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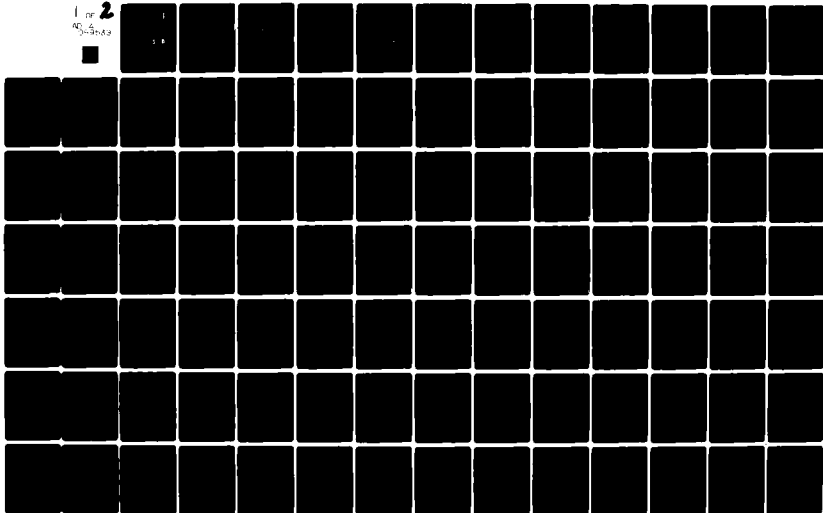
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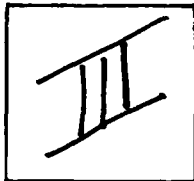


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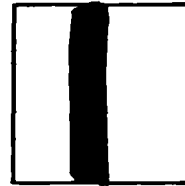
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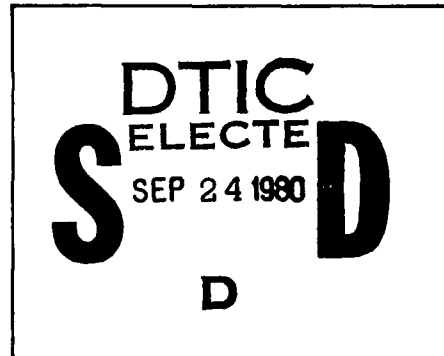
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FASHODA: TURNING POINT IN ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS
A STUDY IN MILITARY-POLITICAL AFFAIRS

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A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1976

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WASHODA: TURNING POINT IN ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS:
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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the military confrontation between French and Anglo-Egyptian forces at Fashoda, in the Nilotic Sudan, during the period 19 September to 11 December, 1898. It examines the confrontation, on both the French and the British sides, as to origin, preparation, conduct, and resolution.

It concludes that the peaceful resolution of the Fashoda Crisis was a major contributing factor in the Entente between France and Great Britain in 1904, and that an analysis of the political-military relationships used by France in her military failure at Fashoda, and by Great Britain in her success, shows that military activity is and must be politically defined, that conflict of interest is detrimental to military efficiency, and that victory is ultimately a political concept.

FOREWORD

The Anglo-French Entente of 1904 was an unexpected deviation in the normal course of European diplomacy; from the days of Edward III and Philip VI, the start of the Hundred Years' War in 1337, hostility between France and England seemed to be a principle of international relations. However, the Entente did not come out of the blue. It had its causes, remote and proximate. Some of these causes are to be found in the relations of France and Great Britain to each other and others are to be found in the relations of France and Great Britain to third powers.

During the Nineteenth Century, there were several milestones on the road followed by France and Britain in arriving at the Entente: cooperation during the Greek Rebellion in the 1820's and in the neutralization of Belgium in the 1830's; the Crimean War alliance of 1854, tenuous though it was (This was the first time that France and England had fought on the same side in a war since the Crusades.); frequent coordination of policy both in the Near East and the Far East; and finally the crucial negotiations immediately preceding the Entente.

One of these milestones, at the time unrecognized, was the peaceful resolution of the Anglo-French confrontation

at Fashoda, in the Nilotic Sudan. This confrontation was the climax of the policies followed in the Nineteenth Century by France and Britain in one region where they were at odds, the Mediterranean, and especially Egypt.

This paper examines the causes of the Fashoda Confrontation and the incident itself, relates it to the Entente Cordiale, and offers certain conclusions concerning the relation between political and military affairs, which may be of interest to the modern military officer.

The source material for this paper is drawn for the most part from the documents, official and private, available to those involved in the Fashoda Incident. Since Fashoda is considered to be one of the events preliminary to World War I, many of these documents are found in the three major collections officially published after the war: British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914; Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914; and Die Grosse Politik der Europaeischen Kabinette, 1871-1914. Some, however, particularly French documents, are not included in these collections and were only recently rediscovered when the private papers of Théophile Delcassé were deposited in the French National Archives in 1965.

As it was physically impossible for me to have direct access to these newly-rediscovered documents, I have relied, for my own purposes, on the works of two historians--one

American and one French--who share the credit for their rediscovery. Roger G. Brown's Fashoda Reconsidered is a masterful analysis of the relationship between the Fashoda Incident and the Dreyfus Affair. Marc Michel's La Mission Marchand is a precise examination of the financing, organization, and support of the Marchand Expedition, as well as its progress, mile by mile, from one side of Africa to the other. I am grateful to these two historians for having done their task so well.

I also express my gratitude to the librarians at the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College who were most helpful to me in obtaining research materials; and to Lieutenant Colonel Paul Jeandel, the French liaison officer at Fort Leavenworth, and Brigadier General Georges Fricaud-Chagnaud, the French Military Attaché in Washington, D. C., who obtained for me a large part of the material contained in Appendix 2. I especially thank Lieutenant Colonel William A. Stofft, Major Harold W. Nelson, and Doctor Joseph R. Goldman, of the Department of Strategy, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College. Their guidance and suggestions contributed greatly to whatever merits this paper may have. I am, of course, solely responsible for the deficiencies that may remain.

NOTES

1. The following examples of citations are offered to ease the reader's path:

a. Documents in collections are cited numerically by series and volume number:

France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914 (1st series, 16 volumes; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1929-59), XII, no. 152.

b. Documents cited in secondary works are cited here as they are in those works:

Archives Nationales, 53, AP: Papiers de Sallintin (Hanotaux's testimony in 1898); cited in Roger G. Brown, Fashoda Reconsidered (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 19.

c. Letters in collections are cited by author, addressee and date:

(Henri Cambon, ed.) Paul Cambon, Correspondance, 1870-1924 (3 vols.; Paris: Editions Grasset, 1940), II, Letter to his mother, 1 Nov 98.

d. Secondary works are cited in the usual manner:

David S. Landes, Bankers and Pashas (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 123.

2. The following abbreviations are used in citations:

- A.N. Archives Nationales (French National Archives)
- B.D. British Documents on the Origins of the War
- B.I. Bibliothèque de l'Institut
(Library of the French Institute)
- D.D.F. Documents diplomatiques français
(French Diplomatic Documents)

G.P. Die Grosse Politik der Europaeischen Kabinette
(The Major Policies of the European Governments)

S.O.M. Section Outre-Mer, Archives Nationales
(Colonial Records, French National Archives)

3. Translations from French and German are my own, but
no special note is made of translated material.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In March of 1897, a force composed of ten French officers and non-commissioned officers, one French civilian, and some one hundred and fifty Senegalese riflemen, led by Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand, left the French colonial city of Brazzaville on the Congo River and headed inland.¹ After an incredibly arduous, adventurous, and romantic journey, Marchand and his small command arrived on 10 July 1898 at Fashoda, on the Nile River, in the Mahdist Sudan. They raised the French flag over an abandoned Egyptian fort and claimed Fashoda and the region of the Bahr el-Ghazal, through which they had traveled, for France.

Marchand and his company expected to be met and reinforced at Fashoda by other French expeditions coming from Ethiopia and French Somaliland, but they waited in vain. In late August they fought and won a battle with the Mahdists. Then, on 19 September, they were finally met by a combined Anglo-Egyptian force under the command of Sir

¹The best description of the organization, composition, and support of the Marchand Expedition is in Marc Michel, La Mission Marchand, 1895-1899 (Paris and The Hague: Mouton and Cie., 1972), 65-80. (Hereinafter cited as Michel, Mission.)

Horatio Herbert Kitchener (later Earl Kitchener of Khartoum), Sirdar of all the Forces of the Khedive of Egypt and General Officer Commanding Her Britannic Majesty's Forces in Egypt.

Marchand and Kitchener discussed the situation over a whiskey and soda, and left all questions of sovereignty to the diplomacy of their respective nations. Both, of course, had instructions from their governments to do precisely this. Kitchener raised the Egyptian flag in Fashoda, south of the French-occupied fort, left there an Egyptian battalion and two gunboats under the command of a British officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jackson, and sailed away to Khartoum and eventually Cairo.

On 11 December 1898, after having received instructions from his government through the good offices of the British in Egypt, Marchand and his company left Fashoda and marched eastward into Ethiopia. There they were met by French officials and escorted to Djibouti, where they embarked on a vessel for France.

This, in brief, is what happened at Fashoda between France and Great Britain. Not a shot was fired; seldom was an angry word spoken. Yet, in Europe, two great nations came quite close to war over what was represented by control of a run-down Sudanese village on an island in a backwater of the Nile. Perhaps such a situation now seems incredible, but it was very real, and its peaceful resolution is a cardinal point in the development of today's world.

Why were Great Britain and France brought together so dramatically and so fatefully? Why did the peaceful settlement of this seemingly isolated incident have such wide ramifications?

The meeting at Fashoda was the climax of the Mediterranean policy followed by France and of the imperial policy followed by Britain since the close of the Seven Years' War in 1763. The first clash in Egypt had taken place during the Napoleonic Wars, at the end of the Eighteenth Century, and competition had remained high thereafter.

In the last half of the Nineteenth Century, France had two distinct policies in the area: the first was a continuation of her traditional interest in the Mediterranean, focused on Egypt; the second was a newer policy oriented on the expansion of the French colonies in West and Central Africa.² In the events leading to Fashoda, the colonial African policy was made to serve the Mediterranean policy.

British aims in the Mediterranean were generally simpler. In brief, these were to prevent Russia's becoming a Mediterranean power, and to protect British communication

² French interest in North Africa was an outgrowth of the first, and older, policy. As a result French interest there was deeper, decolonization was more difficult, and deep involvement continues even today, in a thinly disguised post-colonial manner, quite different from France's continued interest in francophone Africa.

with the Indian Empire. By 1895, both these interests centered on Egypt.³

France had long standing and well-developed interests in Egypt and the Levant dating back to the decline of the Italian commercial cities. In more recent times, France had showed interest in Egypt by the exertions of Napoleon I in 1795 to 1802, by her support of Mohammad Ali in the 1830's to 1850's, and by her financial and commercial penetration, epitomized by the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869.⁴

Great Britain, whose interests in the eastern Mediterranean had centered about Constantinople, began to develop a more permanent involvement in Egypt after the Crimean War. This process accelerated after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. British financial interest in Egypt grew suddenly in 1875 when the British government, at the instigation of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, purchased the Suez Canal Company shares of Khedive Ismail Pasha.

Ismail Pasha's financial difficulties resulted in the establishment in 1876 of a Caisse de la dette publique

³R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, with A. Denny, Africa and the Victorians (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 254-73. (Hereinafter cited as Robinson, Africa.)

⁴David S. Landes, Bankers and Pashas (Torchbook Edition, New York: and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969) presents a fascinating account of this process.

(Fund for the Public Debt), which was an international consortium of Egypt's creditors who had control of the external (i.e., customs duties, port taxes, etc.) sources of Egyptian revenue, and used this to pay off the outstanding debts. The principal members were France and Britain. Austria and Italy were members at first, but by 1879 Britain and France had purchased their shares of the debt. After a last defiant gesture against his European mentors, Ismail Pasha was forced to abdicate in 1879. A series of anti-European riots led to the stationing of a combined Anglo-French fleet off the port of Alexandria in early 1882.⁵ In July, the British bombarded Alexandria in an effort to quell further disturbances. Because of a ministerial crisis in France, the French fleet was not authorized to participate in the bombardment, nor in the subsequent occupation of Alexandria and Cairo.⁶

France retained her position on the various commissions mixtes, multinational commissions composed of the representatives of fourteen nations, having control over various aspects of Egyptian domestic finance, particularly the taxation of foreigners residing in Egypt.⁷ Although

⁵See Landes, Bankers and Pashas, 315-18; for a slightly different view, see Parker T. Moon, Imperialism and World Politics (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), 223-29.

⁶William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890 (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 251-53.

⁷Ibid., 254.

she continued to profit handsomely from efficient British management of Egyptian finance, France was not satisfied. She believed that her political and military rights in Egypt were as great as Britain's, and were being ignored. Thus, she strove mightily to catch up with Britain.

French efforts to gain recognition of her rights in Egypt generally took the form of obstructionism in the commissions mixtes. Since fourteen nations were involved, the diverse interests represented insured that any nation that could control even a small bloc of votes could often control the entire system. Because of her wide financial interests, France could control the votes of several smaller nations. Also, Germany occasionally sided with France as part of her desire to involve France in colonial projects in order to distract her from Continental Europe.

France also demanded from time to time that Britain set a term on her occupation of Egypt. Great Britain herself, particularly during the tenure of William Gladstone, made this demand effective by insisting independently that her presence in Egypt was only temporary and would cease as soon as a viable native government could be formed. However, the longer the British presence continued, the more remote became the possibility of a viable native government.

French exertions and British disclaimers notwithstanding, Britain still occupied Egypt in March of 1896, when both France and Great Britain decided on the first

steps which eventually led to Fashoda. On the French side, this was the decision to launch the Marchand Expedition, and on the British side it was the decision to begin the reconquest of the Sudan.

The event that acted as the catalyst for both decisions was the defeat of the Italians by the Ethiopians at Adowa on 1 March 1896. The Italians had been encouraged in their expansion into Eritrea by the British, who saw them as a counter to the French in Djibouti.⁸ The French, naturally enough, supported the Ethiopians against the Italians, and French supplies and advisors (as well as Russian artillerymen) were the key to the Ethiopian victory.⁹

The Italian defeat meant that Italy could no longer front for Great Britain in East Africa, and it assured France of a dominant voice in Ethiopian councils. Great Britain had to do herself what she wanted done, and France could presume Ethiopian support for her designs in the Sudan.

⁸See Moon, Imperialism, 144-50; and also William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 271-74.

⁹Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900 (Torchbook Edition; New York, etc.: Harper and Row, 1963), 317-18; Moon, Imperialism, 149-50; and Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 274-80.

Chapter 2

MOTIVATION AND PREPARATION

A. France

The French motives for launching the Marchand Expedition are not clearly discernible. The reason is usually ascribed to the instability of the French governments during the entire decade of the 1890's. And it is true that this period was exceptionally unstable: from January 1893 to June 1899, France had four presidents,¹ and eleven different cabinets.²

However, as far as the Marchand Expedition was concerned, this instability was more apparent than real. Gabriel Hanotaux was Foreign Minister from May 1894 to October 1895, and again from April 1896 to June 1898. He was succeeded in 1898 by Théophile Delcassé, who had been Undersecretary of State for Colonies and then Minister of Colonies during Hanotaux's first tenure. Likewise,

¹Sadi Carnot, elected in 1887, was assassinated in June 1894; Jean-Paul Casimir-Perier resigned in January 1895; Félix Faure died in a display of amatory prowess in February 1899; and Emile Loubet was then elected. While the President's role was largely ceremonial, he did have the power of selecting the Prime Minister and of independent consultation with the various ministers.

²See Appendix 2 for a list of governments.

André Leboucq was Minister of Colonies during the entire Méline Cabinet, from April 1896 to June 1898.

The situation was further aggravated by an outside element that entered the decision-making process, the Committee for French Africa. This Committee was formed in 1890 as a lobby group outside the government, but with close ties to the government. Its members were politicians, military men, academicians, and civilian colonial explorers and administrators who wished to protest what they saw as the anti-colonial tendencies of the French government, and to provide research, information, and other support to pro-colonial ministers and deputies. One of its earliest members was the then Undersecretary of State for Colonies, Eugène Etienne.³

The Committee not only supported a pro-colonial policy, but it also had independent funding and organized its own colonial expeditions, the first of which was sent to the Lake Chad area. Just as in the later case of the Marchand Expedition, the Lake Chad enterprise was conducted in cooperation with the Colonial Department and in opposition to the instructions of the Foreign Ministry.⁴

³Roger G. Brown, Fashoda Reconsidered (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 19. (Hereinafter cited as Brown, Fashoda.) It was not until May 1894, when Delcassé took the portfolio for the second time, that this position was raised to full ministerial rank.

⁴G. N. Sanderson, England, Europe and the Upper Nile (1882-1899) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), 118-19.

Traditionally, at least since the time of Louis XIV, the Ministry of Marine had had responsibility for French colonies. At this time, in 1893, the Minister of Marine, a naval officer, had two major subordinates: the Undersecretary of State for Colonies, a civilian; and the Undersecretary of State for the Navy, also a naval officer. The Undersecretary of State for Colonies himself had two major subordinates: the Director of Political Affairs, a civilian representative of the Foreign Ministry responsible for the administration of the colonies; and the Director of Military Affairs, an active duty general officer from the War Department responsible for military and defense matters in the colonies. The War Department detailed officers to serve in colonial military units, which were usually manned by natives and funded either from the colony itself or by the Ministry of Marine.

Théophile Delcassé, an early member of the Committee for French Africa,⁵ became Undersecretary of State for Colonies in January 1893. He accepted the position on the condition that the Colonial Department be physically separated from the Ministry of Marine and given a building of its own.⁶ This break with the Ministry of Marine was more

⁵Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Lettres de Delcassé, Delcassé to Mme Delcassé, 8 July 1896; and Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française, II (July 1892), 16; both cited in Brown, Fashoda, 24.

⁶A. Duchêne, La Politique coloniale de la France (Paris, 1928), 256; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 25.

than merely symbolic. With the active support of the Committee for French Africa, it led to the establishment in May of 1894 of a separate Ministry of Colonies, and inaugurated a period of independence on the part of the Colonial Department that resulted in its release from even the control of the Foreign Ministry.

Delcassé's arrival at the Colonial Department coincided with a general renewal of interest in the Upper Nile. In 1891, the French explorer de Brazza⁷ proposed to Eugène Etienne an expedition to the Fashoda region to force a change in the Egyptian situation.⁸ At first, the French government was cool to the idea because its attention was firmly focused on the Continent.⁹

In January 1893, a French engineer in the Egyptian service named Victor Prompt put forward a proposal that gave form to de Brazza's idea. He suggested building a dam across the Nile, just north of the confluence of the White Nile, the Bahr el-Ghazal, and the Sobat rivers, in order to

⁷Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (1852-1905) was a naturalized Frenchman of Italian birth who was largely responsible for the expansion of French control of Central Africa between 1875 and 1895. He generally favored the civilian approach to colonial matters and often opposed military plans for colonial expansion, including the Marchand Expedition.

⁸Archives Nationales, Section Outre-Mer (hereinafter cited as A.N. and S.O.M.), Letter Brazza to Etienne, 18 April 1891, Gabon-Congo, I, 37a; cited in Marc Michel, La Mission Marchand, 1895-1899 (Paris and The Hague: Mouton et Co., 1972), 16. (Hereinafter cited as Michel, Mission.)

⁹Michel, Mission, 18; and Brown, Fashoda, 27-28.

impound and regulate the sustaining waters of the Nile, provided by the Bahr el-Ghazal and the White Nile which flow fairly constantly year-round. The annual Nile flood is due to the Blue Nile which originates in Ethiopia and is fed by the rushing waters of the spring thaw in the Ethiopian mountains. Prompt's proposal also explicitly threatened the possibility of withholding water in time of drought, or of suddenly releasing it in time of flood.¹⁰

Prompt's idea caught the imagination of President Carnot, who had been a classmate of his at the Ecole Polytechnique in the early 1860's. Carnot and Delcassé enlisted the aid of Parfait Monteil, another African explorer, to organize an expedition to implement it. Delcassé worked very closely with the Committee for French Africa, and by dealing directly with President Carnot circumvented the traditional collegiality of the Cabinet.¹¹ The Foreign Minister, Jules Develle, complained that he got his first inkling of what was to be the Monteil Mission from the newspapers, and that as late as July 1893, he had no offi-

¹⁰Victor Prompt, "Soudan nilotique", Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien, III (1893), 71-116; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 26. For the European reaction to the proposal, and for evidence that it entered into policy formulation, see William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 127-35.

¹¹The best account of the Monteil Mission and of the French motives in this period is to be found in Jean Stengers, "Aux origines de Fachoda: L'Expédition Monteil", Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire, XXXVI (1958), 436-50; XXXVII (1960), 365-404 and 1040-65.

cial notification from the Ministry of Marine that such an expedition was being organized or even contemplated.¹²

Before Monteil had time to do anything, Delcassé fell from office, along with the rest of the Cabinet, in December 1893. He returned in May 1894 as Minister of Colonies; the new Foreign Minister, Gabriel Hanotaux, opposed colonial adventurism because it distracted France from Europe and involved her unnecessarily with Great Britain.¹³ After the assassination of President Carnot, Hanotaux succeeded in circumscribing the Monteil Mission by forbidding it to occupy territory in the name of France. As a result, Delcassé chose to abort it rather than permit it to proceed as merely another civilian exploration.¹⁴ Undaunted, Delcassé then began the organization of another expedition to build Prompt's dam, this one to be headed by Victor Liotard, one of de Brazza's subordinates in the French Sudan. Again, Hanotaux opposed the idea, as did the new President, Jean-Paul Casimir-Perier.

It was at this point, in October 1894, that the Dreyfus Affair first broke.¹⁵ In September 1894, French

¹²S.O.M., Afrique IV, 43: Develle to Delcassé, 23 July 1893; cited by Stengers, 449.

¹³A. J. P. Taylor, "Prelude to Fashoda: The Question of the Upper Nile (1894-1895)", English Historical Review, LXX (1950), 52-80.

¹⁴Brown, Fashoda, 27-29.

¹⁵Brown, Fashoda, passim, is the best treatment of the relationship between the Dreyfus Affair and Fashoda.

authorities became aware that their military plans were being systematically betrayed to Germany. Suspicion quickly focused on Alfred Dreyfus, a French Army captain of Alsatian descent and Jewish religion. He was tried by court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced to the penal colony of Devil's Island. Subsequently, in 1898, it was discovered that the evidence against him had been forged and that the most senior generals in the French Army had probably committed perjury to convict him. The resulting public outcry, polemics, military crisis, and the new trial for Captain Dreyfus coincided with the Fashoda Incident.

From the start, in October 1894, Hanotaux opposed a trial for Dreyfus because he believed that it would unnecessarily exacerbate relations between France and Germany.¹⁶ He was the only minister to oppose the trial. Furthermore, he incurred the personal enmity of Casimir-Perier because the President believed that Hanotaux was slighting him in matters of foreign policy. As a result of these two circumstances, Hanotaux was more and more isolated in the Cabinet.¹⁷

Delcassé took advantage of this situation in October 1894 to obtain a Cabinet decision favorable to the Liotard

¹⁶A.N., 53, AP: Papiers de Sallantin (Hanotaux's testimony in 1898); cited in Brown, Fashoda, 30.

¹⁷The political isolation of Hanotaux is well described in Brown, Fashoda, 30-32.

Expedition. It is difficult to say whether Hanotaux was actually outvoted because he had lost his prestige as a result of his opposition to the Dreyfus Trial,¹⁸ or whether his opposition to colonial expansion in Africa was waning because of his burgeoning contacts with African expansionists (through his relative Lieutenant Charles Mangin, a close friend of Captain J.-B. Marchand).¹⁹ For whatever reason, Hanotaux never again interposed an objection to the activities of the Colonial Ministry in Africa. Liotard was on his way to build a dam at Fashoda.

Liotard set out for Brazzaville in November 1894 and began to organize his expedition. He faced several problems. He lacked the proper financial support because he had to make do with what was left of the credits voted in 1893 for the Monteil Expedition as the Cabinet did not want to go to the Chamber to ask for further credits for African expansion. He faced the opposition of de Brazza, who viewed the organization of such expeditions, sometimes by force, as detrimental to the colonial government he was attempting to organize in the French Sudan and who now doubted the value of what he saw as military adventurism. But, most of all, Liotard lacked time, and the expedition that set out from Brazzaville in the early Spring of 1895 was poorly organized and supplied.

¹⁸Brown, Fashoda, 32.

¹⁹Michel, Mission, imputes this to Hanotaux.

It was at this juncture that the instability of French cabinets did influence the situation. In January 1895 Delcassé was replaced at the Colonial Ministry by Chautemps. That in itself is unimportant; but what is important is that Delcassé was out of office until 1898, and for him Fashoda meant the Liotard Expedition, that is, an expedition organized prior to the Grey Declaration of March 1895, and one whose purpose was the building of a dam on the Nile.

Liotard met insurmountable difficulties and failed far short of Fashoda. By the early Summer of 1895, both the colonial authorities at Brazzaville and the government in Paris agreed that Liotard would never reach his objective; therefore, de Brazza recalled him. Further, Liotard now agreed with de Brazza that an expedition to Fashoda was unwise and adventuristic.²⁰ At this point, the Committee for French Africa produced yet another plan for a Fashoda expedition, in the person of Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand.²¹

Jean-Baptiste Marchand was born in Thoissey, near Lyon, in 1863. He entered the Army in 1883 and was soon detailed to the Marine Infantry for duty in the colonies.

²⁰Brown, Fashoda, 35-36.

²¹Bibliothèque de l'Institut (hereinafter cited as B.I.), Fonds Terrier, 5904; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 36. This is a dossier containing the correspondence between Marchand and Auguste Terrier, Secretary-General of the Committee. It is clear that throughout this period Marchand was acting on the advice of the Committee.

By 1890 his name was well-known as an explorer in West and Central Africa where he helped to enlarge the areas under French control both through military activity and by improving means of communication. He was a protégé of Colonel Louis Archinard, the senior military officer in the French Sudan, and had access to political circles in Paris through his close friend and subordinate Lieutenant Charles Mangin and membership in the Committee for French Africa.²²

In June or July 1895,²³ just at the time when Liotard's failure became known, Marchand had an interview with Hanotaux and outlined his plan for a Nile expedition. The Foreign Minister asked him to submit a formal written proposal to the Minister of Colonies; this could have been an attempt by Hanotaux to bury the project politely,²⁴ or it could have been a tacit admission that the Upper Nile was the responsibility of the Minister of Colonies.

Marchand's plan, submitted in September 1895, contained twenty-one foolscap pages and detailed maps.

²²There are three biographies of Marchand extant, by A. Acard, P. Croidys, and J. Delebecque (see details in the Bibliography), but none is really worthwhile. They were sponsored by the Vichy Government during World War II as anti-British propaganda. A good sketch of Marchand is in Patricia Wright, Conflict on the Nile (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1972), 120-216.

²³Marchand gives both dates; June in Le Matin, 20 June 1905; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 37; and July in his Journal de marche, A.N., 99 AP1; cited in Michel, Mission, 25-26.

²⁴Brown, Fashoda, 37.

It was entitled Mission du Congo-Nil, le Bahr el-Ghazal, and was divided into four sections: the first was a general overview of the current African situation; the second was an analysis of British African policy from Marchand's point of view; the third was his proposal to thwart the British; and the fourth was a detailed break-out of money, personnel, and supplies necessary for his expedition.²⁵

In the second part, Marchand postulated the "English theory of the African cross", a British African empire stretching from Cairo on the north to Capetown on the south, and from Lagos on the west to Mombassa on the east. He proposed to counter this British scheme by linking the French Sudan with French Somaliland. He also intended to strengthen French influence in Africa and to end Britain's occupation of Egypt.²⁶ He recognized that this would constitute an "unfriendly act"²⁷ under the terms of the Grey Declaration of March 1895, which stated that Britain had:

"no reason to suppose that any French Expedition had instructions to enter, or the intention of entering, the Nile Valley." "I cannot think that these rumours deserve credence, because the advance of a French Expedition under secret instructions right from the other side of Africa, into a territory over which

²⁵One copy of Marchand's plan is in S.O.M., Afrique, III, 32a, no. 1, and another in Missions, 42; cited by Michel, Mission, 31. Brown, Fashoda, 37, cites Afrique, III.

²⁶S.O.M., Afrique, III, 32a, no. 1; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 37-39; and Michel, Mission, 31ff.

²⁷Ibid.; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 38.

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 so viewed by England.²⁸

As this statement was made in Parliament, and was not officially communicated to the French government, Hanotaux, the French Foreign Minister, responded in the French Senate in April 1895, with a statement of non-acceptance of the British claim.²⁹

When the Colonial Minister, Chautemps, saw Marchand's plan, he realized that its scope went far beyond his ministerial responsibilities and forwarded it to the Foreign Ministry with a covering letter requesting Hanotaux's opinion.³⁰ Hanotaux proposed an interdepartmental conference,³¹ but it was never held because the Ribot Ministry fell on 28 October 1895.

This was another juncture at which the vagaries of French ministerial politics affected the road to Fashoda. The new government was formed by Léon Bourgeois, with Pierre Guieysse as Minister of Colonies, and Marcelin Berthelot as Foreign Minister in lieu of Hanotaux who refused to

²⁸Hansard, Series IV, vol XXXII, pp. 388-406; cited in Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 265.

²⁹Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 267.

³⁰France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914 (1st series, 16 volumes, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1929-59), XII, no. 152. (hereinafter cited as D.D.F.)

³¹D.D.F., XII, no. 197.

serve in a Radical government. Both Guieysse and Berthelot were academicians of note, but neither had ever held a position even close to cabinet rank before.

It is interesting to speculate on the effect that academicians such as these, and Hanotaux, trained as they were to think in theoretical rather than practical terms, had on French policy. How conscious was Hanotaux the Historian of Hanotaux the Foreign Minister? How much of what was done was done as theoretical abstraction, or with an eye to the future opinion of historians?

A few days after Berthelot assumed the duties of Foreign Minister, his daughter died. He was so grief-stricken that he effectively gave up any semblance of performing his duties. Yet, pressed by his subordinates and by the Colonial Ministry, he gave his approval, with several reservations, to the Marchand Expedition in a letter to Guieysse on 30 November 1895. The approval authorized Marchand to lead a civilian expedition to search for a practicable route from the Ubangi River to the Nile. He was specifically prohibited from conducting a military expedition, from occupying territory, from signing treaties with native chiefs, and from reopening the Egyptian question.³² This last restriction was fatuous, as any French expedition to the Nile, regardless of its character, would

³²D.D.F., XII, no. 219; and S.O.M., Afrique, III, 32a, no. 3, cited in Brown, Fashoda, 44, 51.

necessarily entail complications with Britain over Egypt.

In pushing for Foreign Ministry approval of the Marchand plan, Guieysse had been acting on the advice of the two senior permanent officials in the Colonial Ministry, Ernest Roume, Chief of the Political Department; and General Louis Archinard, Chief of the Military Department. General Archinard had been, prior to his promotion, the senior military officer in the French Sudan. Up to this point, both Archinard and Roume were in agreement.

However, in November 1895, acting on advice from Liotard, the African Bureau of the Colonial Ministry re-examined the Marchand project and recommended scaling it down to conform with the restrictions that were about to be imposed by the Foreign Ministry.³³ As a result, Roume withdrew his support, but Archinard continued to advocate the original proposal, that is, for a military occupation mission to link French West Africa to French Somaliland. Faced with this new disagreement, Guieysse finessed the problem by subordinating Marchand to Liotard, at Brazzaville, and telling them to find the solution to the question themselves.³⁴ The practical effect of this move was to insure that Liotard would follow Roume's instructions while

³³S.O.M., Afrique, III, 32a, unnumbered document; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 48.

³⁴D.D.F., XII, no. 312; S.O.M., Afrique, III, 32a, no. 10, cited in Brown, Fashoda, 49.

Marchand would follow those of Archinard, who ordered him to feign compliance with the Foreign Ministry's restrictions but to prepare to implement the original plan after he was out from under Liotard's control.³⁵ In March 1896, Marchand left Paris for Africa and began to organize his expedition.

In April 1896, Hanotaux returned to the Foreign Ministry in the Méline Cabinet; his counterpart at the Colonial Ministry was André Lebou. Both reapproved the Marchand Expedition and reaffirmed Marchand's subordination to Liotard. The basic policy decisions, however, were still to be made by Liotard and Marchand in Africa.³⁶

Hanotaux approved the Marchand Expedition, as restricted by Berthelot six months previously, because he sought a gambit to reopen the Egyptian question, which had changed to France's disadvantage after the Grey Declaration of March 1895 and the British decision to reconquer the Sudan in March 1896.³⁷

In the Fall of 1896, Roume was replaced, most likely at the instigation of Archinard, by Gustave Binger, a retired Army officer who had served under Archinard's command

³⁵S.O.M., Missions, 42; cited in Brown, Fashoda, 49-51.

³⁶D.D.F., XII, no. 411.

³⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, Fachoda: Le partage d'Afrique (Paris: Flammarion, 1909), 137; cited in M. B. Giffen, Fashoda: The Incident and Its Diplomatic Setting (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930), 211.

in the French Sudan.³⁸ Binger, as the new Director of the Political Department of the Colonial Ministry, fully supported the views of Archinard and the Committee for French Africa³⁹ for a forward policy having as its goal the establishment of a French military post on the Nile and, if necessary, of a military confrontation with Britain to maintain it; or to regain French equality with Britain in Egypt as the price of abandoning it. As a result of this personnel change, harmony was restored in the advice received by the Colonial Minister. During 1897, de Brazza was recalled and Marchand was effectively removed from Liotard's command. Liotard was relegated to the role of providing an administrative and logistical link for Marchand.⁴⁰

In the meantime, Marchand, well-financed (in contrast to Liotard), spent the time after his departure from Paris in putting together his expedition. He placed Lieutenant Mangin in charge of recruiting and training the Senegalese who would provide the backbone of the force, and he himself traveled all over French West Africa gathering food supplies,

³⁸Marchand and his officers--Mangin, Baratier, and Larseau--as well as Monteil, all served at one time or another under Archinard in the French Sudan.

³⁹B.I., Fonds Terrier, 5891, nos. 71-73; and Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française, I (Jan 1891), 1-2; both cited in Brown, Fashoda, 51.

⁴⁰D.D.F., XIII, nos. 365, 388; XIV, nos. 4, 226, 258; M. Michel, "Autour de la Mission Marchand: le rappel de Brazza en 1897", Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 25 (1967), 133-185; A. C. de Mazières, "Liotard et Marchand", Ibid., VI (1966), 330-43.

weapons, trading goods, and arranging for porters. There were difficulties, particularly in obtaining enough porters and in finding a dismantlable, portable steamboat, but by March 1897 all was ready and the expedition left Brazzaville on its way to the Nile.

Marchand finally received definitive instructions in January 1898, just as he was about to cross from the Ubangi into the Nile watershed. He was to fly the French flag; to sign treaties with the native chiefs along his route, putting them under the protection of France and insuring that the boundaries specified in these treaties left no gaps between the French Congo and Fashoda; and finally he was to occupy Fashoda and the surrounding regions and establish a military outpost.⁴¹ These instructions were given by the Colonial Minister, and every point was in direct violation of the restrictions originally imposed by the Foreign Ministry on 30 November 1895.⁴²

In order to effect this east-west junction of French-controlled territory, the French also negotiated with Menelek, the Ethiopian Emperor, in an effort to get him to expand his territories to the right bank of the White Nile, and eventually to meet Marchand at Fashoda. The British were also negotiating with Menelek, but lost out to the French, because the French could afford to give

⁴¹D.D.F., XIV, no. 4.

⁴²D.D.F., XII, no. 219; and above, p. 20.

the Ethiopians more of the Sudan than could the British.⁴³ Also, the French were furnishing Menelek with modern arms and military advisors. However, by the Summer of 1898, the French had to admit that Menelek was incapable (or unwilling) of extending his authority to the Nile at Fashoda, and that any link-up with Marchand would have to be made by French expeditions sent out from Ethiopia or French Somaliland.⁴⁴ The French tried, but it was too difficult to mount an effective expedition on such short notice.

Menelek was outwardly cooperative with the French; certainly he realized that he could never have defeated the Italians without French help, and he knew that the French could provide him with plenty of modern military equipment. But it did not take the most astute mind to discern that Ethiopia was being used as a stalking horse for French designs in East Africa, and that Ethiopian control of Nile territories would be transitory at best. It would be surprising had Menelek not engaged in some subtle sabotage of French plans for Ethiopia.

It is difficult to find, in all of this, a clearcut motive for the French government's undertaking of the Marchand Expedition. It appears that the President, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister were ignorant of

⁴³R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 360-62.

⁴⁴D.D.F., XIV, no. 246.

what was about to happen, and those who did know were secretive about the matter and had not thought it through to its logical consequences.

As was seen earlier, Marchand gained authorization for his project almost by default. Matters did not improve. As late as September 1898, two months after Marchand's arrival at Fashoda, but before the French government learned of it, the exact justification for his presence there had not been decided.⁴⁵ Marchand had earlier proposed that the true purpose of France's occupation of the Bahr el-Ghazal was to be able to withdraw in exchange for a British withdrawal from Egypt,⁴⁶ but this now seemed to have been ignored. The new Colonial Minister, Trouillot, proposed as justification that unrest in the Mahdist Sudan threatened the French Congo and had required the dispatch of a military expedition; he also suggested that a mandate be obtained from the Sultan at Constantinople to authorize France to restore order in the Sultan's name.⁴⁷ Delcassé, who was now Foreign Minister, pointed out that as the British had used such a Turkish mandate to justify their unilateral actions in Egypt and the Sudan, something to which France had always objected, France could not now legalize the British tactic by using it herself. However, he did admit that the other reason

⁴⁵D.D.F., XIV, nos. 246 and 329.

⁴⁶Ibid., XII, no. 192.

⁴⁷Ibid., XIV, no. 246.

proposed by Trouillot, that of having to dispatch a military force to quell unrest in the Mahdist Sudan, was usable.⁴⁸

In the end, nothing was decided. Marchand was simply instructed to avoid any discussion with the British on questions of sovereignty, to keep his force at Fashoda, to maintain communications with Mechra er-Rek, his forward base in the upper reaches of the Bahr el-Ghazal, and to await further instructions. He was also given the authority to leave his command at his discretion, putting it in the hands of Captain Germain, the next senior officer.⁴⁹ Delcassé also informed French diplomatic posts in London and Cairo that all discussion on the Fashoda problem was to be carried out at governmental level, and not between Kitchener and Marchand.⁵⁰

⁴⁸D.D.F., XIV, no. 329. This reason was even then hoary and shopworn, but it was effective because it was an acceptable diplomatic convention. In more sophisticated forms, it survives today.

⁴⁹D.D.F., XIV, no. 352.

⁵⁰Ibid., no. 331.

B. Great Britain

The British motives in deciding on a reconquest of the Sudan must be sought in an examination of the importance of Egypt to Britain. Traditionally, British interest in the eastern Mediterranean had centered at Constantinople, and, except for the period of the Greek Rebellion, had aimed at the maintenance of Turkish integrity through all the challenges of Balkan nationalism and Russian ambition. This policy culminated in the Crimean War, but it began to suffer significant modification after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This change of attitude was reflected in the British position at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, where Britain sanctioned and participated in an attack on the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.⁵¹

The importance for Britain of keeping Russia from becoming a Mediterranean power, in view of French hostility and Italian weakness, was obvious. After the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894, it became evident to British policy makers that a British naval movement through the Mediterranean against the Russians in the Black Sea would be extremely risky because France would almost certainly oppose it. As a result, the idea of creating an independent naval base in the eastern Mediterranean--an eastern Gibraltar-- became

⁵¹C. J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1890 (Torchbook Edition; New York, etc.: Harper and Row, 1963), 33-34; W. L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890 (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 153-66.

very attractive. Responsible naval officers strongly recommended it, as exemplified in a memorandum from the Director of Naval Intelligence in 1896:

The time for jealously guarding the inviolability of the Dardanelles is passing away, and is not worth any important sacrifice now. . . . There would be (with Russia in the eastern Mediterranean) only one way in which England could not only maintain herself in the Mediterranean at all, but continue to hold India, and that is by holding Egypt against all comers and making Alexandria a naval base.⁵²

The Suez Canal gained rapidly in importance. By 1882 more than 3,000 ships, totalling over 7,000,000 tons, made use of the Canal, and of these over eighty percent were of British registry.⁵³ By 1895 Egypt had become the nexus of both Britain's Mediterranean policy and of her communication with the Indian Empire. Egypt had become for Great Britain a question of empire, rather than just another part of the Empire.

The Sudan was, necessarily, a vital interest for Egypt. In order to be master of her own fate, Egypt had to control, or at least to prevent others from controlling, her lifeline, the Nile River.⁵⁴ The main tributaries of the Nile converge in the Sudan. When Great Britain occupied

⁵²D.N.I. Memo, 28 Oct. 96; cited in Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, 355-56.

⁵³Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 252.

⁵⁴Prompt's scheme to dam the Nile could not be dismissed out of hand, and the French had to be taken seriously. See Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 103-108, for a good account of Egyptian, and British, fears that the Nile could be diverted or otherwise interfered with.

Egypt in 1882, she naturally fell heir to Egyptian interests including control of the Nile Valley in the Sudan, to which Mohammed Ali and Ismail Pasha had devoted so much of Egypt's resources. The death of General Charles "Chinese" Gordon, and the annihilation of his command, on 28 January 1885, brought a sudden end to Egyptian, and consequently, British power in the Sudan.

Thereafter, British policy toward the Sudan was one of "reserving" it against encroachment by other powers, on the assumption that the power of the Mahdists would decline far enough and fast enough for the Sudan to be reoccupied and the Nile protected before any other threat, particularly the French, could materialize.⁵⁵ The final expression of this policy was the speech by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on 28 March 1895, in which Sir Edward made it clear that any encroachment by France into the Nile Valley would be viewed by Great Britain as an unfriendly act.⁵⁶ Hanotaux, in a similar speech before the French Senate and in informal discussions with English statesmen, refused to accept the declaration as binding on France.⁵⁷

After their defeat at Meowa on 1 March 1896, the Italians feared for their position in Eritrea, and asked the British to create a diversion in the northern Sudan against the Mahdists, whom the Italians believed to be

⁵⁵Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, 349.

⁵⁶Quoted above, 18-19.

⁵⁷D.D.F., XIV, no. 358.

in league with the Ethiopians.⁵⁸ After some considerable discussion as to what would and would not help the Italians, and whether it was worth helping them at all, the British Cabinet, in consultation with Lord Cromer in Cairo, decided that an attack in force against Dongola, the northernmost province of the Sudan, would have the double advantage of beginning the reconquest of the Sudan at an opportune time, and simultaneously of giving apparent heed to the Italian request. The main and deciding motive, however, was always the eventual reconquest of the Sudan for Egypt.⁵⁹ Lord Cromer made it clear from the first that Egypt could not afford the prolonged campaign involved in a reconquest of the entire Sudan, and that Dongola was to be the limit until further credits could be managed.⁶⁰ Lord Cromer, who was primarily a businessman and financier, could see little advantage to Egypt in reconquering the Sudan, although he recognized that it would have to be done sooner or later for reasons of prestige and to open the Sudan to the "influences of civilization".⁶¹

General Kitchener wasted no time, and Dongola was taken in April 1896. There the Egyptian army sat, however,

⁵⁸Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, 346-54.

⁵⁹Lord Cromer, Modern Egypt, volume II (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), 79-85.

⁶⁰Telegram, Cromer to Salisbury, no. 39, P.R.O., F.O. 78/3762; cited in M. Shabeika, British Policy in the Sudan, 1882-1902 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 367.

⁶¹Cromer, Modern Egypt, II, 79.

while the money was being found to pay for further penetra-
 tion into the Sudan, and especially for the railroad that
 Kitchener insisted was necessary. There occurred in March
 1896 a somewhat shady financial arrangement,⁶² in which
 Egypt borrowed £E500,000 from the Caisse de Dette pub-
 lique to pay for the Dongola expedition. France and Russia
 objected and sued for recovery of the money in the High
 Mixed Court, which, in December, found for France and
 Russia. Britain then loaned Egypt £800,000 to repay the
Caisse. (The Egyptian pound was at this time worth some-
 what more than the British pound, and there were court
 costs and interest payments to cover.) France and Russia
 protested again, but to no avail. On the basis of this
 loan to Egypt, and the subsequent dispatch of British troops
 to reinforce the Egyptian army, Britain was able to claim
 equal rights with Egypt in the Sudan and to obviate the
 necessity of an international conference to settle the
 issue.⁶³

There is no doubt that the decision to reconquer the
 Sudan represented an abrupt change of tactics for the British

⁶²Although Cromer says: "The episode is one to which
 both Englishmen and Egyptians may look back with pride and
 satisfaction." Modern Egypt, II, 92.

⁶³Salisbury to Cromer, Telegram no. 47, Secret, 3 Jun
 98, F.O. 76/5050; cited in Robinson, Africa and the Victor-
 ians, 367. D.D.F., XIV, no. 342. Great Britain, Foreign
 Office, British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-
 1914, G. P. Gooch and H. V. Temperley, eds. (11 Volumes;
 London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1926-38), I, no. 185.
 (Hereinafter cited as B.D.)

government, but the strategic purpose remained the same. It had been Lord Salisbury's policy since 1899 to exclude European rivals from the Nile Valley, and this was the time to do it once and for all.⁶⁴ This decision may have taken the French completely by surprise, as they seemed to expect the British advance into the Sudan to be made from the south, that is, from Uganda.⁶⁵ In any event, the British decision had no discernible effect on French plans.

The decision was made so suddenly that it surprised the British as much as anyone else.⁶⁶ It was announced on 13 March 1896, the same day that Lord Cromer's annual report, stating that Egypt had nothing to fear from the Mahdist Sudan, was published.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, it is clear that the British announced the decision immediately after it was made, and that it was made in London, not in Cairo, although the announcement did state that the action was being taken at the request of the Egyptian government.⁶⁸ Strictly speaking, this was probably true, as Lord Cromer always obtained a formal Khedival request, even after the fact, to authorize and legitimize British action in Egypt.

⁶⁴Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, 354.

⁶⁵Shibeika, British Policy in the Sudan, 359; and Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 121-25.

⁶⁶Cromer, Modern Egypt, II, 83-84.

⁶⁷Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 287.

⁶⁸Salisbury to Dufferin, no. 30, 12 Mar 96, P.R.O., P.O. 78/4893; cited in Shibeika, British Policy, 355.

The Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Sudan languished while the railroad was being built,⁶⁹ but after October 1897, when it was finally ready, the Egyptian army was reinforced with British troops, and the final drive began. It ended on 2 September 1898 when General Kitchener with a combined force of 25,000 defeated the Khalifah and 40,000 Dervishes on the heights of Omdurman. The power of the Mahdists was effectively destroyed, and the whole of the Sudan lay before the victorious army.

In the meantime, Marchand had occupied Fashoda. Rumors of the arrival of a European force on the Upper Nile had reached Cairo, and Kitchener believed as early as January 1898 that a French force had entered the Mahdist Sudan and that the Khalifah Abdullahi had sent part of his army to intercept them.⁷⁰

By June 1898, the British had prepared definitive instructions in the event the French were met on the Nile: specifically, Kitchener was not to provoke an attack, nor take any offensive action; further, British officers coming into contact with the French should identify themselves as British, even though they might be in the Egyptian service.⁷¹

⁶⁹Cromer, Modern Egypt, II, 94-95.

⁷⁰Sirdar to Cromer, quoted in Cromer to Salisbury, no. 37, 23 Jan 98, P.R.O., F.O. 78/5049; cited in Shibeika, British Policy in the Sudan, 392.

⁷¹Memo, Cromer to Salisbury, 15 Jun 98, P.R.O., F.O. 78/4956; cited in Shibeika, British Policy, 393.

These instructions were refined in August, when Salisbury told Kitchener to avoid anything which might in any way imply a recognition of French rights in the Nile basin, and instructed him to take command personally of the force that was to go from Omdurman to Fashoda. Salisbury strictly enjoined Kitchener to avoid conflict with Ethiopian forces at all cost (in case they were with the French), but the details of how the encounter with the French would occur were left to his discretion.⁷²

⁷²B.D., I, no. 185.

Chapter 3

CONFRONTATION

On 19 September 1898 Kitchener arrived at Fashoda, where Marchand greeted him in the name of France. The formal exchange of claims and counterclaims took place pleasantly enough,¹ and Kitchener departed, after having raised the Egyptian flag at the other end of Fashoda from the French position. He also left an Egyptian battalion and two gunboats as the Egyptian garrison. Marchand of course made a formal protest, but he was in no position to do anything about it.

Marchand and Lieutenant Colonel Jackson, the British officer commanding the Egyptian garrison, maintained courteous and correct relations. It was only when Marchand left Fashoda to go to Cairo to present his position in person to the French authorities, that Captain Germain, his second-in-command, pursued an aggressive patrolling policy and actually occupied the right bank of the Nile. British protests became threats, but at a fortunate moment, Marchand, now a major, returned. He expressed his polite

¹For the text of these letters and declarations, see D.D.F., XIV, Appendix 1.

regrets to Lieutenant Colonel Jackson, and the crisis passed quickly.²

There was a flurry of concern in Paris for the safety of Marchand at the hands of the British.³ The French ambassador in Vienna had reported the substance of a conversation that he had had with the Khedive of Egypt, who was visiting Europe, in which the Khedive claimed that Colonel Wingate, Kitchener's chief of staff, had boasted that Marchand and his command would be wiped out.⁴ Later, when Delcassé heard that gunboats were being sent to Fashoda, he sent a worried telegram to Lefèvre-Pourtales, the French representative in Cairo, asking him to try to discern the British intent.⁵ Lefèvre-Pourtales answered that Kitchener was going to Fashoda with no hostile intention against Marchand, and that the French force was in no immediate danger.⁶ The French never again seemed to worry for Marchand's safety.

One fact that complicated the issue between the British and the French at this moment was that the French had no independent means of communication with Marchand. The route along the Ubangi back to Brazzaville was difficult at best as river steamers could go up only as far

²Winston S. Churchill, The River War (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951), 321-22.

³D.D.F., XIV, no. 344; and B.D., I, no. 188.

⁴D.D.F., XIV, no. 261. ⁵Ibid., no. 344. ⁶Ibid., no. 356.

as Ouango on the Ubangi in the French Congo. The link from there to Mechra er-Rek, the forward base on the Bahr el-Ghazal, was by runner. However, at this time, September and October 1898, Marchand was practically cut off from Mechra er-Rek because his steamer could not get through the sudd, the thick carpet of water hyacinths that covers the Nile and its tributaries in the late summer. For a while, the British did not believe that this could be, and thought that the French were disclaiming contact with Marchand merely as a negotiating tactic.⁷

The French never succeeded in re-establishing an independent channel of communication with Marchand, and had to depend on the good offices of the British the entire time that Marchand was at Fashoda. The French consul at Cairo had normal commercial telegraph communication with Paris, but from Cairo south he was dependent on the British military telegraph, which extended only to Khartoum. From there, the British sent messages to Marchand at Fashoda on the river steamer that maintained liaison with Lieutenant Colonel Jackson's force.

As Marchand's situation had a real effect on the eventual French decision to withdraw him, an examination of the predicament in which he found himself is worthwhile.

Marchand spent the time after his arrival at Fashoda

⁷B.D., I, nos. 188 to 191.

in repairing the dilapidated Egyptian fort, and in negotiating with the local inhabitants. He finally succeeded in obtaining the signature of one of the local Chilluk chiefs, who happened to be disaffected from the Khalifah, on a treaty granting France a protectorate.⁸

By 20 August, things looked black; the Mahdists were preparing to attack, and Marchand had lost all communication with the outside world.⁹ After an all-day battle with a Mahdist force of about two-battalion strength, embarked on gunboats, he was reduced to 25,000 cartridges, but his command had suffered no casualties. However, there was still no sign of the relief columns that were to come to his aid from Ethiopia.¹⁰ By 30 August, Marchand had received some resupply from Mechra er-Rek and now had 90,000 cartridges and a four-month supply of food. But, he was still without adequate artillery, and feared that if the British did not capture Omdurman by 15 September, the Mahdists would lay siege to Fashoda by 20 September.¹¹

⁸D.D.F., XIV, no. 445. Besides the treaty, this document contains a series of twenty-six telegraphic reports prepared by Marchand as he crossed Africa and during his stay at Fashoda. All twenty-six were dispatched as a single report when Marchand arrived in Cairo in late October 1898. The Chilluk chieftain later repudiated the treaty with France by telling Kitchener that he had thought that Marchand was actually British.

⁹Ibid., Marchand's Telegram no. 14.

¹⁰Ibid., Marchand's Telegram no. 15.

¹¹Ibid., Marchand's Telegram no. 16.

He also wrote on 30 August that his command was very weak; that it had too much to do, over too wide a territory, and with means totally inadequate to the task.¹²

Finally, after his encounter with Itchenar and his first contacts with the Anglo-Egyptian garrison at Fashoda, Marchand complained that his situation was desperate, that he was cut off from all sides, and that he was unable to exercise the rights he had obtained and to fulfill the obligations he had incurred in the treaty with the Chailuks.¹³

In the name of the Khedive, Kitchener imposed martial law all along the Nile, specifically prohibiting any transport of armaments. Marchand protested, but acted in full conformity with the British regulations. He even arranged for them not to fire on his steamer the Faidherbe, as it was upstream trying to contact the expected relief column, and he was therefore unable to warn the crew of the imposition of martial law by the British.¹⁴

In effect, Marchand admitted to being at the mercy of the British, with a force insufficient to cope with the situation, and he formally communicated this to his government in his official report.

¹²D.D.F., XIV, no. 445, Marchand's Telegram no. 17.

¹³Ibid., Marchand's Telegram no. 22.

¹⁴D.D.F., XIV, Appendix 1, nos. IV through IX.

The British view of Marchand was interesting. From the first, they realized that his position was vulnerable. Kitchener's comment--that he considered himself fortunate to have been able to rescue such a brave explorer¹⁵ was both quite truthful and diplomatically inspired, although Marchand's logistic situation was much better than Kitchener's reports indicated.

The European diplomatic community buzzed with rumors and counter-rumors concerning Fashoda. The German chargé d'affaires in London informed Berlin in mid-October that Marchand was reported to be without munitions and supplies, to be cut off from France completely and unable to return the way he had come, and completely dependent on the British.¹⁶ The Italian government warned the British several times through the embassy in Rome that the French fleet at Toulon was preparing for war.¹⁷

The British threatened to force Marchand out by cutting off all supplies and communication that they provided him,¹⁸ but this threat was never carried out. Lord Salisbury did instruct Lord Cromer and General Kitchener to make Marchand's situation as untenable as possible, and

¹⁵ Deutschland, Auswärtiges Amt, Die Grösse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914, 40 vols., Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft fuer Politik und Geschichte mbH., 1924), XIV/2, no. 3887. (Hereinafter cited as G.P.)

¹⁶ Ibid., no. 3890. ¹⁷ B.D., I, nos. 219, 229, 232.

¹⁸ D.D.F., XIV, no. 350.

to supply him with food only in a dire emergency,¹⁹ but as Marchand was never short of food, this had no practical effect. It would in fact have been difficult to starve the French out as they could buy food from the local inhabitants and had an extensive garden of their own. It is ironic that Marchand was furnishing fresh greens and flowers for Lieutenant Colonel Jackson's table.

The British found themselves in the peculiar position of supporting, out of a sense of humanity and chivalry, the very element that gave the French the only pressure point they had. The English made the best of a bad situation by never recognizing that it existed, which turned out to be the best tactic they could have chosen. The French, of course, could neither admit that dependence on the British was possible, nor could they presume to take advantage of it in any way.

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¹⁹B.D., I, no. 201.

Chapter 4

DISPUTATION

A. The French Case

The basic contention of the French government was that the Bahr el-Ghazal region and Fashoda were res nullius, that is, they belonged to no one; and further that the Marchand expedition constituted an effective occupying force in the sense agreed upon at the Berlin Conference of 1885.¹ Proof of the claim of res nullius was deduced from the British and Egyptian evacuation of 1885, and from the fact that several powers, Great Britain and Italy in particular, had acted as though the Sudan was res nullius by appropriating slices of it whenever they pleased.²

Another French argument was that, even if the Mahdist state had controlled the Bahr el-Ghazal and Fashoda, Marchand had captured these areas before the British had taken Khartoum, and had sealed this capture by the victory of 25 August over the Mahdist forces.³

The French argument had several grave faults. The

¹M. B. Giffen, Fashoda: The Incident and Its Diplomatic Setting (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930), 49.

²Ibid.

³D.D.F., XIV, no. 358.

first was that the French did not announce to the Powers that the purpose of the Marchand Expedition was to occupy the Bahr el-Ghazal and Fashoda, as was required by the Berlin Conference.⁴ Secondly, the Marchand Expedition was not an effective occupation force. Marchand himself gave the best evidence of this: He told his government, after he arrived at Fashoda and saw the situation that he confronted, that against any native opposition an effective French occupation would require six colonial infantry companies, two artillery batteries, two river steamers, and twenty barges; all to be commanded by twenty European officers and thirty European non-commissioned officers.⁵ He in fact had one company, eleven Europeans, one small steamer, and no artillery. There are also Marchand's statements that he could not effectively occupy the Bahr el-Ghazal, and could barely hold Fashoda.⁶ Furthermore, the exceptional courage, heroism, and resourcefulness required for the Marchand Expedition to reach Fashoda, demonstrated that it was clearly unique, and practically impossible to sustain or to repeat.⁷

⁴It is difficult to prove that someone did not do something. However, the French documents relative to the dispatch of Marchand do not mention such an announcement, and in fact treat the Mission with considerable secretiveness. Further, when Delcasse' claimed that Marchand was subordinate to the Congolese explorer Liotard (D.D.F., XIV, no. 358), he effectively confirmed that such an announcement had never been made.

⁵D.D.F., XIV, no. 445, Marchand's Telegram no. 12.

⁶See above, 38-40. ⁷Giffen, Fashoda, 17.

The very fact that Marchand was instructed to sign local treaties, and did sign at least one, was also damaging to the theory of res nullius. A treaty is a political instrument among several parties, each competent in his own right. Additionally, the treaties which Marchand was to have negotiated were to be specific concerning boundaries, as required by the instructions from his government,⁸ so they would have recognized the competence of a particular native element over a certain territorial expanse.

The most damaging blow to the theory of res nullius had been delivered several years earlier by France herself. In 1894, Britain had negotiated a deal with the Congo Free State in which the Bahr el-Ghazal was leased to King Leopold. In order to nullify this arrangement France, with the backing of Germany, had insisted on the undiminished validity of Turkish and Egyptian rights in the entire area that had been the Egyptian Sudan prior to 1885.⁹ This attack was successful; the operative clauses of the Anglo-Belgian treaty were voided, and Egyptian rights in the Sudan were internationally recognized.¹⁰

⁸D.D.F., XIV, no. 4.

⁹H. Temperley and L. Penson (eds.), Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902) (Cambridge: University Press, 1938), no. 196.

¹⁰William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 131-41. King Leopold tried to revive his lease during the Fashoda Crisis but was firmly rebuffed by Delcasse. (D.D.F., XIV, nos. 372 and 373.)

It was fatuous to claim that Marchand had conquered the Bahr el-Ghazal and had successfully defended his conquest at Fashoda. Marchand admitted that from Fashoda he could exercise no control over the Bahr el-Ghazal.¹¹ He also admitted deep concern over the possibility of a renewal of the Mahdist attack against him, and said that only a British defeat of the Mahdists would prevent it.¹² If it had not been for the Anglo-Egyptian advance through the Summer of 1898, the Khalifah could have moved some 20,000 men against the French at Fashoda. Marchand would have become the French Gordon, and Fashoda the French Khartoum.

The existence of a Mahdist army of 40,000 men until 2 September 1898 also weakened the contention that the Bahr el-Ghazal and Fashoda were res nullius in the spring, when Marchand began his advance into the Sudan.

The French could find no real diplomatic support for their position on Fashoda.¹³ Their only formal ally at the time was Russia, but the Russians were only brought into the confidence of the French on 1 September 1898, when they were asked what their attitude would be if British action in the Sudan were to result in an Anglo-French conflict.¹⁴

¹¹D.D.F., XIV, no. 445, Marchand's Telegrams nos. 12, 14, 17, and 22.

¹²Ibid., Telegram no. 16.

¹³Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 562-66.

¹⁴D.D.F., XIV, no. 315..

later, Count Muraviev, the Russian Foreign Minister, told the French Ambassador that he thought that the Tsar would "march side-by-side with France", but Muraviev's concern over the situation did not cause him to delay his annual vacation.¹⁵ Lord Salisbury did not share the opinion of his Ambassador in Paris, Sir Edmund Monson, that the Russians had pledged the French their full diplomatic and military support against the British.¹⁶

In October, the Russians apparently let drop their desire to see the Fashoda Crisis resolve itself peacefully, and their hope that an international conference on Egypt and Africa would follow.¹⁷ In the end, Germany remained scrupulously neutral,¹⁸ and Russia provided little diplomatic, and no military support for France.¹⁹

It was not until the first week in October that the French established a bargaining position. Delcasse' informed Baron de Courcel, the French Ambassador in London, that Marchand would withdraw if the British agreed to a Nile boundary for the French Congo.²⁰

¹⁵D.D.F., XIV, no. 347.

¹⁶B.D., I, nos. 198, 213, 218, and 221.

¹⁷G.P., XIV/2, no. 3893. ¹⁸D.D.F., XIV, no. 405.

¹⁹D.D.F., XIV, nos. 315, 342, 347, 375, 438, 458, 461, 505, 516, and 539.

²⁰Ibid., no. 412.

B. The British Case

The British position was certainly much better than that of the French. Britain had supported Egyptian claims in the Sudan, and had supported them both militarily and diplomatically. In fact, the British decision to operate against the Sudan from the north, on behalf of the Egyptians, rather than from the south in their own name, put the French in an uncomfortable position from the start, especially as the French had recently championed Egyptian rights against Anglo-Belgian machinations.²¹ Secondly, Britain was on strong ground in insisting that the Sudan was a vital necessity for Egypt because of the importance of the Nile to the Egyptian economy.²²

Britain's response to the French claim of res nullius was that in 1885 Egyptian rights in the Sudan had passed by right of conquest to the Mahdist State, which had protected these rights until 1898. The Mahdists were then themselves conquered by the Anglo-Egyptian force, which acquired sovereignty over the Sudan.²³

Even if the French contention of res nullius were

²¹M. Shibeika, British Policy in the Sudan, 1882-1902 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 358-59.

²²Giffen, Fashoda, 49.

²³Salisbury to Cromer, Telegram no. 47, Secret, 3 Jun 98, F.O. 76/5050; cited in R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 367.

accepted on the grounds that the Sudan belonged to no European power, the French representation at Fashoda was an ineffective force of some one hundred and fifty men, whereas Britain and Egypt were represented in the Sudan by a victorious army of 25,000. Britain and Egypt could effectively control, administer, and police the Sudan through regular governmental agencies. France could neither communicate with, nor extricate, her impotent contingent without assistance from others. The only French claim that Great Britain could not challenge was that of prior exploration, but this claim was null if Egyptian rights, rather than British, were invoked.

The British government established its position concerning the Sudan very early. As soon as the magnitude of the victory over the Mahdists could be appreciated, Salisbury notified the French, on 9 September, that all territory formerly subject to the Khalifah had passed to Britain and Egypt jointly; otherwise all territorial questions raised by the Marchand Expedition were negotiable.²⁴ This certainly did not leave the French much room for negotiation, as the Bahr el-Ghazal and Fashoda were territories formerly subject to the Khalifah. Britain never budged from this position.

²⁴D.D.F., XIV, no. 338; B.D., I, no. 189.

Chapter 5

RESOLUTION

Talks at government level went on through the month of October. In the meantime, public opinion on both sides of the Channel, but especially in Britain, clamored for war.¹ This was the era, in Europe and in America, of yellow journalism. The popular press generally indulged not only in jingoistic sabre-rattling, but also irresponsibly hurled the grossest insults at other countries. This xenophobia aroused public opinion to no real purpose, and exacerbated already tense situations, making the work of the statesmen and negotiators that much more difficult. In mid-October, the British and French fleets were put on a war-footing,² and Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Minister, who was expected to be the next Prime Minister, let out some alarming war-talk which quickly reached the Germans.³

Extreme positions which could have led to war were officially avoided by both the British and the French. The

¹D.D.F., XIV, nos. 443 and 446. See William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 551-75, for an excellent analysis of British public opinion; and E. M. Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, 1870-1914 (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1931), 162-82, for the French.

²D.D.F., XIV, no. 443. ³G.P., XIV/2, no. 3908.

British made no demands for the withdrawal of the Marchand Expedition, and even informed the French in writing that they had made no such demand.⁴ The British merely said that, in answer to a query from the French government, it was the opinion of the British government that fruitful negotiations could not take place while Marchand continued to occupy Fashoda.⁵ The position was quite clear, but the words were not provocative.

There were also, by mid-October, other conciliatory signs from Britain. Kitchener gave an interview to the German consul-general in Cairo in which he played down the possibility of war between France and Britain over Fashoda.⁶ At the same time, de Courcel noticed a milder treatment of Fashoda in the British press, which he attributed to government influence.⁷ About a week later, Monson in Paris noticed a similar toning down of the French press, and ascribed it to the same cause.⁸

The French also avoided extreme positions. While they made it clear that a point of national honor was involved, they also insisted that the presence of Marchand at Fashoda should have no bearing on a discussion of the principles involved, which discussion might well result in

⁴B.D., I, no. 220. ⁵D.D.F., XIV, nos. 459, 465.

⁶G.P., XIV/2, no. 3894. ⁷D.D.F., XIV, no. 392.

⁸B.D., I, no. 209.

a change in Marchand's location.⁹ De Courcel pointed out to the British that a settlement might well result from simultaneous arrangements made independently by the two countries with no indication or announcement that a bargain had been struck, or that concessions had been made by one or the other.¹⁰

The British stuck to their position that negotiation was not possible while Marchand was still at Fashoda. De Courcel told Delcassé that this refusal to negotiate on the part of the British was actually an advantage for France because it meant that "it is up to France, if she wants peace, to find a way of withdrawing from Fashoda with honor and with our heads high."¹¹

The French were well aware that a permanent French position on the Nile could only be obtained and maintained by force of arms.¹² Furthermore, France also knew that she was in no position to fight a war; not only was she in the middle of the Dreyfus Affair, which debilitated the French military establishment,¹³ and incidentally the morale of Marchand and his officers at Fashoda when the British

⁹D.D.F., XIV, no. 459.

¹⁰Ibid., no. 392.

¹¹Ibid., no. 465.

¹²Joseph J. Mathews, Egypt and the Formation of the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 18.

¹³Roger G. Brown, Fashoda Reconsidered (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), passim.

thoughtfully provided them with the latest Paris newspapers, but she was also well aware of British naval supremacy, which prevented France from carrying a war to the British.¹⁴ France would have to fight an offensive war: Britain only had to keep France from winning.

De Courcel in London, who was about to retire and wanted to leave peacefully, pushed hard for a quick solution to the problem, on the basis that the British refusal to negotiate gave France full freedom to withdraw from Fashoda for reasons that best suited France.¹⁵ These reasons were that Fashoda had absolutely no value for France in relation to her Central African possessions,¹⁶ and that it did not in fact give France the advantages that she had originally hoped to obtain by occupying it, particularly an economically useful access to the Nile.¹⁷

After discussing the issue at a cabinet meeting on 3 November, Delcassé instructed de Courcel to deliver the following message orally to Lord Salisbury:

In view of the precarious situation and of the unhealthy conditions faced by the members of the Marchand Mission, the Government has decided that this Mission will leave Fashoda.¹⁸

¹⁴R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 374-76.

¹⁵D.D.F., XIV, no. 465. ¹⁶Ibid., no. 455.

¹⁷Ibid., nos. 459 and 465.

¹⁸Ibid., no. 480; B.D., I, nos. 226 and 227.

When the order to leave Fashoda was communicated to Marchand, who was then in Cairo, he took it quite hard.¹⁹ He refused to budge until he were told the real reason for the withdrawal, and he claimed to be the best judge of the condition of his command. He also felt that he was being made a scapegoat to cover the cowardly retreat of a pusillanimous government. Delcassé told him that he was in no position to judge the reasons of state that occasioned such decisions, and that since up to this point he had performed his duties with unusual courage and ability, it would be a shame to blot this record by inconsiderate action at this late stage. Delcassé also pointed out that the soldier is judged on how well he carries out the orders given him, not on what he might think of them personally. In view of Marchand's earlier reports to his government,²⁰ his conduct at this point was undignified, if not hysterical; and questionable, if not reprehensible. There is evidence that Delcassé was extremely angry that Marchand had left his command and had proceeded to Cairo without authorization.²¹

Marchand and Delcassé decided that the best route away from Fashoda would be eastward into Ethiopia and then

¹⁹For the full account of the exchange between Delcassé and Marchand, and to get the flavor of Marchand's feelings, see D.D.F., XIV, nos. 483-486, 490, 493, 494.

²⁰D.D.F., XIV, no. 445; above, 38-40.

²¹B.D., I, nos. 222 and 225. Delcassé was apparently unaware that the Colonial Ministry had authorized Marchand to leave his command at will. (D.D.F., XIV, no. 352.)

to Djibouti, as Marchand feared for the discipline of his command if the Senegalese were made to retrace their steps back to Brazzaville. (It seems that Marchand had shored up the morale of his Senegalese by telling them that they were marching to France.²² In the end, in the two years from Brazzaville to Paris, he lost only four Senegalese, by accidental death, from his force.) Delcassé, for understandable reasons, did not want to accept a British offer to transport the Marchand Expedition to Cairo via the Nile, unless Marchand himself requested it.²³

It took Marchand a month to return to Fashoda and to get his command packed up and moving. The French informed the British on 11 January 1899 that Marchand had left Fashoda on 11 December 1898.²⁴ The French government learned from its representatives in Addis-Ababa on 7 February that Marchand had crossed into Ethiopian territory on 11 January.²⁵

After having announced the evacuation of Fashoda, the French let the question of negotiation rest for a while, as did the British. Paul Cambon, the new French Ambassador in London, wrote to Delcassé that he believed that the British were taken aback by the French silence, as they certainly had expected the French to make the first move. Cambon

²²D.D.F., XIV, no. 484.

²³Ibid., no. 486.

²⁴Ibid., XV, nos. 14 and 15.

²⁵Ibid., no. 67.

advised waiting to see what would happen.²⁶ He also said that he would try for a commercial outlet for France on the Nile as a face-saving solution.²⁷

Unofficially, and on his own responsibility, Cambon proposed to Lord Salisbury that an acceptable demarcation line in the Sudan might be drawn along the parting of the waters between the Ubangi-Congo on the French side and the Nile-Bahr el-Ghazal on the British.²⁸ Cambon, of course, informed Delcassé of this move, whereupon Delcassé authorized him to use this personal recommendation as a basis for negotiation.²⁹ Not only was this proposal logical, but by a happy coincidence it was also the same suggestion that Kitchener had made to settle the matter.³⁰

Cambon reasoned out his proposal with Delcassé, showing why a homogeneous arrangement of French control of the oases to the south of Tripoli would be more advantageous than a relatively isolated position to the east of the Sudan hills on the Bahr el-Ghazal.³¹ Delcassé accepted this

²⁶(Henri Cambon, ed.) Paul Cambon, Correspondance, 1870-1924 (3 vols.; Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1940), II, Letter to Delcassé, 12 Dec 98. The British may have welcomed the respite, if they needed the time to settle the condominium with the Egyptians. (Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 565.)

²⁷Cambon, II, Letter to Delcassé, 13 Dec 98.

²⁸Ibid, Letter to Jules Cambon, 12 Jan 99; and Letter to M. d'Estournelles, 13 Jan 99.

²⁹D.D.F., XV, no. 23. ³⁰B.D., I, no. 207.

³¹Cambon, II, Letter to Delcassé, 21 Jan 99.

reasoning, and pointed out that since Britain had not agreed to French control of the oases of Kanem, Wadai, and Baguirmi when the Nigerian arrangements had been concluded in June 1898, to obtain control of these areas now, as Cambon's proposal would do, would be sufficient compensation for releasing Fashoda.³² This reasoning was obviously to soothe domestic feelings, both in the press and in the Chamber of Deputies.

February and most of March were spent in trying to find an acceptable wording for the agreement. The French dropped their proposal for a commercial outlet on the Nile since it would be militarily indefensible and it would raise the issue of a British commercial outlet on the Ubangi.³³ It was agreed that the Sudan settlement would take the form of a protocol to the June 1898 agreement on the Niger basin.³⁴

The French insisted that none of the wording of the agreement on the Sudan in any way imply French consent to the British position in Egypt proper. As an example, the phrase to the effect that territory to the east of the Nile "is in the British sphere" was deleted, because Egypt could be considered to be to the east of the Nile.³⁵ The French, legalistic as ever, did not want to close the door on their own feet.

³²D.D.F., XV, no. 43.

³³Ibid., no. 84.

³⁴Ibid., nos. 81 and 88.

³⁵Ibid., nos. 76 and 92.

However, these points were minor and the British raised no difficulties. On 23 March 1899, Cambon wrote to his son: "We have concluded our arrangements for Africa. People can say what they want, but these arrangements reflect what is possible."³⁶

While it is true that settlement of the Fashoda Incident did not mark a direct turning point in Anglo-French relations, it was one of the two chief factors which made the Entente of 1904 possible: the other being German policies and tactics.³⁷ The idea that France was voluntarily evacuating Fashoda, not because of British pressure, but as a result of the discovery that Fashoda did not give France the easy and useful access to the Nile that she expected to find there, was a valuable diplomatic fiction. It permitted France to save face by withdrawing gracefully and voluntarily without having to acknowledge British interests, and it also permitted the British to accept some of the French reasoning without having to bring their own motivation out in the open.

British forbearance in not demanding a French withdrawal from Fashoda gave the French some breathing space and showed them that an accommodation with Britain might

³⁶Cambon, II, Letter to his son, 23 Mar 99.

³⁷R. Albrecht-Carrié, A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna (University Paperbacks; London: Methuen and Co., 1965), 224.

bring acceptable results--that perhaps Albion was not so perfidious after all. France made a major concession by accepting an opportune solution to a particular problem in the hope that a logically acceptable position would follow. Fashoda gave the French confidence in such opportune solutions, and in British good-will. Certainly the Entente of 1904 justified this confidence ex post facto.

Fashoda came at a crucial point in the foreign policy of both nations. The British were seeking an end to "Splendid Isolation"³⁸ and the French were seeking ways to complement their Russian alliance. The lodestone for each country was Germany, and there were strong voices in each for a German alliance. In England, the strongest voice belonged to Joseph Chamberlain, spokesman for the growing industrial strength of England, representative of Manchester, Minister for Colonies, and probably (but not quite) the next Prime Minister. In France, the voices belonged to the patriots, the army circles, the anti-Dreyfusards; both the very conservative and the very radical.³⁹

It may be that for both France and England, the

³⁸See C. Howard, "Splendid Isolation", History, 47 (February 1962), 32-41; "The Policy of Isolation", Historical Journal, 10 (1967), 77-88; also Lillian M. Penson, "The New Course in British Foreign Policy, 1892-1902", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th series, 25 (1943), 121-38.

³⁹Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 566-68; Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, 162-82.

price demanded by Germany was too high,⁴⁰ or it may be that each found the other more accommodating than had been expected, but the practical result was that France and Great Britain found the answers to the problems of each in the other.

Rapprochement between France and Great Britain was born during the Fashoda Crisis, and the initiative came from the French. Professor Tardieu was being too kind when he claimed that "the English King (Edward VII) was the initiator of the rapprochement. He it was who both conceived and facilitated it while still many believed that the moment was premature."⁴¹ The French search for rapprochement with Britain began at an interview between the French Ambassador, Paul Cambon, and Lord Salisbury on 13 January 1899, before the Fashoda Crisis was even settled, during which Cambon conducted a tour d'horizon, pointing out to Salisbury that there were no truly serious differences between the two countries.⁴² Delcassé then authorized Cambon to initiate a general negotiation with the British on all points of contention.⁴³

This general negotiation went on for five years; it was sidetracked and delayed by the Boer War, the vestiges

⁴⁰Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 569-70.

⁴¹André Tardieu, France and the Alliances (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1908), 60.

⁴²D.D.F., XV, no. 15.

⁴³Ibid., no. 19.

of the Egyptian problem, and Britain's alliance with Japan, but it did go on.⁴⁴ Finally, on 9 April 1904, a series of agreements between France and Great Britain was signed, settling all of their outstanding differences, including Egypt.

The attraction and good-will toward France displayed on so many occasions by King Edward was but a happy symptom of the underlying accord between the two countries. If there had been a vital point of contention between France and Great Britain, Edward would no doubt have discovered that Berlin was quite a pleasant city after all.

⁴⁴S. B. Fay, The Origins of the World War (2nd ed.; rev.; 2 vols.; New York: The Free Press, 1966), I, 165.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

The confrontation at Fashoda resulted from the decisions and actions on the part of the French and the British, and it had the outcome, described in the previous chapters. A comparison of the procedures of the two nations presents a worthwhile case study in political-military relations, as each nation followed a fundamentally different course of action.

The French never did decide what national ends were to be achieved by a Nile expedition. Each participant saw it only from his particular viewpoint, and often hid his motives from the others. Sadi Carnot and Delcassé, when they organized the Monteil Expedition in 1893, intended to force Britain out of Egypt by building a dam across the Nile to threaten Egypt's water supply. Marchand, besides personal glory, wanted to occupy a strategic point in the British rear, which could then be used as a bargaining counter to improve France's position in Africa in general, and in Egypt in particular. Berthelot, when he conditionally approved the Marchand Expedition, desired to improve France's colonial position in Central Africa, but not at the risk of a clash with the British. Hanotaux, when he renewed Foreign

Ministry approval of the Expedition, sought a symbolic gesture, "a pistol shot", to move the unsatisfactory Egyptian situation off dead-center. Archinard, when he urged the Colonial Minister to sponsor Marchand, wanted to expand France's colonial empire by forcing a reluctant government to follow an intrepid explorer.

On the other hand, the British decision-makers had a clear-cut objective: to secure the Nile River for Egypt, so that Egypt would be secure for Britain.

The lines of authority for the French were often obscure and confused. Marchand was nominally subordinate to Liotard, but took conflicting orders directly from Archinard. Binger was nominally a Foreign Ministry official, but ignored the position of the Foreign Ministry in regard to Marchand. The Ministry of Colonies sought the approval of the Foreign Ministry for the Marchand Expedition, but then issued instructions to Marchand which on every point violated the restrictions imposed by the Foreign Ministry, without informing the Foreign Ministry that it had done so. The Prime Ministers, who were ultimately responsible to the nation for the conduct of their governments, were not party to the decisions until after the fact. The military men involved--Archinard, Marchand, and Mangin--used the Committee for French Africa, and perhaps also family influence, to change government policy to achieve their own ends. Clearly, this was conflict of interest, and even conspiracy.

The removal of Roume and the recall of de Brazza, when they objected to the Marchand Expedition as conceived by Archinard and the Committee for French Africa, only heightened the conspiratorial air.

On the other hand, the British lines of authority were quite clear. Salisbury, who was also Foreign Minister, spoke for the Cabinet. He communicated directly with Cromer at Cairo, who in turn communicated with Kitchener and the Egyptian government. And while the British may not have exposed their full motivation to the Egyptians, they did not hide it from themselves. There was no obscurity; everyone concerned on the British side was fully aware of the situation, and agreed on what was to be done.

Further, the French did not really think through what the effect of their action might be, or at least did not come to an agreement about it. Delcassé thought that an expedition in itself was harmless, that a threat to Egypt would develop only if a dam were built. Marchand, Archinard, and the Committee for French Africa knew that there would be a conflict with Britain, but they thought only in terms of Africa, as though the colonial empires were somehow detached from their principals. The French also ignored the reality of Kitchener's advance into the Sudan, and made no modification of their plans as the situation there changed. And, since they ignored the possibility of a clash with Britain, they made no provision

for such a conflict and were astonished when it happened.

On the other hand, the British had elaborated their plans completely and prepared for all the possible consequences of a reconquest of the Sudan. Kitchener received precise instructions to accomplish the main objective as well as for the contingencies that might arise.

Finally, regardless of what their ends may have been, the French chose means completely inadequate to the task: they send a boy to do a man's work. No matter how determined, resourceful, and courageous they were, a force of one hundred and fifty men was worse than useless in the Sudan. Marchand recognized this immediately, once he arrived at Fashoda, even though he later tried to swallow his own words. The British measured the force to the situation, and unhesitatingly bolstered the Egyptian army with British units when there arose a possibility that the Egyptians might falter. Also, they insured that Kitchener had the proper support, in equipment, in transport, and in communications.

The British advance into the Sudan from 1896 to 1898 provides an example of an effective translation of a political decision into the military activity necessary to bring about the desired political objective. The French advance is an example of futile military action because the political decision was not made, the military activity was inadequate, and the political objective was vague.

This leads to the conclusion that military action, though it has a logic of its own, cannot be its own justification. It has no meaning outside its political context. Another evident conclusion is that conflict of interest is detrimental to military effectiveness, not only because a man cannot serve two masters (in the Biblical sense), but because conflict of interest blurs the lines of authority; it destroys the chain of command. Without a chain of command a military force is an uncontrollable armed mob. There is the obvious conflict of interest, such as occurred when Marchand though subordinate to Liotard actually took orders from Archinard, and also the more subtle conflict of interest that arises when a military man disagrees with his political superior, and rather than voicing his disagreement openly and accepting the consequences, influences the governmental process in his favor through outside agencies. That occurred in 1896, in the case of Marchand, just as it occurred in so many other places and at so many other times in the development of colonial empires.

An examination of what happened after the confrontation at Fashoda demonstrates, once again, that military action is politically defined; that victory is ultimately a political, and not a military term. The French politicians, de Courcel, Delcassé, and Cambon, acknowledged that France had made a mistake, that she was military defeated at Fashoda. They began, in the very ashes of military

defeat, to construct the phoenix of political victory, the Entente of 1904. Therefore, in this sense, Fashoda was a great victory for France.

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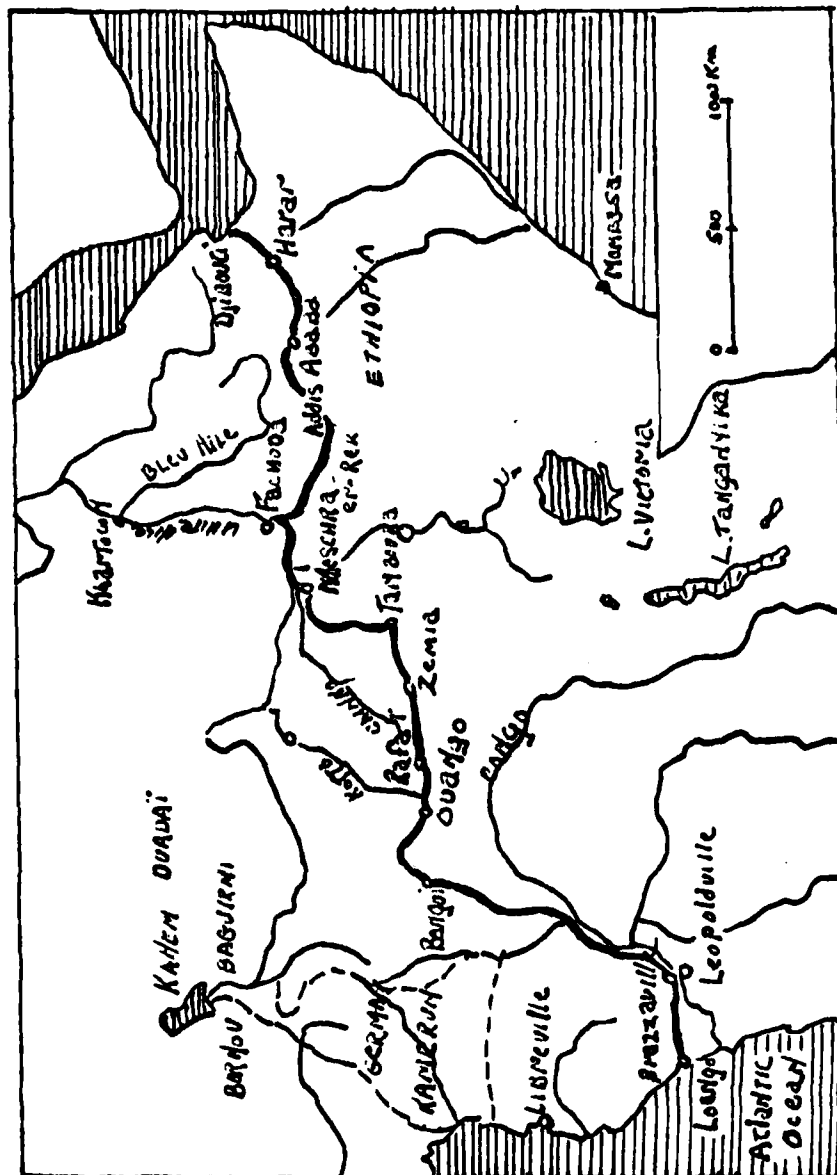
APPENDICES

Appendix 1a: Sketch Map of Africa



Adapted from Prentice-Hall World Atlas. Englewood Cliffs,
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, (1962?).

Appendix 1b: Marchand's Route, from Brazzaville to Djibouti



Adapted from Michel, Marc. La Mission Marchand, 1893-1899.
 Paris and The Hague: Mouton et Cie., 1972, page 14.

Appendix 2: French Governments, from 11 January 1893 to
22 June 1899¹

11 January 1893--Ribot Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior	Alexandre Ribot
Minister of Finance	M. Tirard
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Jules Develle
Minister of Justice	Léon Bourgeois
Minister of War	General Loizillon
Minister of Marine	Admiral Rieunier
Minister of Public Education	Charles Dupuy
Minister of Commerce ² and Colonies	Jules Siegfried
Secretary of State for Colonies	Théophile Delcassé
Minister of Public Works	François Viette
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

4 April 1893--Dupuy Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior	Charles Dupuy
Minister of Finance	Paul Peytral
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Jules Develle
Minister of Justice	Eugène Guérin
Minister of War	General Loizillon
Minister of Marine	Admiral Rieunier
Minister of Commerce	Jean-Louis Terrier
Secretary of State for Colonies	Théophile Delcassé

¹This listing is incomplete as it does not include a few ministerial changes that took place without jeopardizing the life of the cabinet. The initial M. indicates that the first name of the individual is not available to me. The source of this listing is a communication to the author from the Military Attaché at the French Embassy in the United States, and The New York Times.

²During the next few governments, colonies were transferred from Marine to Commerce.

Minister of Public Education	Raymond Poincaré
Minister of Public Works	François Viette
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

3 December 1893--Casimir-Perier Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs	Jean-Paul Casimir-Perier
Minister of Finance	Auguste Burdeau
Minister of the Interior	David Raynal
Minister of Justice	M. Dubost
Minister of War	General Auguste Mercier
Minister of Marine	Admiral Lefèvre
Minister of Commerce	Jean Marty
Secretary of State for Colonies (until 20 March 1894)	Maurice Lebon
Minister of Colonies ³ (from 20 March 1894)	Ernest Boulanger-Bernet
Minister of Public Education	Eugène Spuller
Minister of Public Works	Albert Viger

30 May 1894--Dupuy Cabinet

Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, and Minister of Public Worship	Charles Dupuy
Minister of Finance	Raymond Poincaré
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Gabriel Hanotaux
Minister of Justice	Eugène Guérin
Minister of War	General Auguste Mercier
Minister of Marine	Félix Faure
Minister of Colonies	Théophile Delcassé
Minister of Public Education	Georges Leygues

³The New York Times, 21 March 1894. This position was established on or about 20 March 1894, in the waning days of the government of Casimir-Perier. The first incumbent, Senator Boulanger-Bernet, had no discernible influence on the Marchand Expedition.

Minister of Public Works	M. Barthieu
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

1 July 1894--Dupuy Cabinet

On 28 June 1894, after his election to the Presidency of the Republic, Jean-Paul Casimir-Perier demanded the resignation of the Dupuy Cabinet listed above because he believed that their policies had permitted, if not encouraged, the assassination of President Sadi Carnot. However, as no other political combination was viable at the time, the Dupuy Cabinet, as originally constituted on 30 May, was immediately reconfirmed by the Chamber.

26 January 1895--Ribot Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Alexandre Ribot
Minister of the Interior	Georges Leygues
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Gabriel Hanotaux
Minister of Justice	Jacques Trarieux
Minister of War	General Zurlinden
Minister of Marine	Vice Admiral Besnard
Minister of Colonies	Emile Chautemps
Minister of Public Education	Raymond Poincaré
Minister of Commerce	André Leboucq
Minister of Public Works	Rudovic Dupuy-Dutemps
Minister of Agriculture	M. Gardaud

1 November 1895--Bourgeois Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior	Léon Bourgeois
Minister of Finance	Paul Doumer
Minister of Foreign Affairs (until 28 March 1896)	Marcelin Berthelot
Minister of Foreign Affairs (after 28 March 1896)	Léon Bourgeois
Minister of the Interior (after 28 March 1896)	Jean-Ferdinand Sarrien
Minister of Justice and Public Worship	Pierre Ricard
Minister of War	Godefroy Cavaignac

Minister of Marine	Edouard Lockroy (real Name: Edouard Simon)
Minister of Colonies	Pierre Guieysse
Minister of Public Education	Emile Combes
Minister of Commerce	M. Mesureur
Minister of Public Works	M. Guyot-Dessaigue
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

29 April 1896--Meline Cabinet

Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, and Minister of Agriculture	Jules Méline
Minister of Finance	M. Cochery
Minister of the Interior	Jean-Louis Barthou
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Gabriel Hanotaux
Minister of War	General Billot
Minister of Marine	Vice Admiral Besnard
Minister of Colonies	André Lebon
Minister of Public Education and Public Worship	Alfred Rambaud
Minister of Commerce	M. Boucher
Minister of Public Works	M. Turrel

28 June 1898--Brisson Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior	Henri Brisson
Minister of Finance	Paul Peytral
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Théophile Delcassé
Minister of Justice	Jean-Ferdinand Sarrien
Minister of War (until 5 September 1898)	Godefroy Cavaignac
Minister of War (until 17 September 1898)	General Zurlinden
Minister of War (after 17 September 1898)	General Chandine
Minister of Marine	Edouard Lockroy
Minister of Colonies	Georges Trouillot
Minister of Public Education	Léon Bourgeois

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Minister of Commerce	Emile Maruejouis
Minister of Public Works	M. Tillaye
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

1 November 1898--Dupuy Cabinet

Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, and Minister of Public Worship	Charles Dupuy
Minister of Finance	Paul Peytral
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Théophile Delcassé
Minister of Justice	M. Lebret
Minister of War	Charles-Louis de Freycinet
Minister of Marine	Edouard Lockroy
Minister of Colonies	Antoine Guillain
Minister of Public Education	Georges Leygues
Minister of Commerce	M. Deloncle
Minister of Public Works	Camille Krantz
Minister of Agriculture	Albert Viger

18 February 1899--Dupuy Cabinet

The government listed above fell on 16 February but was reconfirmed on 18 February. Camille Krantz succeeded de Freycinet as Minister of War on 6 May 1899, and this cabinet lasted until 22 June 1899.