THE FASHODA CRISIS AS A FACTOR
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH
FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE
THIRD REPUBLIC

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1963
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-French rivalry in Egypt was certainly one of the primary causes for the Fashoda incident; but one would not understand the true character of it if one did not put it in its place in this vast question of the partition of Africa which was one of the great matters at the end of the 19th century.¹

The above statement by Gabriel Hanotaux, French apologist for the Fashoda crisis, provides an excellent point of departure for the study of a perplexing diplomatic problem. The Fashoda crisis of 1898 does not easily lend itself to a logical and orderly analysis. The origins of the incident are deep-rooted in the Anglo-French rivalry for territorial possessions in Africa. Historians have offered a wide range of views with respect to the essential factors involved in the affair. The topic has undergone intense examination and reexamination over the past sixty years and is by no means a closed subject for historical investigation.² There is a definite need for a clearer understanding of the forces at play in the diplomatic negotiations involving Fashoda.

²See Bibliographical Essay.
Not the least of the problems awaiting further investigation is the French justification for their position during the diplomatic struggle between the leading European colonial powers, France and England. What were the arguments put forth by French diplomats, and what were the reactions of the representatives of the English Government? In what respect did the French Foreign Office prepare itself for the eventual decision to evacuate Fashoda?

One can hardly understand the intricacies of the French position during the Fashoda crisis without, at first, noting some of the more significant considerations in the historical development of the Anglo-French struggle. The remainder of the chapter will, therefore, touch upon the highlights of Anglo-French relations dating roughly from early 1894 to September, 1898. Particular emphasis will be given to the study of French diplomatic activities from January to September, 1898.

French interest in Egypt began in the days of Napoleon's conquests. But French preoccupation with the upper Nile region originated in the late 1880's and grew steadily in the 1890's. French expansionists had visions of uniting French colonies in west Africa, namely French Congo and the Niger area, with Obock, an east African possession. If France could extend her influence from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, then she would have some control.
over the waters of the Nile - Egypt's lifeline. Such a development would necessarily be incompatible with both the British position in Egypt and the imperialist dream of a continuous British colony from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope.

The French Government sought on several occasions to bring about the British evacuation of Egypt. Having failed to achieve this end, French leaders resolved to make a military thrust at the upper Nile and to force an agreement on the Egyptian question. As early as 1890 de Brazza, governor of the French Congo, had appointed Liotard to occupy the Ubangi country with the hope that France might acquire an open outlet on the Nile for her west African possessions. In 1893, President Carnot, in an interview with Major Monteil, the commanding officer of the upper Ubangi, expressed the intention of opening the Egyptian question. If this ambition were to be realized, it would be necessary to send a French expeditionary force to occupy some point in the vast territory of the Sudan. Major Monteil in a note to Lebon, an Under Secretary of State in the Colonial Office, revealed this daring plan.

It was last month that Mr. Delcassé, Under Secretary of State, requested me to

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command a mission destined to attempt, leaving from the upper Ubangi, to reach the Nile and to establish a French post in the vicinity of Fashoda, a point situated on the shore of the confluence of Sobat and the Bahr-el-Ghazal rivers. 4

Monteil argued that the Sudan had been abandoned by Egypt and England. Thus the upper Nile region could be regarded as an unclaimed territory.

After Gordon's death in 1885, the British abandoned efforts to recover the Sudan. In place of direct military action they relied upon diplomacy to prevent intrusion into the upper Nile valley by other European powers. The Anglo-German agreement of 1890 and the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1891 guaranteed the exclusion of Germany and Italy from the area. The British, also, on May 12, 1894 made an agreement with King Leopold II, the Belgian ruler of the Congo Free State, in an attempt to create a buffer to French ambitions. Article II of this convention granted to King Leopold, for the rest of his life, a sizable area on the west bank of the upper Nile with Fashoda at the northern extremity. Leopold was also leased a large portion of the Bahr-el-Ghazal region. In addition, Leopold recognized the British 'sphere of influence' in the Nile valley as

4 Documents Diplomatiques Francais, series I, volume 11, no. 65, March 7, 1894 - cited hereafter as DDF.
defined by the Anglo-German agreement of 1890.\textsuperscript{5}

The French answer to the Anglo-Congolese treaty was the Franco-Congolese treaty of August 14, 1894. By this agreement the French won access to the basin of the upper Ubangi and in this manner thwarted British efforts to discourage French incursions on the upper Nile. Leopold renounced any intentions of occupation and political influence in the Bahr-el-Ghazal area. Shortly after the Franco-Congolese agreement, the expedition under the command of Monteil was replaced by an expedition headed by Colonel Liotard. Liotard was instructed to extend French influence in the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the upper Nile valley, but he was not provided with sufficient means to facilitate such an adventure. Meanwhile Her Majesty's Government had become extremely suspicious of French machinations. Rumors, to the effect that France would endeavor to make good her claim in the upper Nile valley and then confront Britain with a fait accompli, led to the pronouncement of what was later to be dubbed the 'Grey declaration.'

In reply in the House of Commons to an interpella-
tion relating to French pretentions in Sudan, Edward Grey, an Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, delivered a firm

and explicit policy statement.

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 perfectly well known to the French Government that it would be an unfriendly act, and would be viewed so by England. ̄

(March 28, 1895)

British historians, among them G. P. Gooch, claim that this speech was a stiff warning to the French and remained the pillar of British policy for the next nine years. Grey, in his autobiography, reflected that "it was, at any rate, evident that no other power except Egypt or someone acting on behalf of Egypt had any claim whatever to the Sudan and the Nile valley." French circles greeted the "Grey declaration" with astonishment and anger.

Banotaux, the French Foreign Minister, regarded the Grey speech with the utmost contempt. On April 5, 1895, Banotaux declared in the Senate:

The position taken by France is the following - the regions under discussion are under the complete sovereignty of the Sultan. They have a legitimate master, it is the Khedive. Therefore we say to the English Government: "You declare that by virtue of the convention of 1890 England has placed a part of these territories in its sphere of influence. Very well, let us know at least to what territories your claims apply; tell us how far

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7 Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916 (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), volume 1, p. 18.
The sphere of influence extends, which according to you commences on the left bank of the Nile and extends northward indefinitely. 8

The Sudan, in Hanotaux's mind, belonged not to England but to the Sultan of Turkey. Hence, France had as much right to the territory as any European power. The République Française (March 30, 1895), voicing a general response to the Grey speech, caustically referred to it as "an impertinence which it is the duty of the government to meet with dignity." 9 England issued no reply to Hanotaux's suggestion of a definite delimitation of territory because she could not effectively claim a territory which she had not yet conquered. It soon became Kitchener's task to secure this claim.

In early 1896 the French Government decided to resume an earlier project and send an expedition to the upper Nile valley. Captain Marchand, the leader of the expedition, courageously set out to establish a French claim to this area. He had orders to avoid hostilities and to bear in mind that his force was too small to make an actual conquest. According to the eminent diplomatic historian, William Langer, "the purpose of the Marchand


mission, whatever may have been said of it later, was to get a footing on the upper Nile to serve as a pawn in later negotiations with the British about Egypt.\textsuperscript{10} Marchand was told to establish friendly relations with the Mahdists, a curious body of religious fanatics, and to avoid open conflict at all costs. D. W. Brogan asserts that the Marchand mission, in the hope of disrupting British policy, had permission, if necessary, to come to a friendly agreement with the Mahdist power.\textsuperscript{11} A further purpose of the Marchand mission, though of less significance, was to give French possessions in west Africa an outlet on the Nile.

The Marchand mission was the most spectacular and well known French expedition in the period from 1896 through 1898. The French master plan provided for the formation of expeditions using Abyssinia as a home base. From Abyssinia these missions were to proceed to the Nile valley, where they were to join forces with the Marchand expedition. The most important expedition, led by de Bonchamps, advanced from Addis Ababa towards Fashoda; but sickness, desertion and inadequate supplies compelled it to return to Addis Ababa and spoiled plans for a rendezvous of two large forces


at Fashoda. Marchand was more successful than de Bonchamps and managed to reach his destination, his force still intact, in July, 1898. Hanotaux had exclaimed to Marchand as the latter was leaving Paris in May, 1896: "you are going to fire a pistol shot on the Nile; we accept all its consequences."12

At this juncture it is relevant to our story to examine the attitudes of Marchand's three most important subordinates - Charles Michel, Charles Castellani, and Lieutenant Mangin. Each fully subscribed to French ambitions and emphasized the urgency for the success of their mission. Michel, in his account of the Marchand mission, spelled out a major long range French objective. "To the English dream which is summed up by the phrase 'from the Cape to Cairo' we now counter with the French dream 'from the Atlantic to the Red Sea'."13 Charles Castellani, Marchand's biographer, was no less concerned than Michel with the rejuvenation of French grandeur and glory. In a letter published in La Dépêche of Toulouse, August 27, 1897, he stated: "We went into the Ubangi in order to occupy upper Egypt, to inform the Dervishes of our force, to float a boat on the Nile and to reunite, if it is possible, our colony of Obock, on the Red Sea, to that of the Congo, on

12Brogan, p. 322.
the Atlantic."¹⁴ Lieutenant Mangin's views were in complete harmony with those of Michel and Castellani. In negative terms, he envisioned the French purpose to be the obstruction of English activities in Africa. In a letter (June 10, 1898) to General Hervé he wrote:

The desired outcome is to remove all pretense of English occupation of Egypt, to put an end to the dream of our good friends, who want to reunite Egypt with the Cape and their possessions of eastern Africa with those of the Royal Niger and Company, which would prevent us from ever joining the Sudan to the French Congo.¹⁵

Hence the testimony of Michel, Castellani, and Mangin assures us that French goals were far reaching in scope, and that the Marchand mission was much more than an exploratory excursion.

A brief look at British activities from 1896 to 1898 shows that the British were determined to allow no European power to make inroads in the Nile valley. Prime Minister Salisbury regarded the exclusion of friendly powers from control of the waters of the upper Nile as a primary goal of British foreign policy. The motives for the British decision to reconquer the Sudan are not altogether clear, but it is certain that fear of French

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encroachments was a principal consideration. One outspoken expansionist, Winston Churchill, made an especially astute observation in referring to the reconquest of the Sudan. "The diplomatist said: 'It is to forestall the French.' The politician said: 'It is to score over the Radicals.' The ridiculous person said: 'It is to restore the Khedive rule in Sudan.'"16

In March, 1896, the London Government instructed General Kitchener to advance as far as Bongela. Salisbury informed the French ambassador that Great Britain desired to destroy Mahdism. Salisbury, in 1897 was greatly concerned over the possibility of the French reaching the Nile. Rodd, a British agent in Cairo, concurred in this judgment and urged that an expedition be sent along the Nile in the hope of anticipating any French force. In a letter to Lord Lansdowne, Salisbury forewarned Lansdowne of a possible diplomatic crisis.

The two evils...are; on the one side, the strain upon the Egyptian Army, as well as upon the Queen's...on the other, the diplomatic difficulties which might be interposed if any French explorer reaches the Nile before we have taken Khartoum. I am not greatly impressed by this danger, because we shall have to meet it anyhow. If we put into execution the claim of the Anglo-German agreement of 1890, I have no doubt we shall have a very lively protest from the French and I doubt that it will be any louder, or.

seriously louder, because upon some spot in the Nile valley a French explorer may have succeeded in inducing some chief to accept a treaty. The diplomatic question will be interesting and difficult, but the increase of those qualities conferred by a French adventurer’s "effective occupation" will not be serious.17 (October 22, 1897)

This letter spells out in concise terms that Salisbury was resolved to recognize no French claims to the upper Nile valley. Nevertheless, the British decided to let matters take their course and by doing so helped to set the stage for the clash of British and French interests at Fashoda.

In early 1897 a conflict of claims between France and Britain arose in the Niger River country. This dispute was referred to a joint commission which convened in Paris. While negotiations were being conducted, the British ambassador, Monson, met with and reminded the French Foreign Minister, Hanotaux, that Her Majesty's Government would not tolerate any infringement on her rights in the Nile valley.

If other questions are adjusted the Government will make no difficulty about this condition (necessity of territorial adjustment in the Niger region). But in doing so they cannot forget that the possession of this territory may in the future open up a road to the Nile, and they must not be understood to admit that any other European power than Great Britain has any claim to occupy

any part of the valley of the Nile. The views of the British Government upon this matter were plainly stated by Sir Edward Grey and were formally communicated to the French Government. Her Majesty's present Government entirely adhere to the language that was on this occasion employed by their predecessors. 18

Hanotaux replied that any mixing of the Nile and Niger problems might prejudice the Niger Commission. Hanotaux also recalled that he had previously protested the 'Grey declaration.' Thus the two nations restated their divergent views with respect to Sudan. 19

In early 1898, France and Britain almost came to blows over the upper Niger region, but a compromise agreement was finally reached in June, 1898. Throughout this quarrel British public opinion, as reflected in newspapers and periodicals, was quite rabid in its support of British claims. 20 Salisbury assumed a steadfast pose and refused to make any important concessions. The French Government, wanting to avoid trouble, came to terms with the British. Hanotaux maintained later in Fachoda that he had hoped the agreement on west Africa would lead to a compromise accord with respect to the Nile. He laid blame for the failure of his plan at the feet of his successor, Delcassé, for

neglecting to open negotiations aimed at a diplomatic settlement before Kitchener had the opportunity to reach Fashoda. But was it possible for Delcassé to have done this?

A brief survey of French diplomatic documents from January, through August, 1898 can give us some penetrating insights into the activities of the French Foreign Office prior to the diplomatic crisis. It is imperative to attempt to discover how carefully the French Foreign Office prepared itself for the Anglo-French confrontation. It is also necessary to determine what short term and long range concessions the French hoped to win in the event Anglo-French discussions might ensue from a conflict of claims in the Nile basin. From the British angle it is useful to keep abreast of official British policy and to bear in mind the general temper of public opinion.

The French Foreign Office followed British public opinion and official maneuvers with respect to the Nile with an intense interest. De Surrel, a French vice-consul in Manchester, in a note of January 7 to the Foreign Minister, Hanotaux, observed that the Manchester Guardian was highly critical of the Marchand expedition. The Guardian, reported de Surrel, predicted that sooner or later the question of the English title to the occupation of

21 Hanotaux, p. 118ff.
Egypt would be raised. In such a case a distasteful situation would result—a conflict between France and England. "The Marchand mission, the end of which is to join the French Congo to Obock and the Red Sea, is nothing other than a counter project undertaken in opposition to the one which we have formed to unite Cairo to the Cape." Hanotaux received further information about the English reaction from Geoffray, a French Charge d'Affaires in London. In a letter dated January 12, Geoffray explained that the English press and public had become extremely apprehensive as a result of French advances in the Sudan and wanted to know the goal of the Marchand mission. Geoffray indicated that there were two dominant English attitudes with regard to the Marchand mission. The partisans of one group considered the mission as merely an exploratory venture and of little political significance. Others maintained that the 'Grey declaration' was the foundation of British policy and therefore regarded the efforts of Marchand as a bit unfriendly.

Baron de Courcel, the French ambassador to England, also sensed a growing uneasiness among English officials. He contended that some English officials hoped for an Anglo-French agreement on questions relating to Africa, but that

22 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 3, January 12, 1898.
23 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 10, January 10, 1898.
reports of French expeditions operating in the valley of the upper Nile tended to arouse the fears of patriots. De Courcel, in a discussion with Prime Minister Salisbury, on February 9 detected what he believed to be a disguised threat when mention was made of the Marchand mission. In de Courcel’s estimation, it appeared that Salisbury wished to subordinate British internal politics to the advancement of English control in Egypt and the upper Nile region. De Courcel pointed out that the English Government stuck to the belief that Egypt had reserved the legal right to reclaim the Sudan territory which had been evacuated in 1885.26

While French agents were busily following developments in England, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Colonial Office were quietly directing the activities of the Marchand mission. Marchand, in early January, 1898, was directed to conclude treaties with chiefs of all tribes with whom he came in contact.27 Lebon, Minister of Colonies, guessed that Marchand would reach his destination sometime in July.28 Time was a crucial factor in the

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24DGF, series I, volume 14, no. 32, January 18, 1898.
25DGF, series I, volume 14, no. 47, February 9, 1898.
26DGF, series I, volume 14, no. 66, February 26, 1898.
27DGF, series I, volume 14, no. 4, January 8, 1898.
28DGF, series I, volume 14, no. 28, January 24, 1898.
French plans, for the French could hardly establish a claim to the upper Nile if the British succeeded in reaching Fashoda before them. The Foreign Minister, Hanotaux, had hoped that the expeditions from Abyssinia would provide material aid for the Marchand party, but this did not occur.

In the midst of growing Anglo-French antagonism during the furious race to the upper Nile, a significant change took place in the composition of the French Government. The Mélina Ministry fell on June 15 and was succeeded by the Brisson Ministry on June 28, while Théophile Delcassé replaced Hanotaux in the Quai d'Orsay. Consequently, the opportunity to solve the Nile question was left to the new but able Foreign Minister, Delcassé. To many contemporaries the advent of Delcassé heralded a shift from a fundamentally anti-British Foreign Ministry to one in which a friendship with Britain was considered a highly desirable objective. Delcassé was a disciple of Gambetta and was favorably disposed towards a triple entente which would include England and Russia.

I am certainly a sincere and enlightened friend of the English, but not so much as to sacrifice to them the interests of France.... Be convinced that the English, good politicians as they are, esteem only those allies who take account of their interests and know how to make themselves respected. 29 (Delcassé, November 6,

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A. J. P. Taylor maintains that Delcassé abandoned hope for a Franco-German rapprochement and thus attempted to secure an entente with England and Russia.  

It must be recalled that France had concluded an alliance with Russia in 1894. This agreement consisted of a series of political and military conventions designed to halt the possibility of aggression on the part of the Triple Alliance. The extension of the alliance system to include England, argues Taylor, would not receive the assent of French public opinion unless the colonial terms were made acceptable.

Soon after taking office Delcassé, working closely with the Minister of Colonies Trouillot, began to make careful preparations to put his ideas into effect. Hannotaux, on the eve of his departure from office, was optimistic, though deluded, in thinking that Britain would negotiate on the Nile question.

The taking of Khartoum, if it is accomplished towards the end of the summer or in the course of the autumn, will give way to negotiations in view of which France has taken, by a persevering action, the positions of which I have just spoken. In these negotiations, all the Powers which have interests in

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Egypt will have an equal part to take.\textsuperscript{32}

Proceeding from this bold assumption, Trouillot ordered Marchand to entrench himself firmly at Fashoda and to avoid armed combat with the Mahdists. Trouillot warned Delcassé that

the moment will not be far off in arriving when in the eyes of the interested powers, we will have to legitimatize our action in the valley of the upper Nile. The question will be posed with a certain acuteness, without doubt, as soon as the Sirdar's army draws near Fashoda or as soon as the presence of the Marchand mission is known.\textsuperscript{33}

Trouillot added that France could justify her action to Great Britain on the grounds that a state of anarchy in the upper Nile threatened the security of French interests in the upper Ubangi and the upper Congo.\textsuperscript{34} France, then, could act in order to arrest an impending disaster.

Trouillot also outlined a plan to attain the adherence of the Sultan of Turkey to French rule in the upper Nile. The Sultan would delegate the sovereignty of the upper Nile to France. France would acquire a long term lease on this territory, while the Sultan would not have to relinquish his nominal authority. This was, indeed, a clever scheme, but it never had an opportunity to materi-

\textsuperscript{32}DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 236, Hanotaux to Cogordan, General Consul in Cairo, June 21, 1898.

\textsuperscript{33}DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 246, July 4, 1898.

\textsuperscript{34}DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 246.
Continued preparation was carried out in the French Foreign Ministry throughout the months of July and August in an effort to meet the threat of a potential Kitchener-Marchand conflict. It was hoped that England would feel obligated to make compensations in order to justify the acquisition of immense territories in the Sudan. For Marchand resolutely to hold his position on the upper Nile was crucial if France was to maintain a strong bargaining position.\(^{36}\) The rumor, from the lips of the Khedive, that the British intended to annihilate the Marchand mission, did not serve to foster optimism in the French Foreign Ministry.\(^{37}\) It appears that Geoffray properly assessed the situation when he noted: "everything forecasts that the final struggle is near."\(^{38}\)

The summer of 1898 was equally a period of watchful waiting on the part of the English. Sir Edmond Monson, British ambassador to France, carefully gauged conditions in France and reported his conclusions to Salisbury.

\(^{35}\)DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 246.

\(^{36}\)DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 258, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Note, July 18, 1898.

\(^{37}\)DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 261, de Reverseaux to Delcassé, July 25, 1898.

\(^{38}\)DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 305, Geoffray to Delcassé, August 27, 1898.
Monson was skeptical of the efficacy of the Franco-Russian alliance. Nevertheless, he assured Salisbury, the alliance was too valuable to be foresaken by either of the contracting parties. Monson reported that the Russian dignitary, Count Kapnist, had deprecated any notion that Russia would have aided France in the event that a rupture occurred between France and England over the question of the upper Nile. Monson warned, however, that "it would be extremely dangerous were we to base our policy in any controversy with France upon the assumption that we should be allowed to deal with her as our sole enemy."  

Monson's appraisal of the state of the 'French mind' is worth mentioning. He found the colonial group to be noisy but concluded that the public knew little and cared little about the Nile question. Yet he warned that "the effect of the fall of Khartoum and of the predominance of British prestige in the Eastern Sudan will certainly be most irritating on the public opinion of France."  

With utter indifference to French sentiments, the British Government continued its efforts to extend its

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39 British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, volume 1, no. 184, Monson to Salisbury, July 4, 1898.  
40 British Documents, volume 1, no. 186, Monson to Salisbury, August 6, 1898.
sphere of influence over the whole of the Sudan region. On August 2, instructions were sent to Kitchener ordering him personally to command a British flotilla on the White Nile and to proceed as far as Fashoda. Kitchener was asked to pay special attention to two points of policy.

The first of these is that in dealing with any French or Abyssinian authorities who may be encountered, nothing should be said or done which would in any way imply a recognition on behalf of Her Majesty's Government of a title to possession on behalf of France or Abyssinia to any portion of the Nile valley. It is possible that a French force may be found in occupation of some portion of the Nile valley. Should this contingency arise, the course of action to be pursued must depend so much on local circumstances that it is neither necessary nor desirable to furnish Sir Herbert Kitchener with detailed instructions. Her Majesty's Government entertain full confidence in Sir Herbert Kitchener's judgment and discretion.

Salisbury reminded Kitchener that British policy rested upon the views set forth in the 'Grey declaration.' If Kitchener should come in contact with any French force, he was directed to regard its presence as "an infringement of the rights both of Great Britain and of the Khedive." The famous and decisive battle at Khartoum on September 2 served to eradicate any major indigenous threat in the upper Nile valley. It was a popular victory in England and seemed to leave no doubt of England’s

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41 British Documents, volume 1, no. 185, Salisbury to Cromer, August 2, 1898.

42 British Documents, volume 1, no. 185.
preponderant military strength in the Nile valley. Shortly after this victory, Kitchener resolved to act upon prior instructions, and to continue to Fashoda. After gathering together five steamers and a sizable force of Sudanese and English troops, he began to make his way up the Nile. At this point the stage was set for the dramatic Kitchener-Marchand encounter, the diplomatic crisis which followed, and the final French humiliation.
CHAPTER II

THE CRISIS: THE EARLY AND MIDDLE STAGES

The Marchand-Kitchener meeting of September 18 came as a surprise to no one. Both the British and French Governments were well prepared to withstand the "shock" of the fateful encounter. Unfortunately for the French, the repercussions following the Anglo-French confrontation were unforeseen and nearly tragic.

The situation in the French Foreign Office in the two weeks prior to the Fashoda meeting was uncertain and fluid. Marguerite Steinheil, a confidante of President Félix Faure, noticed the mounting tension in France and posed some pertinent questions—questions which Delcassé must have been pondering. "On the 4th, the Sirdar Kitchener had reached Khartoum....And now the crisis is nearing. What are Kitchener's orders? If Marchand is at Fashoda, and Kitchener hears of it, what will he do?"

Delcassé realized the situation was tenuous, and that the Marchand mission faced considerable difficulties. The Foreign Minister, at this juncture, still argued that France

felt compelled to struggle against barbarity in a country ravaged by anarchy.\textsuperscript{44} However, a note from Geoffray contained a sobering message. Geoffray suggested that the English Government enjoyed a considerable increase of prestige as a result of the conquest of Khartoum. Many English newspapers, reported Geoffray, whispered not a word of French rights in the Bahr-el-Ghazal territory. Others spoke in a reserved manner of the necessity of opening negotiations with France. Still others showed a jingoistic tendency in refusing to accept the presence of Frenchmen on the banks of the Nile.\textsuperscript{45} In a later dispatch Geoffray informed Delcassé that the principal newspapers, such as the \textit{Times}, referred to the 'Grey declaration' in support of their arguments for British supremacy in the upper Nile valley.\textsuperscript{46}

The Delcassé-Monson discussion on September 8 served to ease the diplomatic relations between the contesting nations. Delcassé, in this meeting, gave notice to Monson that the Marchand mission was not a belligerent force. Monson, in his account of the meeting, found that Delcassé

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 329, Delcassé to Trouillot, September 7, 1898.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 330, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 7, 1898.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 348, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 12, 1898.
was calm and conciliatory but evasive. Delcassé congratulated Monson on the British victory at Khartoum, and then he said he presumed that a British flotilla would hastily push up the White Nile. Delcassé explained that Marchand was an "emissary of civilization," and that he did not have the authority to discuss questions which involved British and French Governments. He expressed the hope that the foregoing information would be sent to Kitchener, that a collision could be prevented, and that all outstanding differences between France and England might be settled in an amicable manner. Monson, although impressed by Delcassé's sincerity, adroitly summed up the British official opinion, "But while they very naturally try to argue that 'logically' that occupation should now come to an end, they see clearly enough that the recent operations have simply clinched our hold upon Egypt more tightly, and that British 'practice' cannot be assimilated to French 'logic.'"  

Salisbury moved quickly to dispel any illusions in Delcassé's mind concerning the ownership of the upper Nile region. As a result of British military victories, he wrote to Monson, "all the territories which were subject to the Khalifa passed to the British and Egyptian Governments

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47British Documents, volume 1, no. 188, Monson to Salisbury, September 8, 1898.
by right of conquest." He quickly added that this right was not open to discussion. In this vigorous policy statement appeared the first de facto claim to the Sudan. Britain now reinforced theoretical claims with concrete, military action. The possibility of war would now be a central factor in any clash of claims over territories in the upper Nile.

While Delcassé was trying to prepare the British for the presence of Marchand at Fashoda, he was flooded with information emanating from French agents in Egypt. Lefèvre-Pontalis, French consul in Cairo, notified Delcassé on September 8 that the British force under Kitchener was on the way up the Nile and could reach Fashoda in about a week's time. Kitchener was informed by defeated Mahdists that Europeans were in control of Fashoda. The Havas Agency, an Alexandrian news service, reported to Delcassé that the press declared unanimously that Kitchener would fire upon the whites at Fashoda. Geoffray informed Delcassé of a rumor that Kitchener would surround the Marchand party in

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48 British Documents, volume 1, no. 189, Salisbury to Monson, September 9, 1898.
49 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 334, Lefèvre-Pontalis to Delcassé, September 8, 1898.
50 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 334.
such a way as to prevent all communication with the exterior and interfere with the free flow of supplies. Marchand would then find himself in an awkward position and might be forced to surrender Fashoda to a superior army.\textsuperscript{51}

Lefèvre-Pontalis picked up some interesting information from two prominent officials of the Egyptian Government, namely Boutras Pacha and Fakhri Pacha. These gentlemen believed that an accord had been reached in the September 8 Monson-Delcassé meeting, and that Marchand would be forced to retreat from Fashoda.\textsuperscript{52} The Egyptian press also agreed that an Anglo-French rapprochement resulted from the September 8 talk. The \textit{Egyptian Gazette} estimated that "the question of Fashoda has been provisionally settled in Paris...and that instructions have been sent to the Sirdar and to Major Marchand."\textsuperscript{53} The evening paper, \textit{Moayad}, suggested that the independence of Egypt would be an outcome of the Fashoda problem.\textsuperscript{54} The Anglo-Egyptian paper, \textit{Moktenom}, concluded, with \textit{Egyptian Gazette}, that Delcassé and Monson reached a mutually acceptable agreement.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 350, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 15, 1898.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 345, Lefèvre-Pontalis to Delcassé, September 12, 1898.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 346, Lefèvre-Pontalis to Delcassé, September 12, 1898.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 346.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 346.
Contemporary observers wrote of the increasing excitement and suspense generated by the expectation of an Anglo-French clash on the White Nile. Marguerite Steinheil accurately related the most recent information on the situation, as well as the jubilation of President Faure over the apparent French success.

September 12; doubt is no longer possible; Marchand is at Fashoda! It appears that shortly before the battle of Omdurman, the Khalifa heard of the presence of 'white men' at Fashoda. The boat he sent there was riddled with bullets and returned northward. The President is highly elated. The occupation of Fashoda gives France a basis whereon to deal with the Egyptian question. 56

On September 16, noted Steinheil, President Faure, after returning from a conversation with Delcassé, was in an extremely confident mood.

And why not? In the Anglo-Italian agreement of '91, the Upper Nile Valley is not even mentioned, the Khedive had nothing to do with the Anglo-Belgium agreement of '94; Nubar Pasha abandoned the Sudan; England declared she had nothing to do there; besides, did not England promise to evacuate Egypt after the Khedive had been restored to power?.... If we have taken Fashoda, we have taken it not from England or Egypt but from the Dervishes. The British Government is reasonable and not impulsive.... All will be well. 57

Sir Thomas Barclay, a British writer and advocate of an Anglo-French friendship, was far less optimistic. He

56 Steinheil, p. 91.
57 Steinheil, p. 92.
feared the outbreak of an Anglo-French war. "Everybody trembled at the idea of what might happen if Captain Marchand defied the victorious general and a conflict ensued. Such a conflict between the Anglo-Egyptian forces and the French expedition seemed, in fact, dangerously probable."58 Barclay's judgment, as we now know, was not justified. Kitchener was instructed to pursue a firm but not a violent course; while Marchand was ordered to "abstain from all discussion of the sovereignty of these territories, leaving the French Government in Europe to treat the diplomatic question."59

On September 18 Kitchener drew near Fashoda. He sent two messengers with a letter to Marchand. Kitchener, in this letter, announced the destruction of the Mahdists at Khartoum and his intention to come to Fashoda. Marchand replied that he had taken possession of Fashoda in the name of France and invited Kitchener to visit his camp at Fashoda. The men met at Fashoda on September 19. Kitchener told Marchand that he could not recognize any French claim to Fashoda. Marchand retorted that he could not leave Fashoda without a formal order from his Government.

59 *DDE*, series I, volume 14, no. 352, Trouillot to Delcassé, September 15, 1898.
Fortunately, both officers showed restraint and a compromise was reached. The Egyptian flag was then raised at the southern end of the station, and a battalion of Sudanese under the command of Major Jackson remained at Fashoda to establish an Anglo-Egyptian post.\textsuperscript{60} Kitchener agreed to refer the problem to the two home Governments, but he made a formal protest to Marchand in the name of England, Turkey, and Egypt. "I cannot recognize any occupation by France—no matter in what part—in the region of the Nile valley."\textsuperscript{61} He also told Marchand that all war materials on the Nile would be seized.\textsuperscript{62} For all intents and purposes the French military position at Fashoda was indefensible. The British not only had a superior army, but they controlled the supply lines. The best chance the French had for success was to work for a favorable settlement at the diplomatic level.

The task of negotiating an accord in which the French could safeguard their honor was entrusted to Delcassé. Was it possible for him to establish a friendly understanding with England without sacrificing French national pride? What alternatives would be available in the event that

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{60}DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 383, Delcassé to Geoffray, September 28, 1898.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{61}DDF, series I, volume 14, Appendix III, Kitchener to Marchand, September 19, 1898.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{62}General Mangin, p. 267.
England refused to negotiate the problem in a reasonable fashion? These were, no doubt, some of the questions running through Delcassé's mind. The answers were to be found in the vagaries of diplomacy and the passing of time. Marchand's position was precarious; France was experiencing a full scale domestic crisis; and the country was quite unprepared from a military standpoint to wage war. Yet Delcassé believed that he would hold a strong hand in any negotiations.

According to Charles W. Porter, Delcassé believed that France had as much right to the upper Nile area as England. He felt that if the French resolutely defended their rights, then the English would respect a bold stand and would be inclined to seek an accord. For Delcassé two disastrous extremes had to be avoided. Neither actual fighting nor supine surrender could be tolerated. The degree to which Delcassé would be triumphant depended upon Britain's willingness to negotiate on an equal basis and other circumstances over which Delcassé had no control.

One such condition was the dreadful domestic plague which had apparently reached its zenith in the fall of 1898—the Dreyfus scandal. The notorious Dreyfus controversy, dating from the fall of 1894, had now entered a

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63Porter, pp. 133, 134.
critical stage. France had already been divided into two rival camps—the Dreyfusards and Anti-Dreyfusards. The Zola letter, *J'Accuse*, published in January, 1898 and Zola's trial and condemnation had increased the excitement. But the suicide of Colonel Henry, forger of the documents which had helped convict Dreyfus, on August 31 touched off a new wave of controversy. On September 3 Madame Dreyfus demanded of the minister of justice that Dreyfus be retried, and General Cavaignac resigned the post of minister of war.

In the next few weeks, anarchy and civil war threatened the Third Republic. The revisionists, including intellectuals and socialist elements, increased their activity; while Anti-Dreyfusards united under the banner of royalism, patriotism, and anti-Semitism. On September 13 a strike began in Paris which involved about 20,000 men of the building trades. Sixty thousand troops assumed a state of readiness. Rumors of plots echoed throughout the afflicted French capitol. The strike was finally settled, yet rumors, fighting, demonstrations and fear were prevalent throughout the month of October. It is difficult to believe that amid this general, domestic confusion French citizens gave much thought to questions involving distant Africa. Ardent expansionists, however, watched the diplomatic exchanges with a keen interest.64

64 Langer, volume 2, pp. 553, 554.
On September 18 Anglo-French pourparlers began to enter a new phase—a seven week period of diplomatic crisis. French diplomats were resolved to justify Marchand's position at Fashoda. Delcassé, the principal French figure, set out to lay the groundwork upon which fruitful negotiations could take place.

Delcassé opened the discussion with Monson on a coy note. He told Monson that he had no concise knowledge of Marchand's position, but he assumed, as the English newspapers reported, that Marchand was at Fashoda. Is the French Government to understand the Queen's Government to say that Marchand has no right to be at Fashoda, queried Delcassé? Monson answered that Her Majesty's Government wished to live in perfect amity with France, but Fashoda, as a dependency of the Khalifate, had now fallen into the hands of Great Britain and Egypt. Monson reminded the Foreign Minister that Britain had openly warned France that any incursion into the upper Nile basin would be considered an unfriendly act. The debate then shifted to an exchange of views centering on the importance of the 'Grey declaration.'

Monson argued that Marchand departed for Fashoda after the 'Grey declaration.' Delcassé replied that, first
of all, France had never recognized the Anglo-German conventions of 1890 and hence opposed them. "However, why speak of the Marchand mission? There is only the Marchand mission of the newspapers." The true head of the mission, contended Delcassé, was Liotard, and his mission dated back to 1893, not June, 1896. This was "well before the reconquest of the Sudan and well before the declaration of Sir Edward Grey, and this was the mission which was given to him when I was in the Colonies." Delcassé added that not only had France never recognized the British sphere of influence in the upper Nile region, but Hanotaux had openly protested against it in the Senate. Monson retorted in an obliging way that the Queen's Government desired to reach an accord with France, but on the issue of French claims to Fashoda he warned Delcassé that the British Government could not back down on its previous stand. Delcassé recalled terminating the discussion by observing that in Africa "we are fighting against the same enemy, against the same barbarity, and then I voiced the conviction that if the officers of the two nations met on the Nile, they would meet as champions of civilization, having no authority to settle questions of territorial sovereignty, questions to which the solution belongs solely to the Cabinets of Paris and London." 66

66 <i>DCC</i>, series I, volume 14, no. 358; <i>British Documents</i> volume 1, no. 191.
Delcassé's arguments in this conversation were very timely and from the French vantage point were coldly 'logical.' Yet it is worthwhile to notice that Delcassé balked at the use of the term "Marchand mission." By failing to delineate the specific objectives of the Marchand party, Delcassé left the way open for honorable negotiations and a quick adjustment of the very delicate problem. Delcassé informed Salisbury on the following day of a move which was intended to alleviate the Anglo-French tension. Paul Cambon was appointed to the London embassy to succeed Baron de Courcel. Cambon was well known in both countries as a warm friend of England and as an advocate of an Anglo-French entente.\(^{67}\) Cambon, however, did not officially assume this post until after the crisis had passed.

The appointment of Cambon appeared in no visible way to soften the attitude of either the British press or important Government officials. Geoffray reported on September 21 that the English press was by and large violent in its denunciation of France. "I refer to an article published in yesterday's *Times*, in which it made an allusion to the possibility of seeing the Sirdar resort to a sort of blockade in order to compel Major Marchand to retreat."

Geoffray also mentioned a rumor of a treaty between Great Britain and Emperor Menelik—of territorial concessions

\(^{67}\) *British Documents*, no. 192, Monson to Salisbury, September 19, 1898.
made to the Ethiopians in return for recognition of British preponderance in the upper Nile area. Paralleling this information was the news that the German Government saw no reason to oppose the connection of the Cape to Cairo. German favor for the British cause was not particularly important in itself, but it was an ominous indication. France could afford to be skeptical of any future German advances on France's behalf.

The much-awaited report from Kitchener reached Salisbury on September 25. It contained a detailed account of the Kitchener-Marchand meeting. One aspect of the report deserves particular attention. Marchand told Kitchener that he had concluded a treaty with the Chief of the Shilluk Tribe, the head of the major indigenous tribe of the Fashoda area. The Shilluk Chief, said Marchand, placed his country under the protection of France, and Marchand had sent this treaty to his Government for ratification. Kitchener had reason to scorn this treaty because "the Shilluk Chief, with a large following, has come into

68 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 363, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 21, 1898.

69 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 366, Boutiron to Delcassé, September 22, 1898.

70 A reproduction of the treaty is in DDF, series I, volume 14, Appendix, Annex I.
Major Jackson’s camp; the whole tribe absolutely denies having made any treaty with the French." Apparently the French diplomats felt that it was not to their advantage to defend the validity of the Franco-Shilluk Treaty. It was never used to justify their claims to the Fashoda country.

Kitchener’s evaluation of Marchand’s position at Fashoda was straightforward and probably correct.

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 late in crushing the Khalifa.72

Kitchener’s judgment was harsh; nevertheless, the Marchand party was in an extremely weak position in all respects. There was no possibility that immediate assistance, in the form of supplies and reinforcements, would reach Marchand from either French Congo or Abyssinia.

Marchand and his compatriots, however, have always maintained that their position at Fashoda was strong. Marchand claimed that the Mahdists had been turned back, and the Shilluk tribe was friendly. A garden had been planted

71 British Documents, volume 1, no. 193, Rodd to Salisbury, September 25, 1898.

72 British Documents, volume 1, no. 193.
to avert famine, and supplies were expected from Abyssinia and the French Congo. Marchand wrote on September 27: "our political situation at Fashoda and in the Shilluk country is excellent, in spite of the presence of Anglo-Egyptian forces and the efforts of our rivals to influence the Shilluk Chief; all the natives are for the French cause and strongly hope that the Anglo-Egyptians will not remain here."  

With the Kitchener report in hand, Salisbury could now continue his demand for Marchand's evacuation with renewed confidence. The position of Delcassé became concomitantly less advantageous.

Delcassé received what appeared to be an encouraging dispatch from Geoffray on September 26. Thomas Sanderson, British Under-Secretary of State, expressed the hope that the two nations would find a satisfactory basis for an understanding. On the following day ambassador Monson had an extremely significant interview with Delcassé.

The Foreign Minister made a tactical maneuver which was probably designed to give the French Government more time to deliberate. William Langer asserts that Delcassé desired to gain time to enable France to make urgent naval preparations and sound out Russia with respect to chances.

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73 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 445, telegram from Marchand to Lefèvre-Pontalis, September 27, 1898, received by Delcassé on October 21.

74 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 379, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 26, 1898.
of acquiring military support. Delcassé told Monson that Marchand had addressed reports to the Government in duplicate and sent one copy by way of Abyssinia and the other by way of the French Congo. The reports could not reach Paris for weeks, and the French Government, said Delcassé, would be embarrassed to act without being acquainted with the situation by their own representative. Delcassé, at this moment, requested permission to send a telegram to Marchand via Cairo and Khartoum in order to hasten the delivery of the report. Monson’s reply was blunt and demanding. "I said that I must conclude from M. Delcassé’s language that the Government had decided not to recall M. Marchand until they had received his Report. Was this so? I pointed out that M. Marchand’s position appears to be a disagreeable one, and that he himself stated to be desirous of retreating from it. Such being the case, I must press this question urgently." Delcassé hedged: "Permit me not to answer that question. But I can tell you, if you suppose that my intention is to resort to dilatory proceedings, nothing is further from my thoughts."

75 Langer, volume II, p. 562.

76 British Documents, volume 1, no. 196, Monson to Salisbury, September 27, 1898.

77 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 386, Delcassé to Geoffray, September 28, 1898.
Monson reported that Delcassé was on the verge of capitulating, but Delcassé begged not to ask him for the "impossible." Monson reiterated the British line that "Her Majesty's Government considered that there could be no discussion upon such questions as the right of Egypt to Fashoda." Delcassé retorted that if there was to be no discussion, a rupture could not be avoided. He complained that Her Majesty's Government had never clearly and explicitly defined the territories to which she laid claim on Egypt's behalf. Delcassé did not want to be cornered. The Paris press was spreading the rumor that the French Government planned to abandon Marchand. If such was the case, Delcassé would be execrated as the "author of national disgrace." Monson ended the discussion by consenting to state Delcassé's views to Salisbury.

Salisbury immediately gave his assent to Delcassé's request. The English Government would authorize and facilitate the communication of a report from Fashoda to Cairo. In the September 28 telegram, the Prime Minister also issued a stern warning.

You are burdened moreover to observe that, in the case when the actual situation would be prolonged, here it will result in great uneasiness, which will necessarily cause the immediate publication of the facts by the

78 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 386; British Documents, volume 1, no. 196.
Queen's Government..... If we were to announce the departure of Mr. Marchand from Fashoda, no publication would be necessary for the time being.79

The Monson-Delcassé conversation on September 28 was, for the most part, a repetition of previous discussions. But Delcassé remained determined to uphold the right of France to occupy territory practically abandoned by Egypt and contested the prerogative of Great Britain to warn off other powers which had not recognized her sphere of influence. At the same time he voiced his conviction that honest discussion between the two Governments would soon result in an understanding. While Delcassé reechoed the desire of the French Government to make a friend of England, he added, confidentially, that he would much prefer an Anglo-French to a Franco-Russian alliance. He again mentioned the existing excitement in France, and expressed the fear that overt acts might be committed. Once more he made a plea: "do not ask me for the impossible; do not drive me into a corner."80

As the discussion progressed, Delcassé embarked upon a new tack. He admitted that the feeling in England was strong, but he asserted that Englishmen were not so excitable as the French and felt sentimental considerations less

79 *British Documents*, volume 1, no. 198, September 28, 1898.
80 *British Documents*, volume 1, no. 198, September 28, 1898.
deeply. Monson answered resolutely that the Foreign Minister should not underestimate the intensity of the feeling in England on the subject of Fashoda—both on the part of the Government and the public. Delcassé then attempted to play a trump card. He said: "you surely would not break with us over Fashoda?.... In such an event we should not stand alone; but I repeat I would rather have England for an ally than that other." The inference, of course, was to the Franco-Russian alliance which Delcassé threatened to employ. This move was largely a bluff on the part of Delcassé, for Russia had not, as yet, supported the French position at Fashoda, nor did such a move seem likely. The Franco-Russian alliance was aimed at the Triple Alliance, and Russia could hope to gain little in a war with England.

The Monson-Delcassé talks reached a nadir on September 30. In an attempt to persuade Salisbury to begin formal negotiations, Delcassé presented his arguments with an unprecedented aggressiveness. He told Monson, speaking unofficially, that it was impossible for the French Government to give up their right to Fashoda—a right which the English Government did not choose to discuss. Neither the present Ministry nor any other Ministry could submit to

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81 British Documents, volume 1, no. 198.
what would amount to the disgraceful humiliation of France. The French people would regard any proposal to recall Marchand as an insult to national honor. "In my hands national honor will remain intact," proclaimed Delcassé. Any formal demand to evacuate Fashoda would be considered as an ultimatum and be rejected. Delcassé informed the British ambassador that when the Sirdar occupied the Sobat River, he had committed what was practically an act of war, or at least an unfriendly act. He carefully explained to Monson that, as yet, he did not want to make an official complaint. Delcassé did not think it was possible that England wished to go to war over such a question, but France would, unwillingly, accept war rather than subject herself to a national disgrace. In order not to appear too bellicose, Delcassé again exclaimed that the conversation was strictly unofficial. For various reasons Delcassé could not forcefully use the threat of war. The biggest drawback was France's state of military preparedness.

The French navy in 1898 did not favorably compare with the English navy, either in quantitative or qualitative terms. Since 1870 the resources of the country had been spent in re-building the Army. Measures intended to revitalize the French navy were deep-rooted in the tradition

82 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 400, Minister's note, September 30, 1898.

83 British Documents, volume 1, no. 200, Monson to Salisbury, September 30, 1898.
of false economy. Ships were still built with wooden frames at a time when technology made iron frames an essential part of warships. Weak and vacillating administrative leaders prevented necessary organizational reforms. Naval construction was carefully parcelled out to vested interests in coastal towns. Building proceeded at a leisurely pace and was costly. Naval ports lacked adequate personnel, and arsenals were scantily equipped. To make matters worse, no plans nor preparations had been made by the Government to meet the threat of war. The Ministry of Marine was plagued by internal dissension. A long standing dispute had paralyzed the effectiveness of the naval staffs. Proponents of capital ships quarreled with the advocates of cruisers and torpedo ships. The British, on the other hand, had the most powerful and efficient navy in the world. The British fleet was probably equal in battleships to the sum of French, German, and Russian fleets; and British ships were assembled in very homogeneous squadrons. British battleships were strategically stationed off the western coast of France, and large forces were found in the Straits of Gibraltar, in the Mediterranean between Malta and Gibraltar, and at Alexandria. In short the French navy was in a singularly impotent position.84

84 Langer, volume II, pp. 561, 562; Brogan, pp. 324, 325.
In addition to the disturbing facts of the explosive Dreyfus affair, the ill-prepared French navy, and the sterility of the diplomatic negotiations, the French Government feared the militancy of English public opinion. The English press appeared united in their opposition to French encroachments in the Nile valley. The victory at Khartoum was an immensely popular event. If the press was reflective of public sentiment, the public was thirsty for glory. According to Winston Churchill, "the encouragement of success created a volume of feeling throughout England which few have estimated and many have sadly underestimated. It has always been a duty to reconquer the Sudan." Soon rumors of a French expeditionary force on the upper Nile began to circulate. Next there came news of the Kitchener-Marchand encounter which was relayed from correspondents at Khartoum to London, and by the end of September the incident was well-known to most Englishmen. Immediately they had to face the fact that a "friendly power" had, unprovoked, endeavored to rob them of the fruits of their victory. They now realized that while the Anglo-Egyptian army was involved in noble military operations, the French had covertly slipped into the Nile valley—issuing a direct challenge to the victorious British. Would Her Majesty's Government

85Churchill, p. 739.
86Churchill, p. 741.
tolerate such a bold maneuver? The British journals, like the politicians, were unanimously opposed to the intrusion of the Marchand party. Newspapers were abusive in their attack and expressed impatience with negotiations and equivocal French arguments. Among the politicians, the Liberals joined the Unionists and the Tories in support of a firm and uncompromising policy.  

The French agents in London wrote home of the growing Franco-phobia. English newspapers, wrote Geoffray, adamently supported the English Government's claims to the upper Nile. The Westminster Gazette, said Geoffray, spoke of the obstacle that the French placed to future communication between the Niger and the Nile and between Cairo and the Cape of Good Hope. He claimed on September 29 that the British Government imposed a certain direction on the press in the treatment of the Marchand-Kitchener encounter. He noticed that after the violent words of the past weeks, the tone of the press became calm and relatively moderate. He cautioned, however, that behind this courteous exterior was an unwillingness to give concessions to France or to negotiate the question. The Times and the Standard were the two


88 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 391, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 29, 1898.
most important newspapers which demanded a prompt solution. A secret agent reported that the men at Downing Street did not doubt France would abandon Fashoda. The "imperialists," he asserted, called the moves and the Government would be obliged to cooperate with them.

On September 30, with the permission of Salisbury, Delcassé dispatched an urgent message to Marchand. He asked Marchand to send a report of the events which had transpired at Fashoda. "Since the English Government has communicated to us the information it has received from General Kitchener on your meeting with General Kitchener, it is of consequence that I be able to take note as promptly as possible, of information that you are yourself in a position to supply on this incident and on the situation existing prior to your arrival at Fashoda." Delcassé requested that Marchand choose an officer to bring the report to a French agent in Cairo who would telegraph the contents to Delcassé. While Delcassé waited for Marchand's report, he continued, through diplomacy, to press the French case.

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89 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 392, Geoffray to Delcassé, September 29, 1898.

90 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 395, note from a secret agent, September 29, 1898.

91 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 396, Delcassé to Lefèvre-Fontalis.
Deleasse confided to Paul Cambon, still the ambassador to Constantinople, that the Fashoda question was not progressing as he had anticipated and worried him a great deal. He felt that he had acted with moderation and in a conciliatory spirit without transcending the limits of national honor.92

Salisbury informed Delcassé on October 4 that the French message to Marchand had been transmitted to Khartoum and forwarded to its destination. In a telegram addressed to Monson, he clarified his position in the following way. "In order to avoid any misunderstanding, you will have to warn His Excellency that, while conforming to his wish in this respect, Her Majesty's Government in no way modifies the views already expressed by her on the subject of the principal question."93 Salisbury added that, whether in times of Egyptian or Dervish occupation, the region which Marchand claimed had never been without an owner, and his expedition "has no political effect, nor can any political significance be attached to it."94

No less disconcerting to Delcassé than the Salisbury

92 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 407, Delcassé to Cambon, October 3, 1898.

93 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 410, Delcassé to de Courcey, October 4, 1898.

94 British Documents, volume 1, no. 202, Salisbury to Monson.
telegram was Salisbury's proposal to publish the Blue Book. The Blue Book was an official British publication. It was a collection of documents relating to the Fashoda problem and was intended to marshall public opinion behind Salisbury's policy. The purpose of the Blue Book, suggested Delcassé, was to expose to the English people the thesis that Fashoda belonged incontestably to Egypt, and no discussion on this point would be possible. In summing up the basic French argument, Delcassé staunchly held the view that there was no Marchand mission, only a Liotard mission of 1893, and the Liotard mission antedated both the reconquest of Sudan and the 'Grey declaration.' Delcassé made one reservation. "I do not, however, intend to invoke the right of first occupancy, in spite of all, even against our own interest in Fashoda. But can we allow them to ask us to abandon it without discussion, without an investigation of the conditions in which this eventuality would be considered?" On the contrary, observed Delcassé, it seemed that if the tendencies of the British Government were really those shown in the language of Salisbury during the recent talks with Geoffray, the present situation could serve as a point of departure for an amicable exchange of views between the two Cabinets. Consequently, reasoned Delcassé, a

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95 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 412, Delcassé to de Courcel, October 4, 1898; the Blue Book appeared publicly on October 10 under the title: Correspondence with the French Government respecting the valley of the upper Nile.
rapprochement could be reached which would complement the Niger agreement.  

At this point Delcassé told de Courcel that France would consent to withdraw Major Marchand if England would recognize the Bahr-el-Ghazal region as a French possession. If Salisbury accepted this condition, then an equitable solution would quickly follow. Delcassé asked de Courcel to encourage Salisbury not to publish the Blue Book.  

On October 5 de Courcel had a long and cordial discussion with Salisbury concerning the Fashoda problem. The French ambassador's arguments hinged principally upon the fact that the country bordering the White Nile, though it was previously under the auspices of the Egyptian Government, had become *res nullius* by its abandonment; that France had as much right to a position on the Nile as either the Belgians or the Germans; and that the French Government had retained for themselves the prerogative to occupy the upper Nile area at a time of their choosing. Salisbury pointed out to de Courcel that the occupation of Fashoda by Marchand and his 100 troops could give no title to the French, and that, in fact, were it not for the timely arrival of the British flotilla, Marchand's party would have

96 *DDF*, series I, volume 14, no. 412.  
97 *DDF*, series I, volume 14, no. 412.
been destroyed by the Mahdists. The Marchand expedition, according to Salisbury, was a secret mission sent into a territory which was already owned and occupied. France had been warned numerous times that any seizure of land in the upper Nile could not be accepted by Great Britain. Salisbury listed the British warnings in a chronological order.

The first warning was the Anglo-German Agreement, which was communicated to the French Government, and the provisions of which as regards the Nile, were never formally contested. The next warning was given by the Agreement with the King of the Belgians, which gave him for his lifetime occupation up to Fashoda, and which Agreement is in existence and full force still. It has never been cancelled and never been repudiated by this country. It is true that the King of the Belgians was persuaded, without any assent on the part of Great Britain, to promise the French Government that he would not take advantage of it beyond a certain limit; but that concession on his part did not diminish the significance of the act as an assertion of her rights by England. In the objections raised by the French Government to that arrangement, the rights of the Khedive over these territories were expressly asserted as still existing. Then came Sir Edward Grey's speech in 1895, which was followed in 1897 by a formal note from Sir Edward Monson, informing the French Foreign Minister that Her Majesty's Government adhere to the statements made by their predecessors by that speech. 98

Salisbury concluded that, in face of repeated warnings, France should not be surprised to find her claims rejected by Great Britain.

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98 British Documents, volume 1, no. 203, Salisbury to Monson, October 6, 1898.
When de Courcel quizzed Salisbury on the subject of the Blue Book, the Prime Minister made a foreboding reply. He said that its publication could not be long delayed, for the English public must be presented with the facts. Salisbury admitted that he was under great pressure and had been accused of weakness.

De Courcel repeatedly stressed the importance of effecting an agreement between the two nations. At one point de Courcel showed prophetic insight. "Who knows but that, in pursuit of an accord, the long misunderstanding created between France and England by the Egyptian question were to give rise to great advantage in the relations of the two countries and to the personal satisfaction of Lord Salisbury." 99 On the other hand, de Courcel told Salisbury, in the event that the British continued to refuse to negotiate the question, France would steadfastly defend her claims.

While the diplomatic pourparlers were making slow headway, the position of Marchand during the month of October became more and more precarious. On October 6 Salisbury informed Kitchener that the French would not leave Fashoda unless England granted her territorial compensation. Kitchener also received an order to weaken Marchand's position. "M. Marchand's position should be made as untenable

99 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 414, de Courcel to Delcassé, October 6, 1898.
as possible. If he is in want of food supplies, it will be very necessary to use circumspection in helping him to obtain them. Until he expresses his intention of going down the river, no such supplies should be furnished to him except in case of extreme necessity."  

Kitchener had placed the upper Nile under military law, and he reminded Lefèvre-Pontalis of English impatience with the French stand. The Sirdar candidly appraised the Fashoda dilemma in Lefèvre-Pontalis' presence, saying, "you have no interest in remaining there; but in remaining there you will trouble us considerably."  

The English Government, on the surface, appeared wholly confident of success, but Monson's reports on the opinions of the French press might have aroused some apprehension. Monson wrote that the Fashoda incident did not receive as much consideration by the French press as was given it by the London journals. Nevertheless, said Monson, the articles which appeared in the serious Paris newspapers were couched in recognizably firm and uncompromising language. Monson noted that the Matin, which he looked upon as the French Government's mouthpiece, contained an article in which the goals of the Government were made

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100British Documents, volume 1, no. 201, October 1, 1898.

101DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 418, Lefèvre-Pontalis to Delcassé, October 7, 1898.
public. This article stated that

it was the French Government that organized the Marchand mission, laid down its itinerary, and determined its goal.... The Government knew perfectly well what it was doing, and what it intended. It will not retreat before menaces from the press or any menaces.... If the Foreign Office were to adopt and make its own the theories of the London press, and meet the offer of imminent negotiations by the previous question of the recall of M. Marchand, we are in a position to affirm that the reply would be the only one worthy of France—No. 102

In the same dispatch, Monson told of a conversation with confidants who seemed to be in close touch with the French public. These informants, according to Monson, "recognize the certainty that it needs but the whisper of a possible insult to the French flag to arouse a tempest of excitement throughout the country."103 The belief prevailed among these men that no formal demand had been made by the British Government upon the French Government. However, the possibility that the French Government might be handed an ultimatum was becoming very likely.

On October 9 Monson believed he recognized a sign that portended a breakthrough in the Fashoda dispute. A significant telegram dated London, October 8, appeared in the October 9 Matin. The writer, noted Monson, asserted that the English press had modified its tone, and that a

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102 *British Documents*, volume 1, no. 204, Monson to Salisbury, October 7, 1898.

103 *British Documents*, volume 1, no. 204.
discussion of claims was now in the offing. The anonymous author pointed out that the policy followed by France throughout the crisis was motivated by the necessity of obtaining a commercial outlet for central Africa and not by a desire to thwart English policy in the valley of the Nile. The telegram concluded with a passage which stated that "it is clear that a formal and definite settlement is indispensable, and that it can only be arrived at by means of courteous, calm, and friendly discussion." Monson asserted, though the telegram came from London, it was possibly planted by the French Government in order to pave the way to a settlement of the problem by negotiation.

On the following day Monson was astonished by an article on the subject Fashoda published in the Matin. The tone of the article, in Monson's words, "almost verges on the ludicrous, so sudden and complete is the change of front taken up." In essence, the article confessed that the abandonment of Fashoda was fully compatible with the maintenance of national honor. The writer's argument, summarized Monson, takes the following form:

Whilst doing full justice to the energy, perseverance and indomitable tenacity of purpose which enabled Major Marchand to penetrate into the region of the Great Lakes

104 British Documents, volume 1, no. 206, Monson to Salisbury, October 9, 1898.

105 British Documents, volume 1, no. 208, Monson to Salisbury, October 10, 1898.
before the arrival of the Sirdar's troops, and to hoist the French flag inside Fashoda whilst the English cocked snooks at him from without, yet we must realize that it is most imprudent to saddle ourselves with useless and extravagant territories, practically inaccessible from French possessions on the Atlantic coast, annexations in the mountains of the moon, which might, for all the good they do to us, as well be in the moon itself.106

Gloomy and discouraging extracts from Castellani's journal were also included in the article. Although there was no proof that the French Government inspired this article, only future events could confirm the truthfulness of the writer's opinions. The British Government continued to claim Fashoda by right of conquest, while the French position became increasingly desperate. Delcassé would soon have to make some difficult choices.

106British Documents, volume 1, no. 208.
CHAPTER III

THE CRISIS: THE CLIMAX

Tensions between France and England continued to mount. Would Salisbury give the French an ultimatum? Would Delcassé advise war as an alternative to Marchand's unconditional evacuation? Or, would the problem be solved through formal negotiations? Informal discussions were still carried on, but this approach was having little success.

The Monson-Delcassé meeting of October 11 found Delcassé in a very serious and irritable mood. Delcassé appeared to be despondent and tired of repeating the plea that a rupture be avoided. He thought that his good intentions were being disregarded by the English Government, and that the cognizance of his friendly disposition towards England was injuring his position in Paris. Monson got the impression that Delcassé intimated the possibility of retiring from his post. Delcassé warned Monson that another Minister might not be so accommodating. 107

Monson thought that Delcassé was resigned to the ultimate, but not immediate, retreat of the Marchand mission.

107British Documents, volume 1, no. 209, Monson to Salisbury, October 11, 1898.
Delcassé was quite willing to discuss the evacuation of Fashoda in connection with the delimitation of the Franco-Egyptian frontier. Delcassé again contended that the formation of the Liotard mission of 1893 should not be seen by the British Government as an unfriendly act, and that the greater portion of the area in question, the Bahr-el-Ghazal, was effectively occupied by France. In addition to the "intransigence" of the British Government, Delcassé was annoyed by the London press. He contrasted the moderation of the French press with the excited language of the London journals. Monson noted that Delcassé wanted the conversation to be considered unofficial, but he was convinced that Delcassé had altered previous attitudes: "I repeat that I think he is prepared to retreat eventually, and after negotiation, from this position if we can build him a golden bridge for that retrograde movement."

Coinciding with Delcassé's efforts to break through the diplomatic impasse in Paris were the advances by de Courcel made upon Salisbury in London. The Blue Book had just been published, and de Courcel was cautiously optimistic. He suggested that the Blue Book would encourage British public opinion to be moderate and might even lead to

108 [DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 428, Delcassé to de Courcel, October 11, 1898.]
109 [British Documents, volume 1, no. 209.]
an eventual delimitation of the disputed area. De Courcel observed that English public opinion had previously been excited and haughty as a result of the triumph of Anglo-Egyptian forces over the Mahdi. The people could imagine no argument more potent than that of victory and might. De Courcel realized that it would be difficult for Salisbury to go against such a popular belief, and that he could not show indifference amidst the general intoxication. With these conditions in mind, de Courcel took an untried course in the October 12 conversation with Salisbury.

The discussion centered upon conflicting theories of right but was highlighted by a compromise effort by de Courcel. Salisbury's main justification for the British position was that the upper Nile valley belonged to Egypt by right of conquest. De Courcel then retorted that if they were to invoke the right of conquest, it was no longer a question of right, but a question of fact; as in fact Fashoda had not been conquered by the Mahdi, since it was actually occupied by a company of Frenchmen; as a stronger reason, one could not speak of the domination of the Mahdi in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, because for several months, and probably for several years, French posts had been established in this country.

110 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 424, de Courcel to Delcasse, October 10, 1898.

111 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 426, de Courcel to Delcasse, October 10, 1898.

112 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 433, de Courcel to Delcasse, October 13, 1898.
Salisbury said that the effective French control of this region was too weak to constitute a true occupation; that the French were not really the masters of the country, nor were they capable of defending it against the demands of Egypt. De Courcel terminated this phase of the pourparler by saying that the French authority in the territories of the Ubangi and Bahr-el-Ghazal was substantial. The discussion then shifted to the problem of supplying and possibly evacuating Marchand. De Courcel maintained France must be authorized to send supplies across Egypt to Marchand as a first condition in any evacuation of Fashoda. Salisbury agreed to this condition but could not allow the transportation of munitions. The Prime Minister also demanded Marchand return to the watershed between the Ubangi and the affluents of the Nile. Since the discussion was waning, Salisbury pressed de Courcel to make some positive suggestions. De Courcel, in a strategically important move, asked that France be given a natural outlet on the Nile, a port on the navigable portion of the Bahr-el-Ghazal River. Such a concession, hinted de Courcel, would necessarily be followed by the delimitation of the territories between Lake Chad and the Nile River—an agreement similar to the Niger Convention. 113 Salisbury said he would think over

113 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 433.
this demand. Thus the interview closed without definite result. It appeared that France was now committed to a policy of conditional retreat. The success of such a maneuver would depend upon the willingness of Britain to soften its stand.

As the Fashoda incident developed into a crisis of alarming proportions, contemporary writers felt compelled to pen their impressions. The threat of an impending war was a prevalent theme in their accounts. Marguerite Steinheil quoted President Faure on October 7 as saying: "the letters which Delcassé and the British Ambassador exchange already show that war is brewing....But whatever England's hostility, and it is clear that England does not wish to negotiate until Marchand has evacuated Fashoda—we will not yield." Wilfrid S. Blunt, an anti-imperialist poet and a violent opponent of British policy in Sudan, wrote in a more humorous vein.

October 15. All this week has been one of excitement over the quarrel with France about Fashoda. A Blue Book has been published giving the English case, and, imperial plunder being in question, all parties, Tories, Whig, Radical, Churchmen, Nonconformists have joined in publicly extolling English virtue and denouncing the French....Yesterday, there was a great public meeting in favor of peace, and our leading Nonconformists on the platform applauded Lord Salisbury for having thus swindled Egypt.

114 Steinheil, p. 94.
and defied France. We live in an odd age. 115

In contrast to this humorous entry, Blunt's comment on the following day was of an ominous bent. "I think very seriously of the crisis between England and France. It will likely enough lead to war, for both sides being in the wrong each naturally sees the other's wickedness and so believes itself right." 116 Blunt astutely assessed the position of France on October 17. "Things look very warlike with France, and war would certainly happen if the position in Europe were at all less unfavorable to the French, but as it is their Government will certainly not risk a fight if they can help it." 117 With the possibility of a direct military conflict increasing day by day France was desperately in need of assistance. Russia, France's ally, was the logical source of such aid. If France could be assured that Russia would support her stand, then such a commitment could be used to strengthen France's position vis-a-vis Great Britain.

The official Russian policy toward the Fashoda affair from beginning to end was ambiguous and inconsistent. As early as September 12, Toutain, a French envoy in St. Petersburg, reported that the Russian Foreign Minister, Count

116 Blunt, p. 299.
117 Blunt, p. 299.
Muraviev, and the Tsar favored French claims in Africa. "The Minister," wrote Toutain, "begged me to give new assurance that in this affair, as in all questions pertaining to Egypt, the Imperial Government was resolved to work for an accord with us and to shape its attitude to fit that of the French Government." The Russian press in mid-September also gave support to the French. The Nové Vrémia asked the question, 'in whose name could England demand the evacuation of Fashoda by France?' It argued that England had no real right, nor did the Khedive, while the true sovereign of Sudan was the Sultan Abdul Hamid. The Stock-Exchange Gazette did not fear an Anglo-French conflict because the wisdom of the representative statesmen would prevail. Another French envoy in St. Petersburg, de Vauvineaux, postulated that, in general, the Russian press held the belief that France had as much right to occupy Fashoda as did England, and that any territory in Africa belonged to the country that first planted its flag. Whether support other than moral would be given to France was a primary point of conjecture in both French and British official circles.

At a time when the crisis appeared to be headed for a climax, the Russian Foreign Minister arrived in Paris.

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118 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 347, September 12, 1898.

119 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 375, de Vauvineaux to Delcassé, September 24, 1898.
He was accompanied by General Kuropotkin, the minister of war. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what took place in the meetings between Delcassé and Count Muraviev, but there is some evidence which shows that Russia did not intend to fully cooperate with France. The Dual Alliance was directed against the Triple Alliance, and the terms of its conventions dealt strictly with continental problems. Its purpose was to maintain the status quo on the continent. Could France expect to have Russia's support in a dispute with England involving African territory? It appears that Muraviev was convinced that his French colleague, Delcassé, was loyal to the Alliance. Monson, at first, surmised that Muraviev's presence tended to encourage the French Government in its firm stand. Later Monson learned from a trustworthy source that Delcassé received the following advice from the Russian Foreign Minister. "Do not give England any pretext for attacking you at present. At a later date an opportunity will be found by Russia for opening the whole question of Egypt." Monson still could not determine the exact extent to which France could materially rely upon her ally. He wrote Salisbury on October 25 saying, "my own opinion is that Count Muraviev neither categorically refused nor contingently promised the support

120 British Documents, volume 1, no. 213, October 21, 1898.
121 British Documents, volume 1, no. 215, October 25, 1898.
of Russia in the present emergency."\textsuperscript{122} It is more than likely that Delcassé was advised to yield, for Muraviev could hardly consider a conflict of claims in the upper Nile valley as a matter of vital concern to Russia. President Faure reputedly related this illuminating account. "If there is to be a war between France and England, we cannot rely on Russia. The Government in St. Petersburg thinks that we should be ill-advised in allowing ourselves to be dragged into an absurd war with England, especially over that Soudanese swamp, Fashoda."\textsuperscript{123} Closely linked with France's attempt to gain the support of Russia was the delicate question of a Franco-German rapprochement.

The German Government took a neutral position in the dispute over Fashoda. Boutiron, the French consul at Berlin, found German official attitudes to be prudent and non-committal. He concisely recapitulated the general German reaction to the Fashoda affair in the ensuing passage.

We have seen the Berlin Cabinet show absolute reserve in all the debates bearing on the affairs of international order in the Nile valley. We noticed the cautious and neutral attitude adopted by the German representative, Mr. Müller, following, moreover, the example of his predecessor, Count Metternich....Finally, the official press's tone, on

\textsuperscript{122}British Documents, volume 1, no. 215.

\textsuperscript{123}Steinheil, p. 96, October 20, 1898.
the occasion of the Fashoda affair...

guarantees that Germany will remain, in
this question as in all Mediterranean
questions, scrupulously neutral.124

In spite of apparent German indifference to the Anglo-
French controversy, it is possible, although positive evi-
dence is lacking, Delcassé sought German backing.

As a loyal Gambettist, it does not seem likely that
Delcassé favored a close friendship with Germany. The
desire for revanche and the return of Alsace-Lorraine
probably abated during the crisis, but still remained a
central factor in Franco-German diplomatic relations. Anti-
German sentiment was quite strong in France, and if Del-
cassé was to realize his dream of an Anglo-French entente,
any serious thought of a Franco-German alliance had to be
discarded. Germany, for her part, would gain little from
a Franco-German agreement. She had no wish to quarrel with
England and could only benefit from an Anglo-French war.

The might of the British navy looked all the more
imposing since it was almost certain that France, in a war
with Britain, would stand alone. The French Foreign Office
received a great deal of disconcerting news regarding
English naval preparations. A secret agent reported on
October 12 that the English navy was ready for action and

124 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 405, Boutiron to
Delcassé, October 2, 1898.
was frightfully powerful. On October 18, a French naval attaché in London warned that the diplomatic situation appeared to be deteriorating, and that England absolutely wished to make war. He emphasized the fact that in an actual military conflict Britain would be more than twice as strong as France. The same naval attaché noted on October 21 that "all the English Ministers are not bellicose, and, while all do not wish to make concessions, it is believed that the majority do not desire war." The English navy, contended a secret agent, was ready for any eventuality, and the French navy would not stand "a ghost of a chance" against it. This information only tended to reinforce the views of the French military that France could not fight at sea.

Although the English Government wasted little time worrying about the French navy, the Italian Government was alarmed over the French activities at Toulon. The Italian

125 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 430, note from a secret agent.

126 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 440, Captain of the ship Fieron to Vice Admiral Cavelier de Cuverville, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Marine.

127 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 447, Captain of the ship Fieron to Lockroy, Minister of the Marine.

128 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 454, note from a secret agent, October 25, 1898.
Foreign Minister, Marquess Visconti Venosta, informed Sir P. Currie, English ambassador to Rome, that the naval ports of Genoa, Spezia, and Madalena were being put in a state of readiness. Venosta said that in the event of a war between France and England, Italy could only remain neutral or side with England. He foresaw the possibility that France would send her fleet to Italy as she did under the First Empire, even before war was declared. Salisbury immediately sent a dispatch to allay Italian fears, and deprecated the notion that France planned an immediate attack.¹²⁹

In London, Baron de Courcel, discouraged by the diplomatic stalemate, reflected upon the Anglo-French relations prior to the Fashoda crisis. He recalled that in a conversation with Lord Kimberley in 1895, they had agreed that a delimitation of the upper Nile territories would have to be made prior to a legal agreement. De Courcel was annoyed that no accord had taken place and admitted that "we are disposed to make many concessions to England because we attach a substantial price to her friendship."¹³⁰

The French ambassador urged that prompt action be taken by the French Government in order to facilitate

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¹²⁹ *British Documents, volume 1, no. 217, Currie to Salisbury, October 26, 1898; no. 219, Salisbury to Currie, October 27, 1898.

¹³⁰ *DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 246, de Courcel to Geoffray, October 21, 1898."
Marchand's retreat. According to de Courcel, Monsen told British officials that the French Government was ready to give the order for Marchand's retreat as soon as England admitted the principle of French access to the Nile. The Council of Ministers, thought de Courcel, was at that time deliberating upon this proposal. De Courcel was refused an interview by Salisbury on October 25 and believed this incident foreshadowed an ultimatum. Hence de Courcel suggested to Delcassé that the French Government should not boast of forcing a settlement upon England. He also advised that

in my mind, the evacuation of Fashoda would have to be decided as soon as possible, and spontaneously, by the sole consideration of the absolute worth of this advanced post to our Central African Territories, to which it can not serve as an outlet, since it is separated from the Bahr-el-Ghazal by extensive and unpenetrable marshlands, and that it can only communicate with this province by a long detour on the Nile.

The crucial Monsen-Delcassé exchanges resumed on October 21. Delcassé informed Monsen that Frenchmen were disturbed by the speeches of the Duke of Devonshire and Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of Fashoda. Many Senators and Deputies protested the language used in

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131 British Documents, volume 1, no. 216, Sanderson to Salisbury, October 25, 1898. Salisbury recorded: "I should have nothing to say to him."

132 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 245, de Courcel to Delcassé, October 26, 1898.
these speeches, and asked that the Paris Government make an official statement. Delcassé confided to Monson that he was accused of being too weak, but he added that he was imbued with the conviction that war between England and France over the Fashoda affair would be a major calamity. The Foreign Minister said he had all along been ready to discuss Marchand's recall provided that it was not forced upon him as an ultimatum. Monson believed he detected a weakening of the French position: "the impression produced on me by the language employed by Mr. Delcassé is that they will be unable to maintain their contention as regards Mr. Marchand, but, that until they can announce that negotiations have begun on their claims to the west of the Nile, they will decline to withdraw him."\(^{133}\)

On October 28 Delcassé informed Monson that a Ministerial crisis was at hand. The Brisson Cabinet, in fact, fell on October 25. Thus Delcassé was technically no longer Foreign Minister. He intimated that the composition of the new Cabinet with respect to the portfolio of Foreign Affairs depended upon the attitude of the British Government. Were his proposals for the guarantee of an outlet on the Nile rejected, assured Delcassé, he could not continue in office. Delcassé then referred to the

\(^{133}\)British Documents, volume 1, no. 214, October 21, 1898.
Yellow Book, a compendium of 31 French Government documents relating to the Fashoda question, which had been made public shortly after the issuance of the British Blue Book. The Yellow Book was compiled in such a manner as to favor the French position. As a result of the publication of the Yellow Book, asserted Delcassé, the feeling of the Chamber was practically universal in his favor, and he might have counted upon a long term of office in the Quai d'Orsay. "It is you," accused Delcassé, "who make it impossible for me to remain." Delcassé protested against the humiliation which, he was certain, England wanted to inflict on France. Monson admitted that France was in an embarrassing situation, but that England had not brought about this dilemma. In a frank manner Monson maintained that it was France's own deliberate act which brought about her difficulties, and he repudiated all English responsibility for any consequences which might follow.

Delcassé continued the conversation by inveighing against the English lack of appreciation of French sensitivity. France, he said, was the country of sentiment, and if England preferred, she could come to terms with France by respecting such sentiment. In the present

134 British Documents, volume 1, no. 221, Monson to Salisbury, October 28, 1898.
135 British Documents, volume 1, no. 221.
situation France would be driven to seek the friendship of cooperative powers, and, Delcassé hinted, that even Germany would come to the assistance of France. At a later date Monson learned that Delcassé had made indirect overtures to Germany, and that Delcassé was convinced that the rival commercial interests of Germany and England would strongly dispose Germany to join France and Russia for the purpose of destroying England's maritime and commercial superiority.136 It appears that Delcassé was, for the most part, bluffing Monson into believing that France had strong continental backing.

Delcassé felt the time propitious to bring the discussion to a dramatic climax. He reminded Monson he had several times stated that, in the event of a conflict with England, France would have support behind her, and now he would show proof of this assistance. "This," he said, taking up a handful of papers, "is the original scheme of the Yellow Book on the upper Nile."137 He then showed Monson a telegram from the French consul at St. Petersburg which stated that he was authorized by the Russian Foreign Minister to assure the French Government that the latter wholly agreed with their views on the upper Nile. Furthermore, Russia would associate itself with any step which

136 British Documents, volume 1, no. 238, Monson to Salisbury, December 9, 1898.

137 British Documents, volume 1, no. 221.
might be taken by France. There were four other telegrams of the same tenor in the original scheme of the Yellow Book, claimed Delcassé; but he had suppressed them because he wished to make the publication conciliatory and thought the appearance of these documents would raise excitement in England. In suppressing these documents, he asserted, he forfeited an opportunity to enhance his popularity because he had been constantly castigated for not giving actual proof of Russian sympathy. Monson replied that he rejoiced that the documents were suppressed since, in England, they would have been interpreted as a menace. Monson, as an aside to London, reaffirmed his contention that Count Muraviev, during his visit to Paris, did his best to persuade the French Government not to provoke an attack from England.

There is little doubt that the Russian Government gave Delcassé some sympathy, but there is no indication of positive political or military commitment. Although Delcassé hoped to improve his bargaining position by inferring that Russia, in event of an open conflict, would lend its support, this maneuver in no way diminished Delcassé's effort to improve Anglo-French relations and to effect an enduring accord. It is certain, by this time, that Delcassé was convinced Fashoda had to be evacuated. His problem was to accomplish this act without sacrificing national pride.

138 British Documents, volume 1, no. 221.
Delcassé, on October 29, again emphasized to Monson his belief that his continuance in office depended upon English willingness to negotiate on the principle of France receiving an outlet for her commerce on the Nile. Delcassé boldly argued that if this concession was refused, a great humiliation would be imposed upon France—a humiliation which he could not accept. Since a war with England, his only alternative, would be opposed to his avowed policy and contrary to his principles, he would feel obligated to retire from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Monson vigorously tried to persuade Delcassé that no humiliation would result from acknowledging Marchand had no political mission and had never been ordered by the Government to advance to the Nile, but did so in an excess of zeal. Delcassé retorted that as much as he should have liked to do this, he was prevented from this line by the British declaration of sole right, in partnership with Egypt, to the upper Nile region.  

In counterpart conversations in London, de Courcel intimated that the French Government would soon accede to the British demands. Salisbury began the interview of October 27 by saying that as long as the French flag remained at Fashoda no discussions of the frontier question

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139 British Documents, volume 1, no. 222, Monson to Salisbury, October 29, 1898.
would take place, because if the British took part in formal discussions, it would be admitting the legality of Marchand's position. De Courcel vehemently denied the doctrine that Marchand's position was illegal. However, he mentioned to Salisbury, as recorded in a dispatch to Paris:

For my part, concerning this train of thought, I do not think the difficulty will escape a conclusion, because, outside of the whole legal question, it seemed to me less and less probable that we would remain at Fashoda for a long time; not that Major Marchand could not materially subsist there...but we well knew, by all our available information, that we have not found at Fashoda what we were seeking, a usable outlet on the Nile; Fashoda is an isolated place, in the middle of a swamp without communication with the interior provinces and, in conditions like that, my personal conviction was that we would not delay to evacuate this position.  

Salisbury was glad to hear this intimation. He promised that if Marchand received evacuation orders, then the obstacle to a formal discussion would be removed, and abnormal diplomatic relations between the two countries would cease. Thoroughly convinced of Salisbury's honest intentions, de Courcel felt prompted to write: "I do not doubt the sincere desire of Lord Salisbury to arrive at a peaceful solution to the difficulty without humiliating France; but he has to reckon with the dispositions, very embarrassing for him, not only of the nation, but even

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140 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 459, de Courcel to Delcassé, October 28, 1898.
among the Cabinet members.\textsuperscript{141}

Faced with a possible diplomatic defeat, Delcassé was most displeased when he learned of the Marchand "escapade." Marchand had, unauthorized, left Fashoda and reached Khartoum on October 28. In a report dated September 27, Marchand explained the reason for leaving his station.

If, in twelve days, I have not received orders or any messages whatever by the Cairo-Nile route, I will leave in a boat for Omdurman to demand communication with Paris at the risk of being stopped on the way. Impossible to passively accept the situation of being relegated to the confinement created for me here by the English. I am proceeding according to the theory of the neutrality of the river Nile, as my silence and my inertia would have to be of a compromising nature, in the sense that they would seem to be an acceptance of the regulations decreed by the Sirdar in the name of His Highness the Khedive.\textsuperscript{142}

Delcassé regarded Marchand's action as an extreme blunder. He could not understand how an officer in such a position could have believed himself to be free to leave his post without permission.\textsuperscript{143} Delcassé thereupon ordered Marchand to quickly return to Fashoda.\textsuperscript{144}

Delcassé and de Courcel were now in constant

\textsuperscript{141} DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 459.

\textsuperscript{142} DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 445, Lefèvre-Pontalis to Delcassé, October 21, 22, 1898.

\textsuperscript{143} British Documents, volume 1, no. 222; no. 224, Salisbury to Cromer, October 30, 1898.

\textsuperscript{144} DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 463, Delcassé to Lefèvre-Pontalis, October 29, 1898.
communication in an effort to bring the crisis to a rapid close. On October 29 Delcassé suggested to de Courcel that a mixed commission should be formed for the purpose of the delimitation of the disputed area. "Is there not a ground for agreement? The two Governments would have to decide upon the nomination of this commission, and at the same time make known their decision which would give Major Marchand the order to leave Fashoda." Delcassé asked de Courcel to approach Salisbury with this suggestion for a mixed commission.

De Courcel, on the same day, warned Delcassé that the situation was perilous. The British press's abuse had slackened, and the political orators, even the intransigents such as Grey, expressed a desire for the maintenance of peace. But de Courcel interpreted this relative calmness as an indication of resolution—the determination that no formal negotiations would be conducted before Marchand's evacuation of Fashoda. He urged that "it is no longer necessary to deceive ourselves: we will obtain no compromise on this point. Procrastination and delays will only increase the tension. It is therefore in our hands, if we want peace, to find a way to get out of Fashoda with honor and with head erect." Salisbury should not be pushed to

145 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 464, Delcassé to de Courcel, October 29, 1898.

146 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 464.
the limit, commented de Courcel, because of the possibility of war. A secret agent also contributed the information that the British Cabinet met on October 28 and unanimously agreed not to deviate from the existing stand.\footnote{DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 468, note from a secret agent, October 29, 1898.}

In de Courcel's mind surrender seemed imminent. He even examined with Sanderson alternative routes for Marchand's return trip. The situation, wrote de Courcel on November 1, was impossible. "It seems to me that the general state of things commands us in this moment of isolation to localize the Fashoda question, in some measure to save for the future the possibility of some modest negotiation on the Bahr-el-Ghazal, and to keep dormant, until a propitious time, the great questions which must be put to the Powers of the World."\footnote{DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 476, de Courcel to Delcassé, November 1, 1898.}

It is curious to scan the impressions of the Fashoda problem during the last week of October in the memoirs of well-informed non-official observers. Wilfrid S. Blunt was surprisingly optimistic in his assessments of the dilemma. On October 25 he remarked:

The new \textit{Yellow Book} gives a much more dignified form to the French argument than it has received in our \textit{Blue Book}, and I consider that, logic for logic, M. de Courcel has the best of it. It is clear that as I suspected, Lord Salisbury has
been negotiating, though it is equally clear that he has allowed his back to be stiffened by the London press and his colleagues's speeches and Lord Roseberry's. The French terms are now pretty fairly formulated. They will evacuate Fashoda on being allowed to keep the Bahr-el-Ghazal with access to the White Nile.149

On October 26, he recorded: "The Brisson Ministry has resigned and all is in confusion in Paris. This will probably ease the tension toward England and make a peaceful solution more possible."150 In contrast, Marguerite Steinheil took a dim view of the precarious situation. She feared on October 25 that France had received an ultimatum and the Anglo-French tension had reached a breaking point. She quoted President Faure as saying: "we may give up Fashoda, but we must have an outlet on the Nile. If there can be no longer any question of conquest, we must at least be enabled to facilitate our 'pénétration commerciale' ....Surely, some kind of compromise is possible."151 "England is more impatient than ever," reported President Faure on October 28,152 Steinheil anticipated a showdown on October 30. "The game is up....Monson's attitude and words leave no room for hope of a conciliatory settlement.

149 Blunt, p. 304.
150 Blunt, p. 304.
151 Steinheil, p. 98.
152 Steinheil, p. 100.
Unless, of course, we evacuate Fashoda." ¹⁵³

Newspapers close to the French Government, argues E. M. Carroll, began to prepare the public for eventual evacuation of Fashoda. On October 19 the moderate Matin described Fashoda as a "marshy and unhealthy village." ¹⁵⁴ The October 25 Temps wrote that France should clearly state her intention to withdraw provided that "courtesy was observed toward her and that the question was not arbitrarily isolated from others." ¹⁵⁵ Clemenceau vehemently declared that "the brutal fact is that France cannot think of throwing herself into a war for the possession of some African marshes, when the German is camped at Metz and Strassburg." ¹⁵⁶ All signs now pointed to a French surrender.

The situation in France was futile, and Great Britain was determined to go the limit. The new Dupuy Cabinet was formed on October 29. The dejected Delcassé retained his portfolio, unhappily resigned to the necessity of advocating Marchand's retreat. Delcassé sent out the all important order for the retreat of the Marchand expedition on November 2. "After a reading of Major Marchand's

¹⁵³ Steinheil, p. 100.
¹⁵⁴ Carroll, p. 174.
¹⁵⁵ Carroll, p. 174.
¹⁵⁶ Carroll, p. 174; Aurore, October 25, 1898.
dispatches, the Government had the impression that the existing conditions and sanitary state of the personnel of the mission require the order to return.... As for the return route, I wish to be able to authorize the Major to take the one he has proposed to me, that is to say the Sobat-Djibouti route.\textsuperscript{157} On November 3 Delcassé told de Courcel to inform Lord Salisbury verbally that the Government had decided to evacuate Fashoda.\textsuperscript{158} Delcassé then announced to Monson and the entire world of the decision to withdraw.\textsuperscript{159} In an explanatory communication from Delcassé to Barrère, French ambassador to Rome, Delcassé's reasoning was remarkably similar to that used by de Courcel in the October 29 Salisbury interview. "The information which we have received has led us to decide that Fashoda did not constitute, for our colony of the upper Ubangi, the outlet on the Nile, with which we have been preoccupied since 1893. The Government has consequently decided not to keep the Marchand mission at this point."\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{157}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 478, Delcassé to Lefèvre-Pontalis, November 2, 1898.

\textsuperscript{158}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 480, Delcassé to de Courcel, November 3, 1898.

\textsuperscript{159}\textit{British Documents}, volume 1, no. 227, Salisbury to Monson, November 4, 1898; no. 228, Monson to Salisbury, November 4, 1898.

\textsuperscript{160}\textit{DDF}, series I, volume 14, no. 514, November 12, 1898.
The immediate reaction to the recall of Marchand by the French press and contemporaries was a general belief in France's humiliation. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote: "the feeling of rage and wild desire for vengeance to which the French press now gives expression exceeds in degree the outburst of hatred which the loss of Alsace-Lorraine provoked against Germany a generation ago."\(^{161}\) The *Temps* thought it a pity that England had not seized upon the opportunity for a "general accord in regard to questions in Africa and elsewhere," while the temperate *Matin* urged that "the national honor is never at stake in colonial enterprises. These only represent a business policy."\(^{162}\) Wilfrid S. Blunt viewed Fashoda as an abysmal diplomatic defeat for France. "Delcassé has made his climb down about Fashoda, certainly a pitiful one, which reduces France almost to the level of a second-class power."\(^{163}\) Marguerite Steinheil appeared relieved that the crisis had terminated, but she reported: "the humiliation brings tears to Félix Faure's eyes."\(^{164}\) Monson, too, found the Fashoda shock to be deep-rooted. He reported to Salisbury that "France appears to me to be staggered; and in consequence calls

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\(^{161}\) *Carroll*, p. 175, November 3.

\(^{162}\) *Carroll*, p. 175.

\(^{163}\) *Blunt*, p. 304, November 7.

\(^{164}\) *Steinheil*, p. 100, November 4.
herself humiliated. I should like to think that the feeling of resentment will be transitory; but the contrary is, I fear, the more likely. 165 The Socialist spokesman, Jean Jaurès, regretted the degradation suffered by France and placed the blame for France's untenable position on Hanotaux's Anglophobia. "The key to it is the presumptuous and childish politics of Mr. Hanotaux. He has had only one thought, to bring France and Germany together in order to turn her against England." 166

While unofficial elements greeted Delcassé's action with words of dismay and regret, Marchand vociferously opposed the decision. The French explorer was surprised and perplexed by the Government's backdown. "The evacuation of Fashoda, even before you have examined my report, is the abandonment of certain rights acquired by us, not to mention former ones, and of an excellent position in spite of all the reports, contrary to the false assertions of the Sirdar against which I protest with all my feeling of indignation." 167 Marchand maintained that the expedition

165 British Documents, volume 1, no. 233, Monson to Salisbury, November 11, 1898.

166 La Dépêche of Toulouse of November 9, Oeuvres de Jean Jaurès, ed. by Max Bonnafous (Paris: Les Éditions Rieder, 1931), volume 1, p. 214.

167 PDF, series I, volume 14, no. 484, Marchand to Delcassé, November 4, 1898.
was well prepared militarily, and that the English were in no position to impose a retreat. He repeatedly hassared Delcassé for the "true reason" for "the terrible decision." He even asserted that the true aim of England was to invade Abyssinia. Delcassé coldly responded by saying that Fashoda was not the outlet desired by the Government. "In short, the Government, sole judge, under a responsibility to the legislative assembly, of France's general interests, deems that it must not be bound to the occupation of this point on the Nile."

Although Marchand's withdrawal considerably eased a potentially explosive situation, the crisis, in some respects, continued. The problems of French claims in the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the delimitation of territory in the Congo-Sudan region remained. Delcassé doggedly pressed for an opening of negotiations. The British, however, for months showed little indication of a willingness to negotiate. In England, military and naval preparations were

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168 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 490, Marchand to Delcassé, November 5, 1898; no. 493, Lefèvre-Pontalis, November 6, 1898.
169 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 484.
170 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 486, Delcassé to Lefèvre-Pontalis, November 4, 1898.
171 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 485, Delcassé to Lefèvre-Pontalis, November 4, 1898.
prolonged. D'Aubigny, a French consul to Germany, reported that suspicious rumors involving English belligerence were circulated. D'Aubigny wrote: "she does not disarm, although having received satisfaction over Fashoda, because she wishes war with France, and she will act accordingly."172 Salisbury obstinately refused to open negotiations during the months of November and December. He argued that immediate discussion of questions so complex and delicate would lessen the possibility of arriving at a suitable agreement.173 In spite of British reluctance to open formal discussions, France and England finally reached a satisfactory settlement in March, 1899. The important matter, the Fashoda crisis, was resolved. The obstacle to an Anglo-French understanding had been removed, and, above all, the leading world colonial powers averted what might have been a catastrophic war.

172 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 564, d'Aubigny to Delcassé, December 10, 1898.

173 DDF, series I, volume 14, no. 491, de Courcel to Delcassé, November 5, 1898; no. 492, de Courcel to Delcassé, November 10, 1898; no. 558, de Courcel to Delcassé, December 5, 1898; no. 577, Paul Cambon to Delcassé, December 22, 1898.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

With the signing of an Anglo-French agreement on March 21, 1899, the Fashoda incident was formally closed. During the negotiations of February and March, the French abandoned all claims to the Bahr-el-Ghazal area. Gambon, the French ambassador to England, asked for a delimitation of spheres of influence in the Nile-Congo watershed. The British accepted this proposal, and a final agreement was signed. France was excluded from the whole Nile valley, but received some territory in western Sudan.174

The French defense of their position throughout the Fashoda affair lacked continuity and consistency. French arguments were altered as circumstances changed. As the crisis developed and as prospects for a diplomatic success dimmed, French policy— as guided by the Anglophile Delcassé— underwent a subtle and profound transformation. In general, the French "line" at first was very flexible; this was followed by a period when it grew steadily stronger; and then it again became increasingly conciliatory as the

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174 British Documents, volume 1, no. 244, Salisbury to Monson, February 15, 1899; no. 245, Salisbury to Monson, March 15, 1899.
Foreign Office prepared for the ultimate capitulation.

A brief résumé of French arguments can illustrate this point. Gabriel Hanotaux as Foreign Minister originated the Fashoda project, and he presented the only strong justifications for it. By so doing he established a firm basis for an expansionist, anti-British long-range policy. He affirmed the French right to lay claims to Sudan since this area had been abandoned by all claimants. By completing the Franco-Congolese treaty of 1894 and opposing the Anglo-German agreement of 1891 and the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1890, Hanotaux felt that France could justify her claims to the upper Nile valley by asserting a right of conquest. Even after the British issued the Grey declaration of 1895, Hanotaux denied all British claims. He maintained that the Sultan of Turkey was the true owner of Sudan and at the same time challenged the British Government to define their sphere of influence. He then launched the Marchand mission in 1896 in order to stake a French claim in the Nile basin. Hanotaux foresaw the possibility of an Anglo-French conflict of claims, and he was certain France would hold a strong hand in any negotiations.

With Marchand at Fashoda and the Nile problem still unsolved, Théophile Delcassé replaced Hanotaux in the French Foreign Office. Delcassé found himself saddled with a situation he did not create and which he found distasteful due
to his long-term goal of an Anglo-French rapprochement. Delcassé realized that he would have to follow a moderate course of action. He hoped to find a way out of a position which threatened to lead to a conflict with Britain—a nation he desired as a friend or ally. However, he could not withdraw Marchand unconditionally without losing face and compromising French honor. The French people had suffered an agonizing defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870 and were very sensitive to any affront to the French flag. Thus Delcassé had to search for a justification for the French position at Fashoda. He rejected the justifications of Hanotaux as a formal French position and never accepted the drastic Trouillot plan of asking the Sultan to support the French cause.

During the informal Anglo-French discussions in September, Delcassé presented the French case in mild terms. As a means of gaining time and pacifying the British, Delcassé stated that Marchand's force was merely a "civilizing mission" which was attempting to quell the prevailing anarchy in the upper Nile valley. He was confident that the Marchand-Kitchener encounter would be peaceful, and that formal negotiations would result from this meeting. In a move to assure the British that French intentions were not bellicose, Delcassé appointed Paul Cambon to the London embassy.

Delcassé uttered stronger justifications when the
British Government and press remained "intransigent." He contended that there was no "Marchand mission" as such, but the Marchand force was a continuation of the Liotard mission of 1893. This mission, he said, antedated the Grey declaration and thus had a right to be at Fashoda.

Delcassé returned to the aggressive Hanotaux stand when he asserted that France had an undeniable right to occupy territory abandoned by Britain and Egypt. He could not accept the "impossible," namely evacuation without compensation, without at least announcing the beginning of formal negotiations. France, stated Delcassé, would even be willing to risk war if the British made unreasonable demands. While he took this strong "line," Delcassé was careful to remind the British that his views were strictly unofficial. Hence, he did not publicly commit France to defend Fashoda militarily.

British refusal to discuss any compromise forced Delcassé to back away from his demanding position. He promised never to invoke the right of first occupancy, and he declined to use the Franco-Shilluk treaty in support of the French case. When Delcassé offered to trade Fashoda for an outlet on the Nile, he tipped his hand. He now committed the French Government, though not openly, to a policy of conditional retreat. Salisbury, however, did not think France had conceded enough and refused to alter his policy.

As a last resort, Delcassé, with the concurrence of
the new French Cabinet, surrendered Fashoda to the British. He made his decision to prevent the outbreak of war, even at the expense of French honor. Delcassé advised capitulation in the end, but can he be pictured as the engineer of a French humiliation?

Delcassé was a man of expedients. He was not primarily interested in justifying or maintaining the French position, but in finding a comfortable exit. It is very possible that Delcassé, from the beginning, wanted to recall Marchand. All that he needed was a propitious occasion to bring about a honorable withdrawal. He may have used Marchand as a scapegoat. Delcassé left him in a militarily indefensible position without very clear instructions and then condemned him for leaving Fashoda. Delcassé also may have adopted a "hard line" in an attempt to force the British to soften their approach, but not to establish a basis for a defense of the French position at Fashoda.

The importance of Delcassé's quest for a "justification" was not that he wanted to retain Fashoda as a French possession on the Nile, but that he needed an excuse to evacuate it. Delcassé never publicly spelled out the specific objectives of the Marchand mission and thus left the door open for either formal negotiations or an evacuation. Delcassé was willing to sacrifice a great deal in order to promote long-range pro-English policies. He asked
the British to concede very little in exchange for Mar­
chand's evacuation. He repeatedly told Salisbury that he
wanted England's friendship and that he preferred an
Anglo-French to a Franco-Russian alliance. If the British
Government could have only promised to open future negotia-
tions, to name a mixed commission, or to accept certain
agreements "in principle," then Delcassé would almost
certainly have quickly recalled Marchand.

Delcassé implored again and again that the British
give some indication of their good will. He entreated
British officials to soften their public attitudes, and
suggested that the "jingoistic" press be muzzled. He
demonstrated his desire for a peaceful solution by showing
Monson the evidence of Russian support which he had omitted
from the Yellow Book. In desperation, Delcassé threatened
to resign if the British would not cooperate. He implied
that another Minister might stiffen the French stand, and
revive the "justifications" of Hanotaux. In spite of all
Delcassé's suggestions, warnings, and threats, Salisbury
would not deviate from the policy which Britain had deli-
neated in the Grey declaration.

Regardless of the observations of Barclay, Steinheil,
and Blunt, it is improbable that the French Government
would have allowed France to go to war over the Fashoda
question. As long as Delcassé remained in the Ministry,
there was no real danger of a war with England. Even if Delcassé gave serious consideration to the feasibility of a military showdown with England, he understood that France could not fight without continental backing. He also realized that a rapprochement with Germany was out of the question because of popular feelings concerning Alsace-Lorraine, and that military aid would not be forthcoming from Russia in the event of war. Thus, in historical perspective, we may judge that Delcassé acted as a responsible and clairvoyant statesman. The French nation suffered a bitter humiliation, and Delcassé witnessed a temporary diplomatic setback. However, in spite of the perilous policy which he inherited from Hanotaux, the dogmatic and abusive attitude of the British Foreign Office and press, and the pressures in France itself which pushed him to pursue short-term "face-saving" and "honorable" resistance to British demands, Delcassé helped to set the stage for a new milestone in the European political scene—the Anglo-French entente of 1904.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Any investigation of the Fashoda crisis presents the historian with a number of unavoidable problems, yet a critical study of this subject is an interesting and challenging undertaking. The factors which were at play during the Anglo-French diplomatic dispute are complex and baffling. Much has been written about the incident, and a wide range of views exists with respect to its significance.

Material relating to the Fashoda crisis is generally abundant, but there are certain documentary limitations. The documents contained in Documents Diplomatiques Français and British Documents on the Origins of the War are extensive and reliable. However, these sources are made up of documents selected from the archives, and one can only hope that the editors have included all the important material. It is also a major drawback that neither Salisbury nor Delcassé have written memoirs or autobiographies.

The bibliographical material falls into four general categories. These are: documentary evidence; memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and letters; secondary works; and periodical literature.

The single most important primary source, by both qualitative and quantitative standards, is the Documents
Diplomatiques Français. In series I, volume 14 of this collection, the editors have amassed a multitude of documents—more than two hundred—pertaining to the Fashoda crisis. This compendium of documents, spanning a period from January through December, 1898, consists mainly of dispatches to and from Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé. In the Documents Diplomatiques Français, there are many accounts of important diplomatic pourparlers. The choice of documents tends to favor the French case. Nevertheless, most of the French arguments are found, in one form or another, in this work.

The second most valuable primary source is the British Documents on the Origins of the War. This compilation includes a great deal of material directly concerned with the Fashoda affair. In the British Documents, a majority of the entries deal with the Monson-Delcassé discussions and Monson's personal impressions. There are far fewer documents related to Fashoda in the British Documents than in the Documents Diplomatiques Français, and the period covered is much shorter—from July through November, 1898. However, this collection constitutes an indispensable source for both British and French attitudes.

Memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and letters are essential and useful but in no sense abundant sources. Marguerite Steinheil's My Memoirs is helpful because it contains French-slanted semi-official insights into the
whole question. Steinheil, as President Faure's lover, probably had some access to official documents and attitudes. My Diaries by Wilfrid S. Blunt, along with Thomas Barclay's Thirty Years, give some incisive samplings of the views of non-official British observers. Blunt spent many years as a civil servant in the British Foreign Office and was an outspoken anti-imperialist. The statement of French objectives in the Nile are best represented by the efforts of Albert Baratier (À travers 1'Afrique), Charles Castellani (Marchand 1'Africain), and General Mangin ("Lettres de la mission Marchand"). Charles W. Porter's The Career of Théophile Delcassé is a scholarly biographical study and briefly touches upon Delcassé's role in the incident. A. L. Kennedy's Salisbury has some pertinent information regarding Salisbury's part in the crisis.

The secondary sources fall under two general headings: general works and special studies. The authors of these studies present the reader with numerous interpretations regarding the significance of the crisis. G. P. Gooch, a British historian, in The History of Modern Europe argues that France was in error in asserting claims to the Nile region, and that the final capitulation was a spectacular humiliation for France. E. M. Carroll, in French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, contends that public opinion played a large part in Delcassé's decision to evacuate Fashoda. Graham Stuart, author of French Foreign Policy
From Fashoda to Sarajevo, maintains that an Anglo-French entente was a primary aim of Delcassé, and he insists, as does D. W. Brogan, that in the end Delcassé had to choose between humiliation and disaster. A. J. P. Taylor, in The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, asserts that Delcassé had no alternative but to surrender and accept humiliation.

The Anglo-French conflict over the valley of the Nile reached its decisive point. It was not a conflict of equals. The British had control of Egypt and meant to keep it; the French wanted only some compensation for renouncing the legacy that Bonaparte had failed to bequeath to them. Their policy in the upper Nile was a facesaving affair from the first to last. (p. 380)


Other historians have given equally important interpretations. A. J. Grant and Harold Temperley place emphasis upon Britain's threat of force and Salisbury's firm attitudes as factors influencing the French Government's evacuation order. F. Lee Bens asserts that Delcassé, having in mind an Anglo-French entente, believed it would be in the best interest of France to yield. Alan Moorehead, in the The White Nile, alleges that "no such dangerous crisis was to occur again until the actual outbreak of hostilities in 1914, and by then France and Britain were allies against Germany." (p. 340)
Of the special studies, William Langer, author of *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, volumes 1 and 2, has given the most authoritative treatment of the Fashoda affair. Langer's account is balanced and comprehensive. He discusses all aspects of the problem, and his analysis of the French domestic scene is particularly valuable. His annotated bibliography is immeasurably helpful. Langer argues that, in the end, France had to bow to Britain's superior might. "The time for the *ultima ratio* had come. The British were prepared to fight. Some, it seems were rather anxious to fight, knowing full well the superiority of the British naval forces and the helplessness of France, wracked as she was by the domestic crisis of the Dreyfus affair. The outcome of the conflict was a foregone conclusion." (p. 576) The outcome of the Fashoda affair, infers Langer, in part, laid the foundation for the Anglo-French alliance. "The harsh tone of the British in the Fashoda crisis, and the uncompromising attitude of the British government made the *entente cordiale* for the time being a pious hope and little more. The lines of the future were already being marked out." (p. 576)

Morrison Giffen and Gabriel Hanotaux have also contributed worthwhile studies of the Fashoda problem. *Fashoda, The Incident and Its Diplomatic Setting* is an excellent interpretative work. Giffen's discussion of the roles played
by Russia and Germany is especially illuminating. It is Giffen's thesis that France's surrender of Fashoda can only be explained in terms of the existing European situation. "French policy was always being pulled about between two most irreconcilable motives. Desire for colonial expansion took her into Africa and Asia, and made her a rival to British imperialism. Desire for reinstatement in Europe and for revenge upon Germany prompted her to withdraw her energies from distant enterprises." (p. 183) Hanotaux, in Fachoda, writes primarily of the period before the crisis. He condemns British arrogance and charges that France was victimized. France, he argues, capitulated amidst fatal circumstances, official blunders, and the threat of war.

In the periodical literature on the subject there is a great variety of opinions relating to the Fashoda question and its principal figures, Salisbury and Delcassé. In "Fashoda and Lord Salisbury's Vindication," the author maintains that Salisbury redeemed himself from the ignominy of previous failures during the Fashoda affair. The French, the author says, were in the wrong. "The extreme measures resorted to by Lord Salisbury against France can, indeed, only be justified by the indubitable hostility and unlawfulness of the French provocation." (Diplomaticus, Fortnightly Review, December, 1898, p. 1003). An anonymous author in the article, "France, Russia, and the Nile," accuses the French of plotting to disrupt the Anglo-African
empire. He suggests that France and Russia attempted to ally themselves with the Mahdi against Britain, and that the plan miscarried. (Contemporary Review, December, 1898, pp. 761-78).

Several writers praised Delcassé's conduct during the Fashoda dispute. R. T. Riker states: "It is hardly to be denied that the French diplomat Delcassé had fought rather obstinately to enforce his country's claim, but, having finally decided that the trumps were in British hands, he proposed to pin his faith on a new shuffle of the cards. The result was the Entente Cordialle." ("A Survey of British Policy in the Fashoda Crisis," Political Science Quarterly, March, 1929, p. 77). Pierre de Coubertin lauds Delcassé for his moderation in the dispute. "M. Delcassé showed remarkable coolness in conducting the denouement of the deplorable Fashoda affair. He was not responsible for it, but he acted as if he had been." ("M. Delcassé: a character sketch," Fortnightly Review, January, 1902, p. 75) W. M. Fullerton asserts that Delcassé astutely ran counter to German ends by evacuating Fashoda. "M. Delcassé did not hesitate. He chose peace with England. It had suddenly dawned on him, as it had dawned, indeed, at the same time on British statesmen, that both France and England had all along been playing into Germany's hands." ("Théophile Delcassé: The Man who undid the work of Bismarck," World's Work, January, 1915, p. 267).
Although much has been written on the Fashoda affair, there are several facets of the problem which deserve fuller examination. Possibly in the future the French Foreign Office will release documents from the archives which will shed some new light on the subject. Even if more documents are not released, a detailed investigation of the relationship between French domestic politics—especially the Dreyfus affair—and the stand taken by the Foreign Minister would be a worthwhile project. It would be interesting to determine to what extent domestic conditions influenced the attitudes and policy of Delcassé. A study of Franco-German relations during the crisis period would be a difficult but challenging investigation. Any further insights into the role which Russia played during the incident would be a welcome addition. In sum, there is ample opportunity for the revaluation of past interpretations and possibly for development of new ones.
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