bahr-el-Ghazal through Lake No to the White Nile.\(^{27}\)

In following these orders, Marchand commandeered every vessel in the Brazzaville area that was river-worthy, including the *Faidherbe*, a thirty-foot steam launch used as a post-boat on the Upper Ubanghi. The Congolese Government made their river steamer, the *Ville de Bruges*, available and also gave permission to use the facilities of the Matadi-Leopoldville railroad.\(^{28}\) Marchand's account of the men employed and the methods of transportation used presents some interesting figures:

For the transport of necessary material and provisions for the revictualing of the party, the expedition employed the services of 23,000 persons, of whom 17,000 were porters and 4000 were native travelers, engaged in divers capacities; 28 river steamers; and several hundreds of canoes manned by 2500 canoeists. The number of convoys . . . successfully reformed during the journey . . . exceeded 1300. Every kind of locomotion was employed, including man, boat, railway, wheelbarrow, stretcher, horse, dog, ass, ox, and camel.\(^{29}\)


Marchand proved to be an able organizer, and, by the end of March, 1897, the last remnants of his expedition had cleared Brazzaville and were on their way eastward. Liotard, at the head of a small French force, was also on the move well ahead of Marchand. He had invaded the Bahr-el-Ghazal province of the Egyptian Sudan and had established Fort Dupleix at Deim Zubeir on the Chel River to be used as a French outpost in support of the Marchand mission. Part of the supplies that Marchand moved eastward were for Liotard's use.  

Communication between the two leaders was by native runner, and Marchand was assured that there were no heavy concentrations of Mahdist forces ahead of him in the western Bahr-el-Ghazal. This was good news for Marchand, for he had reached Zemio, on the Upper Mbomu River, by early August and had been forced to pull his boats, barges, and canoes out of the shallow water and prepare to march overland some six hundred miles to the nearest navigable stream on the outer edge of the Nile watershed. Marchand had feared a Mahdist attack on his walking columns during the long march over dry land.

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For the trek through the bush, Marchand divided his expedition into three groups. Captain Mangin was placed in charge of the advance party; Captain Baratier and his contingent followed; and Captain Germain led the column bringing up the rear. Dr. Emily, the naval surgeon, traveled with the advance echelon, and Marchand made himself more accessible by remaining with the group in the center.\(^{31}\)

It was the task of the third and last group to dismantle five barges, the *Faidherbe*, and another river steamer of equal size. After this work was completed, they transported these units, along with most of the canoes, overland to Wau, on the Sueh River, a distance of some six hundred miles. A path, fifty feet wide, was cut through virgin bush and elephant grass in order to facilitate the movement.\(^{32}\) Since the boilers of the two river steamers could not be taken apart, they were rolled, tumbled, and, at times, carried on improvised carts.\(^{33}\)

While this work was slowly going forward, the advance and center parties established Fort Hossinger, near Tamboura; Fort Gouly, near Kana; Fort Rapides, on the Bo River; and


\(^{32}\) *Ibid.*

Fort Desaix at Wau, where all three divisions of the expedition came together again in November, 1897. The Faidherbe and her unnamed sister ship were soon reassembled and made ready for the journey down the Sueh and Bahr-el-Ghazal Rivers, through Lake No, to the White Nile.

Early in December, the river steamers, barges, and canoes were launched on the Sueh River, but before the expedition could move forward, the level of the river began to fall as rainfall in the highlands slackened, and Marchand was forced, once again, to rearrange his time schedule. He remained at Wau until June, 1898, awaiting the spring storms that were to provide enough water to float his vessels. Even then, there were times when mud dams had to be constructed ahead of the steamers in order to secure a few more inches of necessary draught. Under these circumstances, a few hundred yards per day was the maximum distance that could be covered.\footnote{Sanderson, \textit{England, Europe and the Upper Nile}, p. 286.}

A long battle with the sudd began as soon as Marchand reached the waters of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, near Meshra-Er-Rek, but, in the first week of July, the stagnant marshland was overcome, and Lake No provided unhindered passage to the White Nile. As he approached the Sobat confluence, Marchand and
his men began to look for signs of support missions from Abyssinia, but there were none to be seen.

Bonchamps, too, had been delayed, but his difficulty was in securing the co-operation from Menelik that had been promised the French. \(^{35}\) The King of Kings, as the Anglo-Egyptian forces moved into the Egyptian Sudan from the north, had assured the Mahdists that he would do nothing to aid any European Power to gain African territory. There were rumors in Khartoum and Omdurman that Menelik was sending rifles and ammunition to the Khalifa to be used against all Europeans who entered the Mahdist territories. \(^{36}\)

One thing is sure: Menelik had decided that all Europeans were his enemies. He would await the outcome of the struggle between the Mahdists and the Anglo-Egyptians, and, in the meanwhile, he would do all that he could to delay and frustrate the French. The Abyssinian guides with Bonchamps led him along every possible detour between Goré and the Sobat-Nile union. The Abyssinian soldiers, natives of the highlands, became more difficult to manage as they penetrated the


swamplands near the White Nile. Many of them deserted, and the loss of life from fever took a heavy toll.

Finally, Bonchamps and his group reached the mouth of the Sobat River on June 22, 1898, less than three weeks before Marchand passed the same point with his flotilla. Two members of the party braved crocodile-infested waters to reach an island and raise the French Tricolor. In vain the area was searched for some sign that Marchand had passed that way. Bonchamps, being unable to prolong his stay, returned to Addis Ababa.

Bonchamps' efforts had amounted to nothing. The French Tricolor at the mouth of the Sobat may have been flying in the breeze when Marchand passed, but it went unnoticed. It is possible that the rushing waters had hauled it down. In any case, Marchand did not tarry long in the area. He ordered the flotilla to head downstream toward his long-sought destination, but he continued to watch for support missions until he reached Fashoda late in the afternoon of July 10, 1898. After Marchand, a staff of seven other French officers


and one hundred and twenty Senegalese soldiers disembarked, the *Faidherbe* started back to Meshra-Er-Rek through the sudd to bring more supplies forward.  

Until the return of the *Faidherbe*, supplies were rationed. Reconstruction of the old Egyptian fort began on July 11, but the men kept their arms close at hand to ward off any attacks against them. Friendly relations were maintained with the local Shilluk tribesmen, who began to gather at Fashoda as soon as the word was passed that strangers had entered their domain. Within two days there were enough natives in the Fashoda area to warrant a display of force, and Marchand staged a military ceremony to mark the official beginning of the French occupation. Oddly enough, as the Tricolor was raised, the staff broke; "an ill-omen," commented Captain Victor Largeau, one of the participants. Firecrackers were exploded as a substitute for cannon-fire when the halyard was repaired and the flag was hoisted for a second time.

On the same day, Marchand sent out the first in a series of reconnaissance missions to look for the promised help from Abyssinia, for he had come to rely heavily on the prospect

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of additional troops and a shorter line of supply and communication than the one behind him to the west. He later told Legarde that when these search parties returned to Fashoda without having contacted the expeditions he had been led to expect, he was "horror-stricken."\textsuperscript{41}

Marchand and his men, however, had already experienced and overcome too many difficulties in reaching their destination to allow one disappointment to upset their plans. They planted a vegetable garden and continued to bolster their defenses. This preparation for battle began to pay dividends within six weeks after they reached Fashoda.

In the early dawn of August 25, lookouts alerted Marchand that two river steamers were approaching Fashoda from the north. As they came closer, it was determined that they were manned by Mahdists and that they were pulling several barges loaded with soldiers equipped with rifles and several small artillery pieces. The Mahdists "must have been a good deal astonished at the sight of white men where no white men should have been; and they opened fire on the French post without in the least knowing who or whence the strangers were."\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{41}Marchand to Lagarde, September 27, 1898, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIV, Appendice I, no. x, pp. 908-909.

\textsuperscript{42}Giffen, Fashoda, p. 6.
The French forces accepted the challenge, and the ensuing battle lasted until late afternoon. The helmsmen aboard the river steamers kept turning in circles while the soldiers on the barges that were being towed directed one volley after another at the men on shore. In trying to negotiate turns that were evidently too short, the helmsmen were responsible for overturning several barges, dumping men, artillery, rifles, and ammunition into the river. Most of the Mahdist casualties, the number of which remains unknown, were the result of drowning. Marchand reported no deaths among his men. Finally, the Mahdists, in retreat, moved downstream in the direction from which they came. ⁴³

A few days later, the Mahdist survivors of the Fashoda encounter were intercepted by Anglo-Egyptian forces south of Omdurman. They told their captors that they had recently come from Fashoda, where they had done battle with European officers commanding native troops. ⁴⁴

Marchand was of the opinion that his victory over the Mahdists had liberated the Shilluks from the rule of Khalifa Abdullah, the Mahdist overlord, and that Kour Abd-el-Fadil,


the Grand Mek of the Shilluks, in recognition of this turn of events, asked for an alliance with the French. Whether or not Marchand's interpretation of the circumstances is correct, the fact remains that an agreement between the two leaders was signed at Fashoda, on September 3, which placed all of the Shilluk lands on the left bank of the White Nile under the protection of France, subject to the approval of the French Government.

The treaty, from Marchand's position, amounted to little more than an empty gesture, for his encounter with the Mahdists had greatly depleted his stores of ammunition, and whether or not he could protect the Shilluks depended upon how soon he could replenish these supplies. Two things were in Marchand's favor. He knew, within reason, that the Mahdists did not have enough river steamers and barges at their disposal to send a large army to Fashoda by way of the Nile. Then, too, the river was rising, and the roads in the vicinity of Fashoda "were so impassable that they could

45 Augustin Baratier, "Memories of Fashoda," Living Age, CCCXII (September 6, 1924), 475.

hardly be said to exist at all.\textsuperscript{47} A marching army would have difficulty in coming within firing range of the fort until the Nile returned to its normal banks, a matter of at least two more months.

Meanwhile, the Faidherbe was somewhere between Fashoda and Meshra Er Rek attempting to negotiate the sudd and transport food and ammunition to the Marchand mission. The soldiers who manned the little steamer continued to scan the shores of the right bank of the Nile between Fashoda and the Sobat confluence for a relief expedition, and Marchand still had hopes that such a mission would suddenly appear across the river from the Fashoda fort, bringing the much-needed men and arms that could make a difference in the precarious situation he found himself in.

While it was a time for optimism, it was also a time to prepare for the worst, and this was the course of action that was followed. Shilluk messengers were sent downstream to seek the aid of their Dinka neighbors in alerting the Fashoda garrison to any unusual troop movements in the area. The first alarm was sounded in the second week of September, and reports, increasing in number as days passed, indicated

\textsuperscript{47} Laratier, "Memories of Fashoda," 473.
that a large flotilla was slowly making its way up the Nile.\textsuperscript{48} The Shilluks, who had heard that the invasion forces were burning villages north of Fashoda, abandoned their homes and sought the protection of the French. They hid all of their possessions, including cattle, in the brush on patches of high ground near the fort.

Their leader, Mek Abd-el-Fadil, pledged that he and his people would die at the side of the French, but as the Shilluks streamed into the Fashoda area they became more of a liability than an asset, and Marchand was hard put to determine what he could do to protect them. While the French leader was pondering over this latest difficulty, word was received, on September 19, that two Negro soldiers, fully armed, wearing cylindrical military caps decorated with red plumes, were nearing the fort bearing a letter addressed to the "Chief of the European Expedition at Fashoda."\textsuperscript{49}

Marchand expected the message to contain a surrender demand. The Shilluks had told him that it was Mahdist policy to give their enemies an opportunity to capitulate before the first major engagement. He was somewhat relieved to

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 474.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
discover that, instead of the Mahdists, he was to be confronted by Anglo-Egyptian forces. The letter was from General Sir Herbert Kitchener, commander-in-chief of the combined army of British and Egyptian troops. He told Marchand that he had defeated the Mahdists at Omdurman on September 2 and that he had re-occupied the country. He was, he said, approaching Fashoda with a flotilla of five gunboats and a "considerable force of English and Egyptian troops."

Marchand sent Kitchener an immediate reply. He congratulated the British military leader on his recent successes in the Egyptian Sudan and welcomed him to Fashoda in the name of France. He mentioned the fact that he, too, had met the Mahdists, winning the engagement handily, and, like his British counterpart, he had occupied territory in the area. The Bahr-el-Ghazal province as far as Meshra Er Rek and the Shilluk country on the left bank of the White Nile, Marchand informed Kitchener, had come under the flag of France.


51 Ibid.

52 Marchand to Kitchener, September 19, 1898, Ibid., no. II, pp. 894-895.
With this exchange of notes, it was obvious that the French and British lines of authority would soon meet each other on the Upper Nile. The confrontation was destined to set off an international crisis, "and it was clearly due to no recognition of a moral solution of the question that the dispute failed to provoke a war."\(^{53}\)

CHAPTER VI

THE FASHODA CRISIS

When General Sir Herbert Kitchener learned that European officers, commanding native troops, were at Fashoda, the report came as no surprise; the London government had already told him, in sealed orders, that a French military expedition of unknown strength was likely to be encountered by the Anglo-Egyptian forces on either the Blue or White Niles south of Khartoum. His task was to seek out the intruders and challenge their right to be in the Egyptian Sudan.¹

On September 8, 1898, the same day that Kitchener, following the directions of his superiors, took command of a flotilla and steamed up the White Nile toward Fashoda, Théophile Delcassé, French Foreign Minister, told Sir Edmund Monson, British Ambassador to France, that Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand, leading a French expedition, had been sent into the Egyptian Sudan as an "emissary of civilization."² Delcassé admitted, in the course of the conversation, that he did not

¹Kennedy, Salisbury, p. 284.
know Marchand's exact location, but he expressed a hope that there would be no clash of arms if and when the Anglo-Egyptian and French forces met. He went on to express a desire that all outstanding differences between Britain and France would be "amicably arranged by the exercise of patience and conciliation." The confrontation was not long in coming.

Kitchener arrived at Fashoda aboard a three-decker gunboat, the Dal, a few minutes before ten a.m. on September 19. Four other river steamers, towing a total of twelve barges loaded with some two thousand soldiers, followed into the Fashoda channel and moored gunwale to gunwale, their artillery bristling in every direction. With the exception of one Union Jack, the Khedive's flag was displayed throughout the flotilla.

Kitchener's troops jostled one another attempting to position themselves to get a glimpse of the Europeans who had taken possession of Fashoda. What soldiers they were able to see, as they looked toward the fort, were Senegalese riflemen standing on the parapet of the French stronghold.

3 Ibid., p. 163.

4 Baratier, "Memories of Fashoda," 476.
awaiting orders from their officers. There was not a European in sight.

Major Edward Cecil, son of Lord Salisbury, British Prime Minister, and Commander Colin Keppel, the British naval officer directing the flotilla, were the first of the Sirdar's men to go ashore, and Marchand received them in the officer's mess hall inside the fort. After formal introductions were over, Cecil told Marchand that Kitchener extended him an invitation to come aboard the Dal for a meeting. "Since I owe him the first visit," Marchand told his British guests, "I shall be with him instantly."  

Kitchener received the French leader on the main deck. Conversations were in French, and Marchand took advantage of the Sirdar's poor use of the language to confuse the issues and refute every suggestion that the French evacuate Fashoda. Marchand told his host and the British staff on board the Dal that his government had ordered him to occupy the Bahr-el-Chazal and the Shilluk country as far north as Fashoda. France, moreover, had just concluded a treaty

5 Ibid., 477.

6 Jean-Baptiste Marchand, "Marchand Speaks," Living Age, CCCXLVI (May, 1934), 232.
with the chief of the Shilluks, establishing a French protectorate over the entire area.\(^7\)

The British general pressed the long-standing claim that Egypt had to the Egyptian Sudan. Having declared that Britain stood ready to defend the Khedive's rights, he observed that the French forces under Marchand's command at Fashoda were greatly outnumbered. Marchand admonished his host to judge the French soldiers on performance rather than number.\(^8\)

Every avenue of the discussion led to the fact that neither Marchand nor Kitchener possessed the authority to budge from their respective positions. Finally, Kitchener proposed that the entire Fashoda problem be referred to the Paris and London governments for settlement. Marchand agreed to this suggestion without hesitation.\(^9\)

This decision eased the tension. "Kitchener stretched suddenly, and (this was very English) passing without transition from rigidity to joviality he said, 'And now,


\[^8\] Marchand, "Marchand Speaks," 233.

\[^9\] Ibid., 233.
Major, we must have a whiskey and soda." Marchand accepted, for it was, in his words, "terribly hot on the deck of the gunboat, what with the sun and the interview as well."  

In the early afternoon, the Sirdar and several members of his staff went ashore to repay Marchand's visit and continue discussions. Kitchener was impressed by the politeness and courtesy extended to the British at the fort. A review of the French forces was staged in honor of the Sirdar's call, and the men who stood at attention while Kitchener conducted an inspection "beat all records for style and looked like fashion plates of a smart tailor."  

"Without vaingloriousness," Marchand observed, "I may say those men were magnificent. I had issued that morning to each officer and man the new uniforms (white satin and khaki) that I had under soldered zinc in preparation for the encounter that was taking place that day at Fashoda."  

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10 Ibid.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Giffen, Fashoda, p. 36.  
13 Marchand, "Marchand Speaks," 234.  
14 Ibid.
When the ceremony ended, Marchand received Kitchener and Cecil in his private quarters, a small thatched-roof hut with one low entrance designed to keep out the tropical heat. As Kitchener crouched and crawled through the doorway, he caught one of his spurs in a leg of his trousers, stumbled, and fell to the dirt floor at Marchand’s feet. Cecil took a penknife and cut the general free. A very amused Marchand served his guests Montebello champagne as soon as Kitchener was back on his feet.15

The first topic of conversation was the question of the right of the British to fly the Khedive’s flag at Fashoda. Kitchener was convinced that the French must have hauled down the Egyptian colors before they raised the Tricolor, but Marchand vehemently denied the charge. Kitchener then asked whether or not Marchand was prepared to resist should the British now decide to raise the Khedive’s standard at Fashoda.16

This was a difficult question for Marchand to answer. He knew that his government had long defended the rights of the Sultan and the Khedive against the British, and he could

15Ibid., 235.

16Emily, Mission Marchand, p. 184.
resist the raising of the Union Jack with enthusiasm, but to oppose the Egyptian flag would be to defend the rights of France against Egypt, a contradiction which could not be easily explained in Paris. He finally told Kitchener that he would not resist in the event that the Egyptian flag were to be raised unless the British interpreted their action as a prejudgment of the political status of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Shilluk country, for it had already been agreed that the entire issue would be settled in Paris and London, and France was not to be hampered by any claim to the territory based on an Egyptian flag placed at Fashoda after the Tricolor had been raised over the fort. 17

The high point in thirty years of Anglo-French rivalry in Africa had been reached. The two leaders shook hands, and Kitchener excused himself to return to the Dal, but Cecil lingered long enough to present Marchand with a bundle of French newspapers and a letter from Kitchener to Marchand, a formal protest of the French occupation of Fashoda. 18

In the same message, Kitchener mentioned that he was leaving Major Herbert Jackson at Fashoda in command of a

battalion of Sudanese troops. A campsite for these men was selected some five hundred yards south of the fort, and the Khedive's flag was ceremoniously raised over the new station that afternoon. Kitchener ordered Jackson to avoid friction with Marchand, but he also gave him full authority to repel any attacks that the French might launch against the Anglo-Egyptian forces. 19

The gunboat Abu Klea remained at anchor in the Fashoda channel for Jackson's use, and the other units of the flotilla moved out to the mainstream of the Nile and headed south. Arriving at the Sobat confluence on September 20, the Sirdar left the gunboats Fattah and Nasir at that juncture and placed two battalions of men under the direction of Major Horace Smith-Dorrien with orders to establish a base at the Sobat mouth. When men and supplies were unloaded, Kitchener went north to Omdurman on the Dal, passing the Fashoda station on September 21 without stopping. 20 The flagship Sultan, accompanying the Dal, put in at Fashoda with a message from Kitchener to Marchand.

The Sirdar, in this, the second note of protest to the French leader, served notice that he had established a new

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20 Ibid.
military post at the mouth of the Sobat River. It was the first, he said, of more such bases that would soon follow. He recalled, too, a statement that he was supposed to have made to Marchand, in person, saying:

During our conversation of yesterday I informed you that by order of His Highness the Khedive the whole country has been placed under martial law. In consequence I have made the following regulation: all transport of munitions of war on the Nile is absolutely forbidden and I have given orders to the commanders of the gunboats to take necessary measures for the execution of this regulation.

Neither Marchand nor Baratier could confirm that the question of martial law in the Egyptian Sudan had been discussed, either on board the Dal or ashore. The Sirdar had evidently taken advantage of the fact that the Faidherbe was somewhere between Meshra Er Rek and Fashoda bringing munitions and supplies to the Marchand mission. It would have to pass the Anglo-Egyptian gunboats, and Marchand had no way of sending a warning to the crew.

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23 Marchand had disclosed the mission of the Faidherbe in his first communication with Kitchener. See Marchand to Kitchener, September 19, 1898, Documents diplomatiques français, First Series, Vol. XIV, Appendice I, no. II, pp. 894-895.
Marchand, as he received this latest communication from Kitchener, handed the messenger a letter addressed to the British general, an answer to the formal protest which Cecil had delivered to Marchand at Fashoda. The captain of the Sultan returned the letter to Marchand almost immediately, explaining that he was not on his way to Omdurman, the Sirdar's headquarters, but had, instead, been ordered to return to the mouth of the Sobat River.

Marchand was dismayed but undaunted. He returned to his quarters and composed another letter to Kitchener, this time taking issue with the edict of martial law and warning that if a clash took place at the Sobat confluence, full responsibility would be placed on the British. When this task was finished, Marchand wrote a letter to Major Jackson, a request that he send the two communications to Omdurman at the first opportunity. Captain Baratier called on Major Jackson and delivered the three dispatches in person.

24Marchand to Kitchener, September 20, 1898, Ibid., Annexe I, pp. 897-899.

25Marchand to Kitchener, September 22, 1898, Ibid., Annexe II, pp. 902-904.

26Marchand to Jackson, September 22, 1898, Ibid., Appendix I, no. VI, pp. 904-905.

27Baratier, "Memories of Fashoda," 483.
Baratier was received with extreme courtesy. Jackson expressed his regrets at being unable to grant Marchand's request. He would, however, get a message to the crew of the Faidherbe, taking full responsibility for their safety and seeing to it that the French at Fashoda received their ammunition and supplies, unharmed and unmolested.  

The cool head of Major Jackson had thus averted an armed clash between the French and the British at the mouth of the Sobat River, but Kitchener was not informed of this friendly gesture on the part of his subordinate. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Théophile Delcassé, knew that it was time for an explosion to occur on the Upper Nile, and, on the day before Kitchener and Marchand met on the deck of the Dal, he called Sir Edmund Monson, the British Ambassador, to the Quai d'Orsay and inquired of him whether or not Great Britain denied France the right to send missions into the regions of the Upper Nile.  

Monson replied that France had been adequately warned that any move into the Nile basin would be an unfriendly act on the part of France. He would like to know, in view

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28 Emily, Mission Marchand, p. 192.

of this fact, why France had reportedly sent men into the area, thereby creating a dangerous situation that could cause a war.30

The French minister stood his ground by saying that France had never recognized a British sphere of influence on the Upper Nile and had been protesting such claims for years. If there were a French mission on the Nile carrying the French Tricolor, it was only an extension of the Liotard expedition, and if this group were in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, it could only be observed that the Upper Nile region had long been outside the control of Egypt. France had as much right to be in the Bahr-el-Ghazal as did Britain to be at Khartoum and Omdurman, and, before France would recognize a British claim to the Egyptian Sudan, the Sultan of Turkey, who was the original owner, would have to issue a firman giving the territory to the British.31

Meanwhile, Kitchener, knowing that it would take months for Marchand to contact Paris by way of Loango, blocked all avenues of communication to or from the French fort by way

30 Ibid.

of Anglo-Egyptian gunboats and prepared to get the first report of the Fashoda meeting to Europe. His version turned out to be "a great propaganda victory for himself." It was designed to convince the British and the French that he was the savior of the Marchand mission, whose members now welcomed an opportunity to return home.

In Kitchener's first message, sent by way of Cairo to London, he said, in part:

> The position in which Captain Marchand finds himself at Fashoda is as impossible as it is absurd. He is cut off from the interior, and his water transport is quite inadequate; he is, moreover, short of ammunition and supplies, which must take months to reach him; he has no following in the country, and nothing could have saved him and his expedition from being annihilated by the Dervishes, had we been a fortnight later in crushing the Khalifa.

As an afterthought, or so it seems, the Sirdar sent a second message, hard on the heels of the first, suggesting that the British Government offer to purchase the *Faidherbe* from France and added:

> If the French Government will at once give telegraphic instructions for the explorer M. Marchand and his expedition to leave Fashoda and come down the Nile, I can now send special steamer with such orders to

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32. Andrew, Théophile Delcassé, p. 93.

fetch them. I am quite sure that no one would be more pleased than M. Marchand and his officers to secure release from their unpleasant position.\(^3\)

News accounts of the Fashoda meeting reached Europe from Cairo on September 25 and were printed in the newspapers on September 26, touching off great excitement in both Britain and France.\(^3\) The Kitchener version of the meeting, the only interpretation available to the press, initiated, in earnest, the Fashoda Crisis.

Delcassé fully expected Salisbury to issue an open letter to the French Government, demanding an immediate withdrawal from Fashoda with war as an alternative. Much to his surprise, Ambassador Monson entered his office, read, aloud, the first two telegrams the British had received from Kitchener and told the French minister that "Her Majesty's Government entirely approve of the Sirdar's proceedings and language."\(^3\)

Delcassé stalled for time. He told Monson that he had not heard from Marchand and that he could make no official statement until the French version of the Fashoda encounter reached his desk. He asked Monson to seek British permission

\(^3\)Ibid., no. 194, p. 168.

\(^3\)The Times (New York), September 26, 1898, p. 1.

to transmit Marchand’s report over their telegraph lines, *en clair*, with the French Government paying for the expense involved.  

Salisbury granted this request. At the same time, he told Monson to instruct the French minister that the British would "accept no responsibility for any consequences to M. Marchand’s health or safety which may result from delay in his departure from his present position."  

Lord Salisbury, leader of the Conservative Party in Parliament, continued to drive home the idea that the French must evacuate Fashoda, and he had a reputation for being "swift and ruthless when necessary." He experienced no difficulty from his membership in taking a firm stand against France in the Fashoda Crisis. They were united, almost to a man, on the matter of expelling the French from the Egyptian Sudan. Unionists, Liberals, and Tories vied with each other in putting themselves at the disposal of their government and in demanding that Salisbury assume an unyielding attitude in speaking to the French.

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Lord Roseberry led off with a keynote speech at Epsom on October 12. He predicted a serious international crisis over the Fashoda question, pointing out that "cordiality between nations can only rest on mutual respect for one another's rights." Sir Michael Hicks Beach, following a "veritable flood of eloquence," in an address at North Shields on October 19, declared that Britain had put its foot down. If the French were unhappy about this turn of events, the officials of the British Government knew what duty demanded. Although war would be a great calamity, there were greater evils than war.

In the British press there was a "volume of opinion favorable to the maintenance of the Egyptian territories on the Upper Nile wholly disproportionate to the value" of the regions in question. Conservative papers, such as the Star, the Morning Leader, and the Evening News, were all in favor of immediate military action against France should the French mission at Fashoda fail to leave the Egyptian Sudan within a reasonable amount of time. There was no need to argue the point, declared the Evening News. If a householder

40 The Times (New York), October 13, 1898, p. 7.
41 Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 553.
finds an uninvited guest in his back garden, he does not go into a long discussion with the visitor about ownership of the garden; the intruder is simply ejected if he does not leave.\textsuperscript{43}

Liberal papers in Britain took an opposite view. The Manchester Guardian, the Daily News, and the Daily Chronicle saw no reason to go to war over Fashoda. If calm could be maintained in the crisis, an opening might be found for peaceful adjustment. In any case, the question of whether or not the French had a clear title to the Bahr-el-Ghazal did not turn on the immediate evacuation of Fashoda.\textsuperscript{44}

British periodicals were printing articles in which unfavorable comparisons were made between French colonial policy and that of their own government. France, one writer said, closed her colonies to world trade while Britain opened her possessions to the commerce of the entire world and taxed herself heavily for goods that passed into England from the empire. The British people, furthermore, looked on their colonial extension as a means of giving civilization to backward areas. What right had France, in view of her past


\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 65.
record with colonies, to place control over an area larger than France itself.\(^45\)

This criticism was especially disturbing to the French, for the year 1898 was an arduous period in the history of the Third Republic. The Dreyfus case, which began in 1894, was at a crucial stage. Émile Zola, the novelist, attacked the injustices to Dreyfus and published his sensational letter, \(J'\text{Accuse}\), in the month of January. The Meline cabinet, planners of the Marchand mission, fell on June 22. Colonel Hubert Henry, the forger of the documents used against Dreyfus, committed suicide on August 31, and General Jacques Marie Cavaignac, the French Minister of War, resigned on September 3. Besides internal difficulties, the entire Dreyfus affair served to undermine French prestige outside of France.\(^46\) To make matters worse, a strike involving thousands of workers in the building trades began on September 13, and, by early October, President Félix Faure decided to move 10,000 soldiers into Paris to maintain order.\(^47\) The French capital

\(^{45}\)Decle, "The Fashoda Question," 667.


\(^{47}\)\textit{The Times} (New York), October 10, 1898, p. 7.
was filled with rumor and was on edge for weeks. Historian William L. Langer has likened this period to the "Great Fear" during the French Revolution. 48

While the average Frenchman, never too interested in colonial affairs, turned most of his political attention to domestic issues, the extreme nationalists saw an opportunity, in the contention over Fashoda, to bring Britain before a council of the Powers and settle, once and for all, the knotty Egyptian Question in international affairs. The leading newspapers in Paris followed this line of thought and attempted, throughout the six-month duration of the Fashoda Crisis, to build a strong case for French rights in both Egypt and the regions of the Upper Nile. 49

The French press was aroused, in early October, when it was learned that Salisbury had informed the French Government, after the Battle of Omdurman, that "all the territories which were subject to the Khalifa passed to the British and Egyptian Governments by right of conquest." 50 Let France,

48 Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, pp. 553-554.

49 The Times (New York), October 24, 1898, p. 1. See also the issues following through March, 1899.

if it cared to, claim that the Egyptian Sudan was a derelict territory and was, therefore, *res nullius*; the British had picked up the option when they subdued the Khalifa.

The Paris correspondent of the *New York Times* filed a report on October 11, in which he summarized French press reaction to this thrust from across the channel. Le Temps, he said, maintained that the "right by conquest" statement presented a weak claim. Marchand had occupied the Bahr-el-Ghazal before the Anglo-Egyptian forces reached Omdurman and Khartoum, and Delcassé could count on the support of the French people in maintaining this position. Figaro took the same course, adding that France should not leave Fashoda without a hearing before the Powers. Le Galois wanted France to move with caution; Salisbury's tone of voice was entirely too harsh, leaving no reason to be optimistic about the outcome of the crisis. Libre Parole openly accused the British of backing the Dreyfusards in France so as to confuse the issues over Fashoda.

While this war of words was in progress, Delcassé still awaited a report from the Marchand mission at Fashoda.

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51 *The Times* (New York), October 12, 1898, p. 7.

52 Ibid.
had instructed Marchand to use the British wire facilities to communicate with Paris. The message could have been filed at Khartoum by a subordinate, but Marchand decided, instead, to go to Cairo himself, and when Delcassé learned of this, he was furious. This move placed the French minister in a precarious position on the home front, for his enemies were already intimating that he had given Marchand secret orders to evacuate Fashoda, a sign that Delcassé was too soft to deal with British diplomacy.

The British, too, took advantage of the awkward situation. Salisbury, having ordered Kitchener to send the only available steamer back to Khartoum from Cairo, informed the French Government that there was no other transportation at hand to convey Marchand back to his post at Fashoda.

As if this difficulty were not enough, Delcassé was beginning to be faced with a weakening of the Dual Alliance with Russia. Political groups in France, on both the Left and the Right had become disenchanted with the agreement when it appeared that Russia did not reciprocate support.

The Russians, too, seemed unhappy with the arrangement. The

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54 Salisbury to Cromer, October 30, 1898, Ibid., no. 224, p. 187.
Dreyfus affair caused France to be a weak partner, and Russian diplomats complained that the entire Brisson ministry, in power since the fall of the Meline cabinet on June 22, was against the Russian alliance. How could such an agreement work under these circumstances? What few people of the time realized was that this secret entente was, in fact, a military alliance directed against Germany, not Britain, and that colonial questions were not covered in the pact.  

German Ambassador Münster, in Paris, told his foreign ministry in early November that Delcassé was fighting a rear-guard action in his bout with Salisbury. France, he said, was in an untenable position, and the Russians could be counted on for nothing more than moral support. In fact, General Alexei Kuropatkin, the Russian Minister of War, had told Delcassé, on a recent visit to Paris, that Russia would support a hearing of the Powers on the Egyptian Question at some future date. This was not the time for France to have a military confrontation with Britain in order to settle colonial differences.  

German diplomats in Britain tested the mood of the Salisbury cabinet to see if there was a strong sentiment for war with France. Joseph Chamberlain, British Colonial Secretary, told German Ambassador Metternich, in early November, that he thought France would evacuate Fashoda but that this turn of events would make no real difference. He was afraid, he said, that Salisbury would not choose the right moment to strike France as Bismarck had done at Ems. As soon as Britain was ready, said Chamberlain, she would present her bill to France, not only in Egypt, but all over the globe. If France refused to pay, then there would be war. Britain, he continued, was not fearful of any aid that Russia could give to France. The only naval contingent that Russia could use was the Black Sea fleet; the bulk of the Russian navy would be frozen in at northern ports as winter progressed. If, said Chamberlain, the Fashoda Crisis turned to armed conflict, he hoped that Germany would give Britain her best wishes. 57

To be sure, Chamberlain was accurate on at least two counts. France, in the wake of Russian discouragement,

57 German Ambassador Metternich to German Secretary of State Richthofen, November 6, 1898, Ibid., no. 3908, pp. 387-389.
ordered Marchand to evacuate Fashoda, and the French people were told of this decision on November 4, 1898. Lord Salisbury was informed that the Marchand mission had ceased to have any political significance and that France would accept British aid in getting Marchand from Cairo to Fashoda in order for him to follow his instructions. As Chamberlain had intimated, the order to evacuate Fashoda did nothing to cool the tempers of the British, and, in fact, the situation became more critical.

It was an opportune moment for Delcassé to send a new French ambassador to London. As early as September 19, the French Foreign Minister sent word to Salisbury that he proposed to send Paul Cambon to the Court of St. James, replacing Baron de Courcel, who had asked to be relieved of his duties. There was no objection, and Cambon arrived in London on December 7, 1898, in time to find Anglo-French relations strained almost to the breaking point.

Beginning his diplomatic career in 1882, Paul Cambon had served his country in Tunisia, in Spain, and at the
Sublime Porte before presenting his credentials at the Court of St. James. He knew the entire Egyptian Question thoroughly, having handled French negotiations with the Sultan since 1891, and he had a reputation among diplomats as being one French minister who leaned toward the British point of view in international affairs. It was well-known, for example, that Cambon distrusted Russia, favoring a French alliance with Britain over and above an entente with the Tsar.  

As Cambon took up his duties in London, the Fashoda Crisis had entered its most dangerous stage. Salisbury had told de Courcel on October 27 that so long as the French flag floated above the fort at Fashoda, he would not negotiate with the French. The Khedive, said Salisbury, had a historic claim to the Egyptian Sudan. Britain was acting in behalf of Egypt, and the rights of Britain hinged on the special position she had in that country. If the French were dissatisfied with that argument, then the Egyptian Sudan belonged to Egypt and Britain by right of conquest. To discuss the issues while Marchand remained at Fashoda would imply that France had a legal right to be there.  

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60 Ibid., p. 58.

Subsequently, on December 11, 1898, four days after Cambon reached his post in London, Marchand hauled down the French flag at Fashoda, gave most of his supplies to the British troops stationed there, and set out for home. Disobeying orders to leave Africa by way of Loango, Marchand took his mission from Fashoda to Abyssinia and on to Djibouti in order to reach the nearest ocean transportation. It was a caprice, said Marchand.  

The evacuation of Fashoda, oddly enough, marked the beginning of intense naval preparations in both Britain and France. The Plymouth and Portsmouth shipyards were placed on an around-the-clock schedule, and, in France, all military leaves were cancelled. Hasty repairs were being made to French ships at the Toulon harbor facility. Lord Salisbury attempted to explain away the unusual activity in Britain by saying that plans for increased naval preparedness had been made during the previous spring before the encounter at Fashoda.

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64 German Ambassador Hatzfeldt in London to Hohenlohe, December 22, 1898, Ibid., no. 3925, pp. 405-406.
General confidence was felt in Britain that if war came there would be no lack of materials to fight with, and there is evidence that the feeling was justifiable. Britain was well-prepared to fight a war on the sea. She had thirty-four battleships less than ten years old, all of them capable of sixteen knots per hour. France, on the other hand, had only thirteen ships of this class. Britain, at the time, probably had a navy equal in strength to the combined French, German, and Russian fleets and was at least four times as strong as the French navy. Most of the French ships, moreover, had been built prior to 1885 and were of diverse design. To make matters worse, there was a lack of trained men for the French navy, and her arsenals were ill-equipped.  

The British battle plan was issued by the Admiralty on October 26. It was expected that France would send torpedo-boats into the English Channel, and the first job of the British navy was to clear the enemy from this area. Cruiser squadrons were to shell enemy ports and blockade the French coasts. The over-all order was to get the enemy out to sea as soon as possible and bring him to action.

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67 Ibid.
The British did not hesitate to show their naval superiority to the French. Channel squadrons cruised near the French coasts, and the French blacked out their coastal cities as a result.\textsuperscript{68}

The German ministers to France and Britain watched the preparations for war with great interest. They realized that the Kaiser was delighted with the prospects, for such a disturbance tended to drive both France and Britain into the arms of Germany. The Kaiser told Tsar Nicholas II, during the Fashoda Crisis, that it was comforting to have Britain and France wooing him while Russia was, at the same time, on good terms with Germany.\textsuperscript{69} To be sure, France sought out the Kaiser only when she was in great fear of Britain, and it was to be expected that when the danger had passed, she would, again, turn her back.\textsuperscript{70}

Anything that would divert French attention away from Alsace-Lorraine was welcomed by the German diplomatic corps, where there was some apprehension that the Kaiser might be

\textsuperscript{68} Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 560.

\textsuperscript{69} For correspondence between the Kaiser and the Tsar concerning the Fashoda Crisis, see Die Grosse Politik, Vol. XIV, part 2, nos. 3900, 2905, 2913-3919, pp. 380 ff.

\textsuperscript{70} Porter, The Career of Théophile Delcassé, pp. 206-207.
tempted to trade the provinces for a French colony. Delcassé had suggested such an arrangement as he sought an entente with Germany at one point during the Fashoda Crisis. The Kaiser's answer was, of course, negative.\footnote{Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 569.}

Since France had yielded Fashoda without a struggle, the girding for war by the British was difficult for German observers to explain. The Kaiser's embassy in London surmised that Britain was flexing her muscles just in case France, when the time came to settle the dispute, made outlandish claims for territory on the Upper Nile. They thought, also, that Britain was taking a chance on pushing the French too far.\footnote{German chargé d'affaires Castell-Rudenhausen in London to Hohenlohe, November 8, 1898, Die Grosse Politik, Vol. XIV, part 2, no. 3909, pp. 389-391.} German diplomats in Paris reported to the Wilhelmstrasse that France had lost her early zeal for patriotism, thought no more of glory, hated treacherous Jews, worshipped the golden calf, and was afraid to fight.\footnote{Münster to Hohenlohe, December 18, 1898, Ibid., Vol. XIII, no. 3618, pp. 314-316.}

The French people were, indeed, filled with fear and suspicion of the British. French newspapers spoke of the untimely publication of a Blue Book on the Madagascar
negotiations and charged the British with printing the exposé at a time already filled with anxiety. The people in the south of France became fearful of a British bombardment of the Riviera when the usual winter travelers from Britain did not go to the French resorts, but went, instead, to Italy. Britain had become famous for that tactic after their leveling of Copenhagen, April 2, 1801, repeated in 1807, during the Napoleonic wars.

On January 10, 1899, Cambon approached Salisbury on the matter of opening discussions for a settlement of the Fashoda question. The French Ambassador was in a very conciliatory mood and seemed to indicate that France had given up all hope of flying the French flag over any part of the Nile Valley. In the early talks, the two men pored over a map of Africa with diligent concern.

When foreign observers in Britain learned that these conversations had started, they became suspicious that the French and the British were bargaining beyond the immediate question of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. One of the German representatives in London sent word to his government that France and


Britain had been looking at the possibility of dividing the Spanish colonies between them, but they were hard at work on an agreement over Fashoda, and he predicted an early settlement. 76

On February 10, Delcassé, knowing that the British would not sanction French forts and armed posts along the western frontier of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, proposed that France be allowed freedom of trade in central Africa with an opening on the Upper Nile. 77 Cambon had already cautioned Delcassé that it would be well for France to prepare for a delimitation of the French sphere of influence east of Lake Chad and that trade rights on the Upper Nile would be better than no rights at all. 78 Salisbury indicated that the French could have trade concessions on the Nile if the right had no territorial title attached to it. 79 After consultation with members of his cabinet, Salisbury informed Cambon that an


78 Cambon to Delcassé, January 21, 1899, Ibid., no. 3, p. 8.

agreement could be reached with France that amounted to a delimitation of spheres of influence.\textsuperscript{80}

Cambon then made the suggestion that a line be drawn following, in general, the Nile-Congo watershed and continuing northward along the eastern frontier of Wadai. France would abandon her claim to the Bahr-el-Ghazal if she were compensated for this loss by a recognition of her authority in the lands north and east of Lake Chad. Salisbury raised no objection, and this proposal furnished the basis for the final settlement.

Talks between the two governments, meanwhile, had lessened the tension and gradually diminished the menace of war; public feeling on both sides of the English Channel began to grow more calm. Queen Victoria paid a visit to Nice on March 13 and was respectfully received, but there was no cheering from the populace.\textsuperscript{82}

On March 21, France and Britain signed an agreement providing for the appointment of commissioners who would

\textsuperscript{80}Cambon to Delcassé, January 21, 1899, Documents diplomatiques français, correspondance additionnelle, no. 3, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{81}Cambon to Delcassé, January 12, 1899, Ibid., no. 1, pp. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{82}Münster to Bülow, March 13, 1899, Die Große Politik, Vol. XIV, part 2, no. 3940, pp. 420-421.
make a study and establish a delimitation which conformed to a line drawn from a point where the French Congo-Congo Free State boundary met the Nile-Congo watershed to eleven degrees north latitude and thence along the boundary between Wadai and Darfur. The French Government promised to confine its activities and political influence to the territories west of this line, and Great Britain agreed to restrict her influence and expansion to the region east of the line.  

Delcassé readily expressed relief and satisfaction over the agreement. German Ambassador Münster in Paris reported to Berlin that Delcassé appeared to him like a man that had escaped a great danger. To the Senate, in Paris, Delcassé declared that there was now a great deal of sand available for the Gallic cock to scratch in with ease, and the British duck might now rejoice with full liberties in the marshes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

Now that an accord had been reached on Fashoda, Britain and France continued to discuss matters of mutual concern to both countries. For one thing, the role of France in Egypt and Tunisia had not been discussed in the talks on Fashoda.

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84 Giffen, Fashoda, p. 91.
French fishing rights on the Grand Banks had been a bone of contention between the two countries for at least sixty years. Property rights of British and French nationals in the New Hebrides needed to be resolved, and British cotton merchants were interested in working out a tariff agreement with France in her colony of Madagascar. Anglo-French spheres of influence in Siam required definition, and the question of Morocco deserved special attention.  

Since internal disturbances in that country made it a power vacuum where any European Power might find a pretext for intervention, both France and Britain were looking for expedient measures to prevent such an occurrence. With possession of Morocco, an enemy Power could control the approaches to Gibraltar on the Atlantic and could also dominate the western Mediterranean. Britain's concern was, of course, Gibraltar, and France had a newly-acquired sphere of influence to protect in West Africa.

After some five years of sporadic negotiations, the famous treaty known as the Entente Cordiale was signed on April 8, 1904. By this agreement, Britain was given free

85 Eubank, Paul Cambon, pp. 66 ff.
86 Ibid., pp. 87-89.
rein in Egypt with no limitation placed on the time that she could occupy the area. France was given the right to maintain order in Morocco and make necessary reforms in that country, but the political status was not to be disturbed, and British treaty rights in Morocco were to be respected by France. Both nations agreed to give each other diplomatic support on the agreement concerning Morocco and Egypt. The other problems, including Tunisia, which fell within the French sphere, were settled in the same amicable spirit.

Though not an alliance, the Entente Cordiale resolved several outstanding disputes. It stemmed directly from the Fashoda Crisis, after a long series of clashes over colonial questions, and it withstood the tests of German attempts to discover the precise nature of the entente and strain the relationship of Britain and France in the first and second Moroccan Crises of 1905 and 1911. The Entente Cordiale "did not bring Britain into the war of 1914, but as a result of this understanding, each government knew where the sympathies of the other lay."

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87 Albrecht-Carrière, A Diplomatic History of Europe, p. 243.  
88 Eubank, Paul Cambon, p. 89.
Responsibility for the Fashoda Crisis rests in the expansionist policies of Gabriel Hanotaux, who dominated the Quai d'Orsay from 1894 to 1898. He was the real promoter of the Marchand mission, which had its origin in the desire to add territory to a growing list of French colonies. For years France had fretted over Britain's occupation of Egypt and her own failure to co-operate in that venture, and now she decided to force the issue by sending a French expedition into the region of the Upper Nile where it would serve as a pawn in the negotiations. France might possibly realize a dream of empire from the Congo to the Red Sea, which at the same time, would frustrate British plans to build a railroad and an empire from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope. Hanotaux freely admits, in his publication Fachoda, that all French activity in Africa, at the time, pointed in this direction.¹

The territory in question was not the entire Egyptian Sudan, but only that part of the Nile Valley drained by the

¹Hanotaux, Fachoda, p. 104.
Bahr-el-Ghazal. It lay in a vast triangle between the White Nile, the Bahr-el-Arab, and the Nile-Congo watershed. Egyptian authority had vanished in this region after the fall of Khartoum to the Mahdist forces some thirteen years earlier. French Foreign Minister Delcassé was able to say that the country bordering the White Nile was res nullius, derelict land belonging to no one, because it had been abandoned by the Egyptian Government. The Marchand mission was at Fashoda by right of priority in cast-off fragments of the former Egyptian empire.

If the Nile Valley were still a part of that empire, what right did Britain have to be in Uganda? Why was Italy in Senaar and Belgium in Lado? All of these territories were once a part of the Khedive's domain. France was only following the lead of other nations.

Furthermore, France claimed to be the first European nation in the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Frenchmen had been steadily penetrating the area since 1895, and Marchand had beaten Kitchener to Fashoda by some three months. There was a question, however, as to whether or not this occupation had been an effective one. The chief weakness of the French contention was the small force of men under Marchand's command, and the matter of supply and communication made his
position even more difficult; it took six months for letters
and supplies to reach Fashoda by way of Loango, and, after
the encounter, the French were driven to use the British wire
facilities in Egypt.

The British were able to offer strong claims on more
positive ground by insisting that the Egyptian Sudan belonged
to the Khedive of Egypt by historical right and that the
title had not been lost when the Mahdi revolted. Kitchener
had taken the Mahdist capital, Omdurman, which implied the
recovery of sovereignty. Egypt was famous for her misgovern-
ment of the Sudan, but this was no argument to cloud the
title.

Egyptian rights, according to the British, rested not
only on a historic basis but also upon the economic necessity
of controlling the Nile River. Her very life depended upon
that stream, and there was some fear that whoever controlled
the Upper Nile would be able to dominate Egypt. It should
be noted, however, that had France been able to maintain
Marchand at Fashoda, her only control of the Nile would have
been that of one tributary, the Bahr-el-Ghazal. All other
important rivers flowing into the Nile would have remained in
the hands of Britain and Egypt.
Britain placed herself in a position of responsibility as between Egypt and the Egyptian Sudan; the ancient rights of Egypt and the necessity for the control of the Upper Nile were worded to exclude the French and maintain British rights. Britain initiated the reconquest of the Egyptian Sudan, and it is doubtful that Egypt would have undertaken such a task single handed. The military operations were put forward under the flag of Egypt, but the commander-in-chief was a British officer.

Kitchener's victory at Khartoum seemed to strengthen the British contentions in that she could now claim the rights of a victor. It gave the British two titles to the Egyptian Sudan, cut through the flimsy paper arguments, and dispelled the fiction that the reconquest of the Sudan was strictly an Egyptian operation. Britain was now in a position of partnership with Egypt.

The temper of the two European rivals, especially of Great Britain, was dangerous. War seemed imminent. While France showed some patience and conciliation, Britain took a firm stand and refused to discuss the matter while Marchand remained at Fashoda. This position killed the effectiveness of the main French objective, that of using the Marchand mission as a pawn in the negotiations over the Egyptian Question.
To the French, it seemed that they were being pressed to withdraw before their case was heard. They had arrived first at Fashoda, but the British demand for their withdrawal constituted an ultimatum. Actually, Britain feared that negotiations while Marchand remained at Fashoda might admit the legality of his position.

In view of stiff British resistance and token support from Russia, Delcassé's retreat is understandable. France was in no position to fight a war over Fashoda at a time when there was so much internal turmoil on the domestic front. There is some evidence that Delcassé hoped to delay the proceedings long enough to build a wall of defense when he asked for time to receive a personal report from Marchand. As it happened, however, British wire facilities were placed at the disposal of France, and the pretext for delay was lost.

Continuation of Delcassé’s rear guard action brought about the order for Marchand to evacuate Fashoda, and this move was probably the turning point of the Fashoda Crisis, even though it can be said that the removal of Marchand did not at once settle the issue. The British Cabinet adopted an uncompromising posture after the order was given. Salisbury could not retreat without risking his political position, for
the British press and the opposition party in Parliament both demanded that he stand firm.

The most alarming aspect of the Fashoda Crisis was the preparation for war in Britain after France had yielded Fashoda without a struggle. To the French, it looked as if Britain was seeking another excuse to make war on them and that the British lion was in a killing mood, but Britain, in all probability, saw very clearly in the Fashoda Crisis that Russia would not aid France, and, if she did, the Russian navy was not a formidable foe. British rearmament was initiated, evidently, to frighten France into a modification of her demands for territory in the final settlement.

To Paul Cambon must go the credit for putting great diplomatic skill to work and moving the crisis toward a settlement. It would seem that since Britain had demanded evacuation of Fashoda before talks could begin and since France had complied with that request, the next move for a settlement should have come from the British Foreign Office.

The fact that diplomacy had begun to function in January, 1899, eased the menace of war, and the final settlement in March of that year marked the formal passing of the Fashoda Crisis. Britain had won a war of nerves, and France had wavered in the peril.
The Fashoda Crisis taught France a sharp lesson in the use of the Dual Alliance. Britain was not afraid of it, and Germany had found that there were limitations in the agreement. It was true that the alliance did not cover colonial questions, but colonies were becoming more important in European politics, and such territories were becoming dear to European nations. France saw in the Fashoda Crisis that a treaty with Russia was not enough to cover her conflicting policies of revanche and colonies at the same time.

The Fashoda Crisis marked the end of chronic bitterness and enmity between France and Britain, for in less than six years after Marchand and Kitchener confronted each other at Fashoda, the entire world learned that France and Britain were virtual allies in Africa. With the Entente Cordiale, France found in Morocco a compensation for the Bahr-el-Ghazal, and a balance was effected, Morocco against Egypt.

The dispute over Fashoda has sometimes been called an affair by historians. This choice of words tends to minimize the significance of the clash, and one has but to follow a day-by-day account of the diplomatic correspondence of the time to see very clearly that it was a crisis-hour in the history of Europe. If there is a stronger word than crisis available, it should immediately be applied to that period
in history when one rifle shot fired in the mud-hut village of Fashoda, hundreds of miles from Europe, could have touched off a global war. The amazing thing about the story of Fashoda is that such a shot was not fired.
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