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ANGLO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS UNDER  
LORD SALISBURY, 1885-1892

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## Abstract

### ANGLO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS UNDER LORD SALISBURY, 1885-1892

by

Abdullah Nasir Al-Subaiy

Lord Salisbury (1830-1903), one of the greatest modern British politicians, dominated the political scene for almost thirty-five years. He entered political life in 1868 as a member of the House of Lords. In 1874 he joined Disraeli's cabinet as Indian Secretary, then served as Foreign Secretary in 1878. In 1885, he was selected as Prime Minister and occupied this post until 1892, except for a few months in 1886. In 1895, he was reappointed Prime Minister and held that office until he retired in 1902.

Between 1885 and 1892, Salisbury played a decisive role in shaping British foreign policy. During this period the imperialist movement, involving competition and the struggle for colonies among the European powers, reached its height. Under Salisbury's premiership, Britain strengthened its interests in Africa and Asia. Salisbury also succeeded in destroying the isolationist policy which had distinguished

British foreign relations before 1878. At the same time, he was determined to keep Britain out of the System of European alliance which was a principal feature of that area.

In dealing with the Eastern Question, which concerned the Ottoman Empire and its dominions in Eastern Europe, Salisbury was in close contact with the other Powers. Between 1876 and 1887, he was the British representative at the Constantinople Conference, which was held to settle the Eastern Crisis.

Through his work in Eastern and Indian affairs, Salisbury gathered information about the Egyptian question. This background enabled him to play a decisive role in shaping Anglo-Egyptian relations. He realized the strategic value of Egypt's location to the British empire and worked to preserve and increase British influence there.

Although the British occupation of Egypt took place under Gladstone's leadership, the foundations of their presence there were established by Salisbury's policy. He succeeded in easing international tensions among the great European powers over Egypt. He also managed to calm the Sudanese issue.

Chapter I describes the historical background of the European, mainly British and French, involvement in Egyptian

affairs, culminating in the British occupation. Chapter II concentrates on Salisbury's diplomatic efforts to reduce international tensions over the Egyptian question. Although his diplomatic pronouncements suggested that Britain might withdraw from Egypt under certain conditions, his intent was that the British remain for an indefinite time. Chapter III focuses on Salisbury's dealings with the European great powers. By 1900, Salisbury had persuaded them that Britain should dominate in Egypt, offering colonies and other concessions in Africa as compensation. Chapter IV discusses British policy in internal Egyptian affairs. Salisbury tried to keep domestic conflict in Egypt from developing into international crises which would threaten British interests there. He sought to prevent any contact between the European powers, especially France, and the Egyptian people, fearing the Europeans would encourage the nationalist movement against Britain. Chapter V deals with Salisbury's policy toward the Sudan. Anglo-Egyptian relations were damaged by the British decision in 1885 to abandon the Sudan. Realizing the importance of that territory to the Egyptian government and to the British presence in Egypt, Salisbury succeeded in calming the Sudanese crisis.

Chapter VI summarizes the main arguments of the thesis. Conclusions are offered concerning Salisbury's diplomatic attempts to reach an agreement with the Ottomans regarding Egypt, his success in blunting European opposition to the occupation, his support of Baring's handling of Egyptian internal affairs. Finally, Salisbury's attitude toward Egyptian internal affairs is evaluated.

## DEDICATION

To my sons Tarek and Husam,  
and my wife, Anisa

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been a great privilege for me to have Dr. Donald N. Lammers as both my committee chairman and major advisor. I wish to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for his help and guidance in writing this dissertation which gave me a real learning experience in research. Without his support and fine knowledge of my subject I could not have completed this dissertation.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

F.O.	British Foreign Office
P.R.O.	British Public Record Office
S.P.	Salisbury Papers
W.C.	Wolff Correspondence
£E	Pound Egyptian (L£ os. 6d)

## Chapter I

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO 1885

Lord Salisbury played an important and often decisive role in Anglo-Egyptian relations between 1878 and 1902. He first became involved with the Egyptian question in 1878, after Lord Derby's withdrawal from Disraeli's cabinet. As foreign secretary, Salisbury worked well as he tried to find a new and positive foreign policy which Britain could adopt to strengthen its position.

One major problem Salisbury faced in his years in office was the Eastern Question, which involved centrally the power relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. A cornerstone of his policy was to prevent Russian control of the Straits. Because the Treaty of San Stefano gave Russia this control, Salisbury found it unacceptable. He made it clear that if Russia insisted on the treaty, Britain would have to stand behind the Ottoman Empire, even if this meant war. Salisbury's new policy showed his great intelligence and genuine willingness to use new methods in British foreign

policy to protect imperial interests in the Mediterranean and the Near East. After he assumed control of the Foreign Office, his policy was embodied in his famous "circular dispatch of April 1878," which he sent to all British embassies and laid before Parliament. This important dispatch showed very clearly that a change in British policy had been introduced.

Even earlier, Salisbury had carefully watched the Eastern Crisis as Secretary of State for India and as an active representative in the abortive conference held in Constantinople in 1876-1877. The Conference was called to resolve the Eastern Crisis, finally settled at Berlin in 1878.

As of 1875, the Ottoman Empire still dominated a huge area encompassing Bulgaria, Albania, a substantial part of modern Yugoslavia, northern Greece, and much of the Near East. The Ottomans faced strong nationalistic opposition to their rule, especially from their Christian subjects in the Balkans. The Ottomans, of course, wished to hold the empire at any cost. The other protagonists in the Eastern Question (Britain, Russia, and Austria-Hungary) viewed the situation from their own vantage points: Russia wanted a quick collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in hopes of facilitating its own expansion

southward; Austria-Hungary, itself threatened by Slav nationalist movements, preferred the preservation of Ottoman rule; Britain, fearing Russian intentions toward India, Persia, and the Mediterranean, also shaped its policy to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

Salisbury's policy as Foreign Secretary in 1878 reflected Britain's desire to continue its traditional support of the Ottomans. On several occasions, Salisbury showed the other powers that Britain's intentions were clear and firm. One example was the British rejection of Bismarck's proposal, made at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, to dismember the Ottoman Empire, give Tunis to France, and permit England to annex Egypt.

The British attitude stemmed from the belief that preservation of Ottoman rule, however weak, was in the best interests of British involvement in the Mediterranean, Egypt, and the Suez Canal. Salisbury thought that war might ensue from the inability of the European powers to find a replacement for Ottoman hegemony. Dismemberment of the empire would possibly sever the trade routes essential to British survival.

Salisbury, by supporting the Ottomans in 1878, sought to keep the Russians from acquiring the Straits and thus denying them to the British navy. He was troubled by another

rival, even more dangerous than Russia. France, with a navy second only to Britain's, was able to challenge British interests in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the French had a scheme to obtain new territories along the northern African coast, which would seriously threaten Britain's route to India through Alexandria and the Suez Canal.

Britain's position generally was isolationist, whereas most of the other great powers had depended on a system of alliances to protect their interests. The British refused to enter into such arrangements, which could have involved them in a power struggle on the Continent. Britain's major goals were to maintain its commercial activities and naval facilities throughout the world and to try to gain control over certain strategic positions. Islands and ports such as Gibraltar, the Cape of Good Hope, Cyprus, Malta, and Alexandria were of great value to the far-flung British Empire. Salisbury realized this need and succeeded in acquiring Cyprus and Alexandria, which were the keystones of British policy in the Mediterranean and the Near East. Cyprus would facilitate British aid to the Ottoman Empire, and Alexandria would secure the British route to India through the Suez Canal.

Salisbury believed that it was essential for Britain to gain a predominant influence in Egypt. He hoped, through

the maintenance of Ottoman friendship, that the Porte would allow British naval concessions in Egypt. He explained his policy on July 15, 1879:

The only form of control we have is that which is called moral influence, which in practice is a combination of menace, abjuration, and worry. In this we are still supreme and have many modes of applying it. We must devote ourselves to the perfecting of this weapon.<sup>1</sup>

Serious British political and strategic interests in Egypt and the Near East developed in the second half of the eighteenth century. When the French signed the Treaty of Paris in 1763, their dream of an Indian empire was ended, but they would refuse to withdraw from the area for a long time to come. In 1798, Napoleon attacked Egypt with the ultimate aim of depriving Britain of its crucial land and water route to India. His expedition drew attention to Egypt, which became a battlefield thereafter, especially between the French and the British. Each wanted to control Egypt and use it as a base to threaten the interests of the other in the area. Ottoman and British efforts forced Napoleon to withdraw in 1801.

Mohammed Ali, an Albanian posted in Kavalla (now part of Greece), was sent by Sultan Selim III to defend Egypt

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Lyons, in Lord Newton, Lord Lyons (London, 1913), Vol. II, p. 355.

against the French. Through his cleverness, bravery, and diplomacy, Mohammed Ali succeeded in diminishing the Mameluks' rule over Egypt and, after the defeat of the French, in benefiting from the conflict between the Mameluks and the Sultan. Mohammed Ali's dream was to establish his own empire, with Egypt at the center. Sultan Selim III appointed him governor of Egypt in 1805, and he began his ambitious task of creating an independent state. Mohammed Ali tried to drive foreign powers from Egypt. His most important and successful step was the defeat of the British expeditionary force in 1807, led by General Frazer. By 1835, Mohammed Ali had conquered the Sudan and part of Arabia, which was to be the core of the new empire. He also had reformed Egyptian governmental administration and modernized Egypt by imitating the West. He created such a strong state that it finally overshadowed the Ottoman Empire. When the European powers realized the seriousness of his intent, they decided that he must be stopped.

The first clash came when Mohammed Ali expanded into Syria. The British saw a grave threat to their interests in the Near East, through which the land route to India passed. Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria supported Sultan Abdul Mejid I against Mohammed Ali, who eventually was forced to content himself with Egypt. The Treaty of London forced, on

both parties by the European powers in 1840, resulted in Sultan Abdul Mejid I's Firman (imperial decree) of June 1, 1841, which ushered in a new phase of Ottoman-Egyptian relations.<sup>1</sup> The Firman gave Mohammed Ali's family hereditary rule in Egypt. The Egyptian army was to be limited to 18,000 soldiers in time of peace. Mohammed Ali was forbidden to build new ships, and Egypt was to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan. This turning point in modern Egyptian history limited Mohammed Ali's ambitious dream and ushered in European control over Egyptian affairs.

The policies of Mohammed Ali's successors promoted European intervention in Egypt through creation of the Suez Canal and growing indebtedness. European involvement in Egypt's internal affairs can be directly traced to Khedive Ismail (1863-1879), one of the most extravagant and flamboyant rulers in modern Egyptian history. His extraordinary expenditures to westernize Egypt resulted in a debt of £E. 90,000,000 to European financiers. Because Egyptian tax revenues were very low, Ismail incurred further debts to meet

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<sup>1</sup>Although Egypt remained a part of the Ottoman Empire, the treaty entitled Mohammed Ali's family to rule Egypt directly. They had the right to initiate their own internal policy. The Sultan's suzerainty limited Egyptian freedom of action in the international field, particularly with regard to the European powers.

his obligations to the Suez Canal Company (the canal was opened in 1869) and to secure his conquests in Africa. In 1867, Ismail obtained the title of khedive (viceroy) from Sultan Abdul Aziz by paying additional tribute.<sup>1</sup>

Ismail's financial position worsened in 1875. In that year the Ottoman Empire declared bankruptcy, and there was a serious decline in the price for cotton, considered the mainstay of the Egyptian economy. Ismail was forced to seek more loans, at even higher interest rates. He finally was obliged to sell his shares in the Suez Canal (176,602 shares, or about 44 percent of the total) to Britain at a very low price. The Ottomans were bankrupt, so could not buy them, and the French refused to. The country's indebtedness, the opening of the Suez Canal, and Ismail's sale of shares to Britain marked a new and dangerous turn in Egyptian history. These developments placed the country at the mercy of the European powers, especially France and Britain, and increased their influence over Egyptian administration.

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<sup>1</sup>S.N. Fisher, in the Middle East, A History, discusses Ismail's financial troubles: "From the moment of his accession in 1863 until his deposition in 1879, life at the court in Egypt was sumptuous, and money flowed like the waters of the Nile. Ismail showered munificent gifts upon all, and his trips to Europe and Istanbul were lavish in every detail. Presents to the Sultan on the order of \$1,000,000 and a diamond-encrusted, solid gold dinner service were not unusual."

British interests and policies in Egypt changed after the 1870s for two main reasons. The first was the weakness of the Ottomans. Their failure to manage their affairs and strengthen their position prompted the Europeans to consider dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The second was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which shortened the water route from Europe to India by almost 5,000 miles. The creation of the canal and its subsequent importance to British shipping (89 percent of all traffic in 1878-1880 was British) caused Britain to direct increasing attention toward Egypt and consider maintenance of the canal essential to its imperial defense. The British government, which originally opposed the creation of the canal because it expected the French to dominate, now looked for any opportunity to seize control. Lord Palmerston, the British foreign minister, declared in April 1859: "It is not to our interest that there should be open between the Mediterrean and the Indian Ocean a water-passage at the command of other powers (France), and not at ours."<sup>1</sup>

The British opportunity came in 1875, when Khedive Ismail's financial trouble forced him to sell his canal shares. The British prime minister, Disraeli, saw the chance

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<sup>1</sup>Suzann Evertt, "Disraeli and the Suez Canal," British History Illustrated 2 (June 1975): 57.

he was looking for, and believed it was vital for Britain to assume supremacy over the canal. Disraeli purchased Ismail's shares with financial support from the Rothschilds. By so doing he secured the British route to India and the Far East and prevented the French from dominating the canal.

Disraeli's pride in his purchase was clear in a letter he wrote to Queen Victoria on November 24, 1875:

It is just settled; you have it Madam. The French Government has been out-generaled. They tried too much, offering loans at an usurious rate, and with conditions which would have virtually given them the government of Egypt. The Khedive, in despair and disgust, offered your Majesty's Government to purchase his shares outright.<sup>1</sup>

The purchase of the Suez Canal shares was the first serious step on the road to British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Writing on the day when the purchase was announced, the Times declared:

It is impossible to separate in our thoughts the purchase of the Suez Canal shares from the question of England's future relations with Egypt, or the destinies of Egypt from the shadows that darken the Turkish Empire.<sup>2</sup>

It was clear to the British that Egypt would strengthen their empire and give them strategic domination in the Mediterranean and Near East. In the event of dismemberment of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Rothstein, Egypt's Ruin (London: 1910, p. 8.

Ottoman Empire, as Disraeli stated in his message to the Queen on November 18, 1875:

It is vital to your majesty's authority and power at this critical moment, that the Canal should belong to England, and I was so decided and absolute with Lord Derby on this head, that he ultimately adopted my views and brought the matter before the Cabinet yesterday. The Cabinet was unanimous in their decision that the interest of the Khedive should, if possible, be obtained, and we telegraphed accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking in Parliament on February 21, 1876, Disraeli declared:

I have never recommended and I do not now recommend this purchase as a financial investment . . . . I do not recommend it either as a commercial speculation . . . . I have always and do now recommend it to the country as a political transaction, and one which I believe is calculated to strengthen the Empire.<sup>2</sup>

The sale of the khedive's shares did not solve Egypt's financial problems, which only grew worse. Creditors were very disturbed by the country's inability to pay its debts. The European nations saw a golden opportunity for turning the issue from one of private investments into an international question. France was the first to take this line and behave as sheriff's officer for French bondholders, seeking to gain maximum protection for their interests and to strengthen French influence in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup>Evertt, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890 (New York: 1950), p. 256.

Early in 1876, the French minister of foreign affairs, the Duc Decazes, approached Lord Lyons, the British ambassador at Paris, with certain crude proposals for intervening in Egypt. Decazes suggested cooperation in establishing an international commission there, similar to the one that had worked so well in Tunis. The British government rejected the proposal because it was aware that the plan would enhance France's position in Egypt, which would be contrary to British imperial interests. At that time, Britain's general policy was to support the Ottoman Empire and gain influence in Egypt through friendly relations with the sultan and the khedive.

The opportunity for European intervention was offered by Khedive Ismail, who appealed to them for experts to reorganize his finances and prepare materials for annual budgeting. He hoped to satisfy his creditors by demonstrating a genuine desire to set his affairs in order and fulfill his obligations. On May 2, 1876, Ismail accepted the French suggestion which led to the establishment of the Caisse de la Dette Publique. This new institution included representatives from France, Italy, Austria and, later, Britain. In addition, two controllers, one French and one British, were appointed to supervise Egypt's finances, hence the name Dual Control by which the system became known.

This European intervention in Egyptian financial affairs during 1876-1878 did not improve the situation, and matters grew worse. In the meantime, British policy began to change under the leadership of Salisbury, who had replaced Lord Derby as foreign secretary. Salisbury seemed dissatisfied with events in Egypt and advocated more active interference. He was unhappy with the idea of cooperating with France; as he wrote to Disraeli: "The state of affairs may change and it may suit us at some future period to push ahead: and then any obligatory engagement would be highly inconvenient."<sup>1</sup> Salisbury wished England to dominate: "We have no wish to part company with France: still less do we mean that France should acquire in Egypt special ascendancy."<sup>2</sup> For Salisbury, even sharing the controller's office did not mesh with British plans for adding Egypt to the empire in the near future. Salisbury stated this clearly in a letter to Lord Lyon: "But the controllers will hardly be enough, we want to have some hold over the government of Egypt, though we do not want to assume any overt responsibility."<sup>3</sup> It was clear to

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<sup>1</sup>Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, Life of Robert Cecil, Marquis of Salisbury (London: 1921), vol. II, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Lyons, April 10, 1879, Newton, op. cit., II, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup>Newton, op. cit., II, p. 187.

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Salisbury that England could not occupy Egypt at that time: the international situation and the lack of a strong European ally militated against it. Britain had no choice but to share control with France. In Salisbury's words:

As to our policy--the defence of it lies in a nutshell, when you have got a faithful ally who is bent on meddling in a country in which you are deeply interested--you have three courses open to you. You may renounce--or monopolize--or share. Renouncing would have been to place the French across our road to India. Monopolizing would have brought it very near the risk of war. So we resolved to share.<sup>1</sup>

Once the two governments agreed to work together, they pressured Khedive Ismail into accepting an international board of inquiry into his affairs in an attempt to find a solution to the financial problem. The commission met on April 1, 1878, and it eventually recommended that the entire Egyptian administration be changed. It also stressed that the Khedive should offer his estates as security and accept a form of constitutional government with power vested in a ministry containing two Europeans. After some hesitation, Ismail agreed. These changes strengthened European influence over internal affairs.

The European coalition that was consolidated in 1878 and that purported to be the protector of European bondholders was in fact using this pretext to intervene in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil, op. cit., II, p. 331 - 2.

Salisbury was frank: "I should be glad to be free of the companionship of the bondholders."<sup>1</sup> European control of Egyptian finances brought no improvement. In 1879, the controllers decided there was no money in Egypt's treasury to pay the interest due on its debts, and they recommended that Egypt make no payment that year. It was clear that they wanted to declare the country bankrupt, but Khedive Ismail resisted. He rejected their recommendations and put forward his own proposal to reduce the interest on the funded debt by one-half percent and thus pay off the floating debt. Moreover, he declared that he would undertake to pay off all obligations if he was allowed to deal with the situation. The controllers resigned in protest over the Khedive's rejection of their recommendations.

Khedive Ismail, who was deeply grieved by foreign intervention, took this opportunity to restore his prestige. He demanded the dismissal of his prime minister, Nubar Pasha, who had been appointed in 1878 under pressure from the European powers. The Khedive charged that Nubar Pasha had gone too far in complying with the Europeans. Ismail also demanded a new government which would inspire his own and the

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil, op. cit., II, p. 352.

people's confidence. Neither Paris nor London opposed the dismissal of Nubar Pasha, even though Sir Rivers Wilson, Egyptian Minister of Finance, pressed upon the British government the case for reinstatement. Salisbury's view of the episode was stated thus:

Her Majesty's Government are of the opinion that the position of Sir Rivers Wilson will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, unless Nubar Pasha is readmitted to the cabinet in some form or other.<sup>1</sup>

But the British did not insist on the return of Nubar Pasha, and Khedive Ismail formed a new cabinet under the premiership of his son, Tawfik. The two European ministers were retained and were made full members of the cabinet, with veto power.

The formation of a new cabinet did not produce any significant change in Egyptian finances, and the country seethed under its humiliation and exploitation by Europeans. Most Egyptians felt European intervention in their affairs should be stopped. Khedive Ismail was aware of this, and he tried to show his people that he agreed. The Europeans prevented him from performing his duty as a head of state when they refused to permit him to assist in the deliberations of his own council. Both foreign representatives in the Egyptian

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<sup>1</sup>Lord Cromer, Modern Egypt (London: 1908), II, p. 88.

cabinet, Sir Rivers Wilson for the British, and M. de Blignières for the French, insisted on imposing their influence on ministerial decisions and on their right to veto every measure which they jointly disapproved. To establish their absolute authority over the Khedive, they proposed to issue a decree postponing the upcoming debt payment (the April Coupon of 1879). The Khedive refused to cooperate, for he believed that Egypt was perfectly capable of paying. The European controllers considered this refusal a grave challenge to their authority and prestige; they threatened to advise their governments to use whatever force was necessary to secure bondholders' money if the Khedive did not sign their proposal.

Khedive Ismail thereupon made one final attempt to regain his lost authority. Certain that he would soon lose his throne and become a puppet of the Europeans, he decided to move quickly. On April 7, 1879, he summoned the European consular agents and asked them to transmit to their governments a project which expressed the wishes of the Egyptian people. He stated that Egypt could meet all of its financial obligations, and he demanded the formation of a native cabinet to be responsible to the Chamber of Delegates. The European ministers were dismissed, and Sharif Pasha, the constitutionalist

leader, was appointed head of the new cabinet. These measures aroused the utmost indignation in European official circles. This threat could by no means go unanswered.

Salisbury's reaction was swift. On April 9, 1879, he wrote in a dispatch: "Admitting that the Khedive was not bound to retain Mr. Wilson permanently in office [his action] was precipitate and causeless."<sup>1</sup> Salisbury suggested that the khedive restore the European ministers. On May 11, the German foreign minister, Count Munster, informed Salisbury that his government considered the khedive's decree illegal and invited England to join in a deliberate rejection. The other powers instructed their agents and consuls-general to follow suit. The Europeans made their position known on April 22. Mr. Vivian, the British agent and consul general in Egypt, informed Salisbury on June 8, 1879, that the protest would be successful and that the decree would be modified or withdrawn. On June 18, Salisbury sent instructions that the khedive should be officially informed that he would be wise to abdicate in favor of his son Tawfik. Salisbury also wrote a dispatch based on the assumption that there

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<sup>1</sup>W.H. Russell, "Why Did We Depose Ismail?" Contemporary Review, vol. 48 (1885): p. 317.

was public disorder . . . . the personal character and rule of the Khedive and his past career unfitted him to remain in power. The powers were bound to arrest misgovernment before it results in the material ruin and almost incurable disorder to which it must lead.<sup>1</sup>

The Europeans put great pressure on the Ottoman sultan, Abdul Hamid II, Egypt's suzerain,<sup>2</sup> to depose the Khedive, and he complied on June 26, 1879. Ismail left Egypt four days later to live in exile in Italy. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Tawfik. Ismail's deposition marked another turning point in the Egyptian question. The country now faced an uncertain future, and Salisbury correctly noted that "after having a Khedive deposed the character of nonintervention is not easy to retain."<sup>3</sup>

Khedive Tawfik was very weak and could not continue his father's attempts to oust the Europeans. On July 17, 1879, Tawfik dismissed Sharif Pasha's ministry and rejected its reform proposals, which included some constitutional reforms. On November 15, 1879, he returned to the controller-general system. He appointed Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) and M. de Blignières to the posts. The controllers were now

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>2</sup>See note 1, P. 7

<sup>3</sup>Salisbury to Lyons, July 17, 1879, Newton, op. cit., II, p. 357.

much more secure, for they could not be dismissed without the consent of their governments.

On July 7, 1880, Khedive Tawfik tried to convince the Europeans that a general settlement of Egyptian affairs should be reached. He was unhappy with the way the Europeans defined the Egyptian debt under the law of liquidation. According to this law, Egypt's annual revenue should be divided into almost two equal parts. One portion, the Europeans insisted, should go to the Caisse on behalf of the bondholders. The other was to go to the Egyptian government on the condition that it must pay its tribute to the Porte and any deficits which might accrue to the Caisse. Thus, Egypt was left with about £E.2 million with which to run the government. The Khedive, having failed in his negotiations, watched helplessly as the Europeans took another step toward domination of Egypt. On January 14, 1881, the controllers-general arranged for the sale of Egypt's last stakes in the Suez Canal Company's profit. This showed the Egyptians that the Khedive was to be only a token ruler and his native ministry a mere instrument for executing the will of the Europeans.

In the meantime, the number of foreigners in Egypt increased: "In the interest of greater efficiency numbers of Europeans were brought in to act as officials, all of whom

enjoyed attractive salaries, while the native officials went unpaid for a year or eighteen months."<sup>1</sup> The Europeans held a privileged position under the capitulatory system, which aroused Egyptian hostility even more than did the controllers' arrangement. Europeans were allowed special consideration in many areas, including religious worship, laws, taxation, trade, and tariffs. The system dated back to the sixteenth century, when the sultan granted extra-territorial rights to the Europeans residing in the Ottoman Empire. As Egypt was juridically a part of that empire, the Europeans insisted on these privileges for their subjects there. By granting them, Egypt lost much of its autonomy.

The Egyptians, unable to bear their humiliation by foreigners, began their struggle in the summer of 1881. At this time, the nationalist movement consisted of three groups. The constitutionalists were composed of the rich and those mostly educated abroad. The second group was led by Muslim intellectuals who believed in constitutional rule and in a return to the pure foundations of Islam. The third group consisted of native Egyptian army officers; they were led by Ahmed Arabi, and their intent was to secure certain reforms

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<sup>1</sup>Langer, op. cit., p. 260.

and free Egypt from foreign exploitation. Gladstone had admitted that Arabi's movement was in "truth national as well as military; it was anti-European, and above all, it was in its objects anti-Turk."<sup>1</sup>

Arabi and his followers constituted a dangerous threat to the puppet ruler of Egypt and to European control. Arabi urged all Egyptians to fight to free their country from both. He began to acquire fame, and many Egyptians saw in him the only potentially victorious leader. As his reputation spread, he became a symbol of the nationalist movement.

Arabi and his followers in the army challenged the Khedive's authority by military demonstrations and by pressing for genuine reform. They forced the Khedive to organize a new cabinet under Sharif Pasha's premiership in September 1881. The French and British regarded the nationalists as a threat to their aims in Egypt, and they decided to abort the movement in its early stages. The European powers unsuccessfully urged Arabi to leave. According to Arabi: "Monsieur Mange, the French consul, and another French gentleman did their utmost to persuade me to leave the country and go to

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 263.

Paris in order to avoid all troubles."<sup>1</sup> They then tried to persuade Sultan Abdul Hamid II to induce him to do so:

"Dervish Pasha invited me to go to Constantinople to live with His Majesty the Sultan and with other friends."<sup>2</sup> Arabi resisted all these efforts, for his departure would mean abandoning the struggle for legal rights and freedom from foreign intervention.

On November 10, 1881, M. St. Hilaire, Prime Minister of France, was succeeded by M. Gambetta. The latter had recently returned from Tunis and Algeria, where he had experienced serious difficulties. The native revolt against French rule in both countries was beginning, and it was gaining added vigor from the Pan-Islamic movement led by Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Gambetta believed that Egyptian nationalism could seriously affect the French situation in North Africa. Furthermore, he was closely connected to the financial houses of Paris, the Bourse, and the Rothschilds, and with other capitalists, all of whom had invested millions in Egyptian bonds. Gambetta suggested to the British Liberal government, led by Gladstone, a joint expedition against the Egyptians. However,

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<sup>1</sup>Ahmed Arabi, "Instructions to My Counsel," The Nineteenth Century (December 1882): 238.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

rivalry between the two countries prevented the British from accepting the idea. Gambetta then proposed sending a joint note to the Egyptians, and Gladstone's government accepted. The note stated that the two powers would stand beside the Khedive against nationalist pressure and would maintain order in Egypt, by force if necessary.

The note, sent on January 12, 1882, was poorly received, even among pro-Westerners, and support for the nationalists increased. In reaction, the Egyptian Assembly refused to ratify the new budget, which created a serious clash between the government and the European controllers. Confronted with the great upsurge in nationalist feeling, Sharif's cabinet resigned and was replaced by a nationalist government headed by Mahmoud Sami Al-Baroudi. Ahmed Arabi became minister of war. The cabinet had the country's full support.

On January 30, 1882, M. Gambetta fell from power and was succeeded by M. de Freycinet, who regarded joint action against Egypt in a different way. He believed in sending warships as a show of power to intimidate the Egyptians, but he opposed the British idea of asking Sultan Abdul Hamid II to send one of his generals with authority to try to settle the issue. If such a mission were successful, the Europeans would lose the opportunity to intervene.

On June 11, 1882, the situation reached dangerous proportions. Riots in Alexandria created a critical moment for both the Khedive and the nationalists. The consensus of historians of modern Egypt is that neither the Khedive nor Arabi was responsible. One eyewitness, W.S. Blunt, blamed the European powers and the Ottoman Empire:

It was part of the plot I knew to have been designed through Dervish Pasha (Ottoman agent in Egypt) and the Foreign Office to entrap and betray Arabi.

Blunt added:

One point only in this sinister affair is still a matter for me of much perplexity and that is to determine the exact amount of responsibility assignable in it to our agents at Cairo and Alexandria. There are passages in Malet's dispatches which seem to show that he was looking forward, about the time when the disturbance was first contemplated, to some violent solution of his diplomatic difficulties, and there is no doubt that it had been, for some time past, part of his argument against the nationalist Government that it was producing anarchy.<sup>1</sup>

The riots developed out of a quarrel between a Maltese and an Egyptian donkey-boy, and the boy was killed. Fighting between the Egyptians and the Europeans began on June 11, 1881, and continued for some time.

The British government watched the situation carefully but was unable to reach a rapid conclusion about what was

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (New York: 1922), pp. 235-36.

happening. In London, opinion was divided as to what policy to follow. Gladstone sympathized with the nationalists and wanted to take a moderate line, but the majority of his cabinet did not share this feeling. Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, insisted that the Egyptian situation required military intervention, especially after the riots in Alexandria, and he argued that Britain must squelch Arabi's movement.

Granville was worried about the British interest in the Suez Canal:

I am ready to go to any length for reparation, and I set great store about making the Canal safe. But I own to dreadful alarm at occupying Egypt militarily and politically with the French. I think the majority (in the cabinet) would rather like to do this . . . it is a nasty business, and we have been much out of luck.<sup>1</sup>

The split in the cabinet and the opposition created a serious problem for the government. Lord Hartington, Secretary of State for War, threatened to resign if direct action were not taken. The British Foreign Office heard rumors that France was willing to support Arabi and thus attempt to gain control in Egypt. Britain and France were mutually suspicious, and each was unwilling to let the other deal with Egypt

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<sup>1</sup>Edmond Fitzmaurice, The Life of the Second Earl Granville (London: 1905), II, p. 265.

alone. France rejected the British proposal of an Ottoman expedition, even under Anglo-French auspices. The French insisted, instead, on a European conference, which the British approved, but the Ottomans refused to participate, considering it interference in their internal affairs. Despite the Ottoman refusal, the conference opened in Constantinople on July 23, 1882, with representatives from Britain, France, Russia, Austria, and Italy in attendance.

The conferees agreed on a French suggestion that the powers should not seek any territorial gain or any further concessions in Egypt. Lord Dufferin, the British ambassador at Constantinople, expressed a reservation in his acceptance of this agreement; he wanted to leave Britain free to act in response to cases of force majeure. He believed the agreement "would comprise not only danger to the Suez Canal, but any other unexpected change in the political situation in Egypt which might call for immediate action."<sup>1</sup>

The British cabinet, fearing that Arabi might block the canal, ordered Beauchamp Seymour, Admiral of the Fleet at Alexandria, to send an ultimatum to the Egyptian government. The British thought the ultimatum and the appearance of the

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<sup>1</sup>British state paper, Egypt, no. 17 (1882), p. 48.

fleet in Egyptian waters would bring an end to the situation. But Seymour found that Alexandria was fortified and that Arabi was taking all necessary measures to protect the city. The British asked Sultan Abdul Hamid to order all work on these fortifications stopped immediately. The sultan, who was also worried about events in Egypt, so ordered. The fortifications were inadequate to prevent the British from capturing the city, but the British wanted to create an issue. Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty, in his report to Gladstone, said:

If we want to bring on a fight we can instruct B. Seymour to require the guns to be dismantled. My advisers do not think they will do much harm where they are.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Egyptians had already ceased work on the forts Seymour claimed that they had not, and on July 10, 1882, he sent a new ultimatum demanding that the forts be surrendered to him for dismantling. The Egyptian government was deeply insulted by this order from someone with no legal authority, and it was regarded as another attempt to diminish Egyptian sovereignty. The entire cabinet and the Khedive rejected the ultimatum.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Knaplund, Gladstone's Foreign Policy (New York: 1935), p. 183.

The French, who were suspicious of British aims in Egypt, were unwilling to become more involved. They ordered their fleet to withdraw if the British attacked Alexandria or took any further action. The British were quite pleased with this decision, which ultimately gave them sole control of Egypt and the Suez Canal. The French thought their refusal to participate might dissuade the British from interfering in Egypt. Even if this failed, by not joining with the British, the French kept their policy options open. Furthermore, the French did not want to antagonize the Egyptians, among whom they enjoyed much influence. Finally, mindful of its interests in Syria and Lebanon, France was reluctant to endanger its relations with the Ottoman Empire.

On July 11, 1882, the British fleet bombarded Alexandria. On July 31, British marines landed. The Khedive put himself under British protection and dismissed Arabi, who proclaimed a state of war between Egypt and England. The Egyptian nationalists decided to continue their struggle even if the Khedive had sold himself to the Europeans. Arabi believed that he had an obligation toward his people to defend the country against its enemies. He expected the Ottoman Empire to offer support, but the Porte, itself very weak,

first hesitated and then abandoned Egypt. The Ottomans hoped the other great powers would prevent British domination.

After a careful study of the international situation and its complications, Britain decided to complete its occupation of Egypt. The Ottoman Empire could not challenge the British forces; Bismarck had given Britain a green light in an attempt to isolate France and weaken it; and Italy, Russia, and Austria had no objections. On July 22, 1882, Parliament agreed on a budget for a military campaign against Egypt with the special aim of suppressing the nationalist movement. In an attempt to conceal its main purpose, the British government invited France and Italy to join them, certain that they would refuse. Both did so. The French Prime Minister, Freycinet, who favored participation in the expedition to protect French interests in the Suez Canal, resigned. Bismarck, although he had no direct interest in Egypt, believed he should put pressure on Britain in order to gain concessions. He insisted on renewing the conference of Constantinople. Meanwhile, on July 20, 1882, the Ottoman Empire had agreed to participate in the conference. Then, on July 24, in an attempt to regain its prestige as Egypt's suzerain, the Ottoman Empire declared that it planned to send a military expedition to Egypt. But since the Ottomans could not carry through,

due to their extremely weak condition, sultan Abdul Hamid, on August 7, 1882, accepted the Identical Note of July 15.

In the Identical Note, the European powers had agreed that, under certain conditions, they would allow the sultan to intervene in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The note was adopted by the conference and sent to the European governments for ratification. The British, believing the conference fruitless, had entered into direct negotiations with the sultan in an attempt to gain time. They discussed the propriety of sending Ottoman forces to Egypt, while their own soldiers under General Wolseley, were crushing the Egyptian nationalists at the battle of Tal-al-Kabeer on September 13, 1882. This defeat ended nationalist resistance and inaugurated 72 years of British occupation. After Tal-al-Kabeer, Grandville asked Lord Dufferin to cease negotiations with the Ottomans.

The motives behind the British occupation of Egypt were complex, but there were three important and immediate reasons. The first was Egypt's strategic location in relation to three continents. This factor was especially

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<sup>1</sup>The Europeans could require the Sultan to accept their terms because of their enormous economic and political influence on him. Furthermore, the Europeans much preferred that the Ottomans intervene rather than any European power, in order that none gain ascendancy.

important after the completion of the Suez Canal, the artery between England, India, and the colonies of the Far East.

Bismarck was aware of this:

Egypt is of the utmost importance to England on account of the Suez Canal, the shortest line of communication between the Eastern and Western halves of the Empire. It is the spinal cord which connects the backbone with the brain.<sup>1</sup>

Second, because of French fears of German power in Europe, especially along the Rhine frontier, France was prepared to allow Britain to intervene in Egyptian affairs, thus ending their long period of rivalry. The British also believed the moment was ripe for occupation of Egypt; the international climate generally was suitable for such action.

Third, the British felt the nationalist rebellion must be crushed, for it threatened to end European intervention in Egyptian affairs.

The British judgment was correct, as there was no serious military resistance to their intervention either from the French or from the sultan. The British feared that the sultan might send troops to support the Egyptians against them, but no such action was taken.

After the military occupation, Britain had a difficult time justifying its actions to the other European powers

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<sup>1</sup>M. Busch, Bismarck, vol. II (London, 1898) p. 322.

and to the Porte. The British first announced that they would evacuate Egypt after restoring Khedive Tawfik's authority. In the early stages, they also considered handling the situation in a manner similar to the Belgian question. The European powers would be asked to agree to Egypt's becoming a neutral state; no European power would try to gain concessions in Egypt or the canal zone. But Britain soon abandoned both ideas and worked, instead, to strengthen its control. The Prince of Wales wrote to Wolseley: "After this campaign we must forever keep a strong hold over Egypt, as our interests are too great ever to be lost sight of again."<sup>1</sup> In February 1883, Queen Victoria wrote to Lord Granville along the same lines: "The Queen feels very anxious that nothing should be said to fetter or hamper our action in Egypt: we must have a firm hold on her once and for all."<sup>2</sup>

The British decided to establish a new governmental system which would put Egypt under Britain's absolute domination. Action was swift. Forty-five days after the occupation, Lord Dufferin, British ambassador to Constantinople, was sent to Egypt. Granville, in his instructions to Dufferin, wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>Langer, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Her Majesty's Government . . . feel bound not to withdraw from the task thus imposed on them until the administration of affairs has been reconstructed on a basis which will afford satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Dufferin was familiar with Egyptian affairs. From his two important posts as ambassador to Russia (until 1879) and to Constantinople (since 1881) he had watched developments and was able to strengthen the British presence in Egypt. Dufferin arrived in Alexandria on November 7, 1882, and spent six months in the country. On February 6, 1883, he sent his final report to Granville. It is considered one of the most important documents on the Egyptian question. In it, he laid the foundation of British policy during the occupation.

Among his many recommendations, Lord Dufferin suggested organizing an Egyptian army of 6,000 under the command of British officers; establishing consultative representative councils consisting of a legislative council and a general assembly; appointing an able British agent to guide the country; and maintaining British guidance for an indefinite period, through the agent and British administrative officials. Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer) was chosen for the top post on May 30, 1883, and he arrived in Egypt on September 11

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<sup>1</sup>British State paper, Egypt. no. 2 (1883) p. 11.

of that year. Baring ruled Egypt for 23 years (1882-1907), exercising virtually absolute power and authority.

With Baring's arrival, a new era of Anglo-Egyptian relations began. Even though the country nominally remained part of the Ottoman Empire, control had passed to the British. The authority of the Khedive and his cabinet was greatly reduced. British officials were attached as advisors to the more prominent officials. As Baring said, "we do not govern Egypt, we only govern the governors of Egypt."<sup>1</sup> The cabinet could make no decision without the British consul-General's consent. Granville instructed Baring:

The advice of Her Majesty's Government should be followed, as long as provisional occupation continues. Ministers and governors must carry out this advice or forfeit their offices.<sup>2</sup>

On January 18, 1883, Anglo-French control was abolished. Britain was determined to rule Egypt alone, but tried to conceal its interest and policy in Egypt from the other European powers. On January 3, 1883, the British issued a mild circular stating that they would be responsible for preserving public tranquility and security in Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, Egypt and Cromer (London: 1968), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Cromer, op. cit., I. p. 382.

<sup>3</sup>British State Paper, Egypt, no. 2 (1883), p. 11.

## Chapter II

### SALISBURY'S DIPLOMATIC ATTEMPTS TO EASE

### THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION, 1885-1887

#### Sir Drummond Wolff's First Mission to Constantinople

When Lord Salisbury's cabinet replaced Gladstone's on June 11, 1885, one of its major problems was the Egyptian question. Salisbury immediately sent Sir Drummond Wolff to Constantinople to negotiate with the Ottomans. France and the Porte were pressuring England to announce a definite evacuation date. French influence in Egypt was still greater than that of any other European power, and the French language and culture were second only to the Arabic. France also had strategic and economic interests in the country which it was unwilling to lose to the British.

The Wolff mission was born more of necessity than of a genuine desire to withdraw from Egypt. Salisbury made it clear that he would follow Gladstone's policy. As he told Baring: "We are not in a position, as I ventured to explain to you, to originate now any policy diverging at a sharp angle from that

of our predecessors."<sup>1</sup> The mission had three aims: to gain important concessions from the other European powers if Britain evacuated Egypt; to bring Britain out of isolation; and to weaken Egyptian opposition to the British occupation. Salisbury wanted to establish good relations with Germany and France, but he also wanted to dilute Bismarck's influence. He wrote to Sir William White, Ambassador in Constantinople:

I do not wish to depend upon [Bismarck's] good will, and therefore, shall keep friends with France as far as we can do it without paying too dear for it. The threat of making us uneasy in Egypt through the action of France is the only weapon [Bismarck] has against us and we are free of him in proportion as we can blunt it.<sup>2</sup>

Wolff's mission was intended to conciliate France and the Ottomans and to prevent Bismarck from using France against Britain. Those aims were clear in Salisbury's instruction. He wanted Wolff to point out that the British government would recognize fully the rights of the sultan as sovereign of Egypt. Salisbury knew that this would keep the sultan and the Muslim world quiet for the moment. Also, he hoped such recognition would prompt the sultan to send troops to subdue the Mahdi's

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, September 15, 1885 no. 64, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>F. H. Hinseley, "Bismarck, Salisbury and the Agreement of 1887," Historical Journal (1958): 79.

rebellion in the Sudan, which threatened the British position in Egypt. But Salisbury clearly intended that the Wolff mission should secure British dominance in Egypt and prevent other European powers from maintaining any competitive influence there.

In the first instance, [your mission is] to secure for this country the amount of influence which is necessary for its own imperial interests, and subject to that condition, to provide a strong and efficient Egyptian government, as free as possible from foreign interference.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury saw Wolff's mission as an attempt to strengthen the British occupation, not weaken it. He instructed Wolff to avoid any promise of British evacuation.

Our diplomatic task is twofold: to obtain the arrangement necessary for our work in Egypt now, secondly, in leaving it to secure the privileged position which will pay us for blood and treasure spent . . . . we must avoid any definite or contingent promise of evacuation.<sup>2</sup>

Abandoning Egypt was unthinkable unless the European powers formally agreed to make great concessions to the British in Africa and Asia.

For early evacuation will be the only price we shall have to offer for this second object. If we can say to Europe we are in possession: practically you can

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Wolff, August 7, 1885, no. 1. Correspondence respecting Sir H. Drummond Wolff's special mission to Constantinople, British State Papers, British Museum, London, are henceforth referred to as W.C.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 46.

not turn us out. What will you give us to go soon?  
And if the state of European politics happens to be  
favorable we may gain a great deal for England.<sup>1</sup>

But in 1885, such an arrangement seemed impossible. Thus, the Wolff mission was essentially an attempt to gain time and assess the reaction of the major European powers, especially France, toward the British occupation. This intent was made clear by Salisbury's refusal to give Wolff full powers to negotiate with the Ottomans, a fact which aroused much suspicion in Constantinople.

Despite the Wolff mission, Salisbury had no specific policy toward the Egyptian question in 1885. Because of Egypt's strategic value and profound importance to Britain's Mediterranean interests, the only thing upon which Salisbury insisted was British supremacy in Egypt, either through continued occupation or through guarantees from the other powers if Britain should withdraw. In a private letter dated August 18, 1885, Salisbury told Wolff:

My great objection to fixing a date for our evacuation of Egypt is that relief from our hated presence is the one bribe we have to offer, the price we have to pay for any little advantage we may desire to secure. If we once part with that, we

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

practically go into the market empty-handed, a practice of which the late government were fond, but which I never knew came to any good.<sup>1</sup>

Thus instructed, Sir Drummond Wolff, Ambassador Extraordinary, arrived in Constantinople on August 22, 1885. In his negotiations with the Ottomans, Wolff followed Salisbury's directions and avoided any serious talks about British evacuation.<sup>2</sup> In a private letter dated September 8, 1885, Salisbury told Wolff that the Queen was strongly against any promise to withdraw:

The Queen is dreadfully nervous of any promise of a fixed time for evacuation. I have generally found she represents a large body of conservative opinion of the less obtrusive kind.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Wolff concentrated his efforts on gaining Ottoman approval on three main points. First, the sultan should send troops to subdue the Sudanese rebellion. This alternative to sending British troops was favored because the sultan had a

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Wolff, private, August 18, 1885, no. A 44/33. Salisbury Papers. The Salisbury Papers, Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts, are henceforth referred to as S.P.

<sup>2</sup>The Ottoman negotiators were: Assim Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kiamil Pasha, Minister of Evcaf, and Naoum Effendi, who acted as protocolist. After September 25, 1885, the new Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, Aarifi Pasha, the new president of the council of state and acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mohammed Said Pasha, the Foreign Minister.

<sup>3</sup>S.P. Salisbury to Wolff, private, September 8, 1885, no. A 44/35.

legitimate claim to the Sudan, and the Sudanese Muslims might find it more difficult to fight Ottoman Muslims than the troops of a Christian nation. Second, the sultan should appoint a commissioner to proceed to Egypt with Wolff or some other British representative to settle the future organization of the country. Third, any international engagements contracted by Khedive Tawfik must be taken into consideration in reaching the final settlement of the Egyptian question.

The Ottomans were inclined to accept the last two stipulations, but they hesitated over the first. Sultan Abdul Hamid II feared that sending troops would damage his reputation as a Muslim leader and would create great difficulties among his Muslim subjects.

During the negotiations, the sultan pressed the British to fix a date for evacuation, but they refused. They claimed that if they left, another European power would replace them. Furthermore, Wolff maintained that British troops were the guardians of European interests in Egypt, which obliged them to stay until they felt the country was able to pay its debts.

Under instructions from Salisbury, Wolff did make one conciliatory move to gain Ottoman approval of the British position. He suggested that British troops might withdraw

gradually if the sultan allowed Khedive Tawfik to recruit soldiers from the Ottoman Empire to replace the British units. But he also made it clear that if such a proposal was agreeable, the withdrawal of British forces required the consent of both the British and Ottoman commissioners in Egypt as well as of the Khedive, so that the satisfactory operation of the government in Egypt would be secured.<sup>1</sup>

On October 24, 1885, a convention was signed between England and the Ottoman Empire. There were six articles. First, both governments agreed to send a high commissioner to study the situation in Egypt. They would report their findings to their governments and the best solution for the Egyptian question would then be decided. Second, the Ottoman high commissioner would consult with the Khedive to try and find the best means of tranquilizing the Sudan by peaceful measures. The Ottomans agreed to inform the English high commissioner of the negotiations with the Sudanese and not to reach any settlement without British consent. Third, both high commissioners would discuss with the Khedive the best means of reorganizing all branches of the Egyptian

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, September 15, 1885, no. 22.

administration and would try to introduce any reforms which might be considered necessary. Fourth, the sultan agreed to respect the international engagements contracted by Khedive Tawfik unless they were contrary to the privileges granted by his Imperial Firmans. Fifth, both commissioners would examine and study the internal affairs of Egypt. They would both help the Egyptian government secure its southern frontiers and maintain domestic stability and order. Once assured that order prevailed, they would report to their governments, which would then consider concluding a convention regulating the withdrawal of the British troops in a convenient period. Sixth, both governments agreed to ratify the convention, and the exchange should take place at Constantinople within fifteen days or less, if possible.<sup>1</sup>

The convention was greatly to Britain's advantage. The Porte acknowledged the occupation, and the sultan's influence in Egypt was thereby considerably diminished. In particular, the appointment of English and Ottoman high commissioners meant, to the British, that the Porte officially recognized and accepted the occupation, which weakened both

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, October 24, 1885, no. 65.

European opposition and Egyptian resistance. The agreement was a great success for Salisbury.

In accord with the agreement, the two commissioners, Drummond Wolff and Mukhtar Pasha Ghazi, went to Egypt to discuss with Khedive Tawfik the reorganization of his administration and the army. Wolff was astonished by the Ottoman attitude. He reported to Salisbury that he believed the Ottomans expected the British to stay in Egypt for a long period, for they had ceased pressing for an evacuation date. Therefore, he advised his government to reach a final agreement with the sultan which would give the British a legitimate basis for staying on. But France consistently opposed any such agreement if it did not include a specific evacuation date.

After the agreement was signed, Salisbury was replaced by Gladstone, but the latter's government lasted only six months. Gladstone, who was busy with the Irish Home Rule question, did not have much time to devote to Egyptian matters. In June 1886, Salisbury returned to form a new ministry, this time with a secure governing majority.

Drummond Wolff's Second Mission  
to Constantinople

When Salisbury returned to power in June 1886, Britain had become diplomatically isolated, and the international situation was tense. He wrote to Baring:

We have a hard game to play, and a very full board. Abroad we seem to shut up the alternative of two wars either of which is likely to modify profoundly the face of Europe . . . . in these circumstances you must not be surprised if we find our hands a good deal tied in many respects.<sup>1</sup>

The Egyptian question was one among many issues on which Salisbury believed he should take immediate action. The best course seemed to be resumption of diplomatic negotiations with the Ottomans. This step was chosen to meet possible pressure from the European powers to neutralize Egypt. The idea of neutralization was unacceptable to Salisbury unless England could maintain the right to secure its own interests:

The object which the Powers of Europe have had in view may be generally expressed by the phrase "the neutralization of Egypt," . . . . the British

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 13, 1887, no. 88, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

Government must retain the right to guard and uphold the condition of things which have been brought about by the military action and large sacrifices of this country.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury again sent Drummond Wolff to Constantinople, in January 1887, in an attempt to convince the Ottomans to reach a final agreement. Salisbury had little confidence in the mission's success. He wrote to Baring:

Wolff's negotiations are not promising at present. I do not think they will come to much unless there is some change in the present distribution of power in Europe. But they seem to keep the door open, and to give the French an excuse before their own people for taking no steps.<sup>2</sup>

Wolff's mission, in Salisbury's view, was merely an attempt to gain time, not a serious search for a solution. The stumbling blocks were Germany and France:

Bismarck is trying to force us into an attitude more definitely antagonistic to the French. This is natural, as he wishes to isolate them, and would not be sorry to waste a portion of their forces upon us. This of course is not our interest, and the necessity of guarding against this device adds to the difficulties of our negotiation just now.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Wolff, January 15, 1887, British State Paper, no. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 13, 1887, no. 88, P.R.O. F.O., 633/7.

<sup>3</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 25, 1887, no. 89, P.R.O. F.O., 633/7.

Even though Bismarck could stir up considerable trouble over Egypt, Salisbury viewed France as the main obstacle to reaching an agreement with the Porte. By sending Wolff to Constantinople for an unspecified time, he hoped that eventually a political change in France would alter official attitudes:

Whether we shall get as much as this out of France may very well be doubted and the negotiation may take a long time. If the present strained condition of affairs in Europe should end in any result to the detriment of France, she might become more open to persuasion than she is now.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury was in no hurry to reach an agreement with the Ottomans unless he was sure that the French would allow it:

With a future so uncertain, we are not anxious for an immediate close of the negotiation and therefore these ideas are only put in the form of suggestions, and must not be looked upon as having reached any further stages of growth. In fact, it is evident that a good deal of flesh must be put upon their bones before they can come to maturity.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Lyons, the British ambassador at Paris, was more optimistic than Salisbury. He believed that if the present cabinet was changed, the new government would adopt a friendly attitude toward England: "If there should be a new

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 11, 1887, no. 87, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

ministry it might possibly pursue a policy more friendly toward England with regard to Egypt and other matters. The Egyptian question would no doubt become less difficult."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Salisbury planned to use Wolff's mission to buy time: "Our negotiations must be circumspect, slow, and a little hazy and ambiguous."<sup>2</sup>

In February 1887, according to Salisbury's instructions, Wolff delivered to the Sublime Porte a memorandum which outlined the framework that the negotiations should follow. He concentrated on four main points. First, the withdrawal of troops from Egypt should not take place before England was sure that the Egyptians were able to handle their own administration and that any agreement they had or might have with the Khedive would be honored. Therefore, England could not fix a date for the evacuation unless external and internal peace for Egypt were assured. Second, the European powers should give their consent to any agreements reached between England and the Ottoman Empire. The British wanted to be certain that no powers would seek to replace them in Egypt. Third, England would insist on retaining in a

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Lord Lyons to Salisbury, private, February 18, 1887, no. A56/11.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Malet, private, February 23, 1887, no. A 64/3.

position of command a sufficient number of British officers, and only on that condition would Britain accept the responsibility of evacuation. But England would not withdraw unless it felt that the situation in Egypt were satisfactory.

Fourth, England was willing to agree with the European powers' view that the best solution of the Egyptian question was to neutralize that country. Each power should have the right to make use of the land passage to proceed from one sea to the other, but no foreign soldiers should be permitted to remain on Egyptian soil. This condition must be restricted to periods of peace as far as England was concerned. If the British agreed to evacuate Egypt, they must be allowed to retain a treaty right of intervention if at any time internal peace or external security should be threatened.

In a private instruction, Salisbury told Wolff to concentrate on securing perpetual security for free transit within Egypt and along the Suez Canal for the British. He also insisted on the right of reentry into Egypt as the main condition of any British evacuation:

I wish to obtain if it is possible some treaty right of re-occupation, under proper conditions and limitations, which would enable us to watch over Egypt

from Cyprus and Malta, without offending the Mussulman population by floating the infidel flag among them.<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Abdul Hamid II was reluctant to enter into new negotiations. He believed the agreement of 1885 had paved the way for British withdrawal, still not accomplished after a year, and that further discussions should wait upon that withdrawal. The British pointed out that Article VI had stipulated that further agreement should be discussed. Also, they threatened to "take away from (the sultan) the Califate which is derived from Egypt, and give it to one of the Egyptian sheiks who are descended from the prophet."<sup>2</sup>

Given this attitude, the sultan agreed to begin talks on February 6, 1887. There was great pressure from France and Russia on the sultan to insist on a fixed date for the British evacuation. They urged him to maintain his authority over Egypt. The French position was clear, as Salisbury explained to Baring:

The French through Herbette to Malet tell us that all our troubles are due to our refusal to fix a

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, January 21, 1887, no. 85, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>S.P. Wolff to Salisbury, Decypher, Private and Secret, July 11, 1887, no. A51/133.

date for the evacuation . . . "only let us (the French) have the credit of having induced you to fix a date."<sup>1</sup>

The Ottomans opened their talks with Wolff by demanding that England should fix a date for evacuation within three to six months and that the British officers in the Egyptian army should be gradually replaced by Ottoman officers.<sup>2</sup> They wanted to resume responsibility for protecting Egypt in the event of disorders, but should it prove inconvenient for the Porte to send troops, then England should have the right of re-entry. England rejected these suggestions on the ground that they did not have any guarantee against the attempts of other powers to obtain paramount influence in Egypt. The British declared they could not withdraw for many months and that British officers must remain in command of the Egyptian army.

The Ottomans asked if it were possible to limit the negotiations to matters which could be settled between England and the Ottoman Empire alone. Salisbury replied that the British government could not agree to a partial

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 4, 1887, no. 86, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>The Ottomans who conducted the negotiations were the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammed Said Pasha.

arrangement which would leave the Egyptian question undecided in the absence of an international understanding. Sultan Abdul Hamid II personally was unhappy with the question of neutralization. He preferred to substitute the French phrase, "sûreté territoriale." He asked in what respect a treaty of neutralization would secure his right in Egypt. The Porte believed that the existing treaties guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire were sufficient; if they were not, how would a treaty of neutralization prove more effective? The Ottomans also asked whether the powers who would join in the treaty would be responsible for resisting any possible violation of neutrality. Next, the Porte pointed out that if the question of neutralization were so important, should it not be arranged by separate treaty between the Ottoman Empire and England. The Ottomans feared "neutralization" because of the Belgian case, for they believed that the policy had caused Belgium's separation from the kingdom of the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The neutralization of Egypt was not so vital an issue that Salisbury was prepared to insist on it. He felt it was more important to England to reach an agreement with the Ottomans than to pressure them into accepting neutralization. He told

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, March 11, 1887. no. 40.

the Ottomans, through Wolff, that "Her Majesty's Government attach no importance to the word of "neutralization."<sup>1</sup> The issue was dropped from the negotiations.

On April 16, the Ottomans submitted their first proposal to Wolff. It consisted of four articles. First, they wanted British troops to be withdrawn within eighteen months. Second, they demanded the removal of British officers from the Egyptian army within a year. Third, the Porte would give England the right of re-entry, but it would be limited to cases of external invasion and would hold for only a few years after the British evacuation. Fourth, the Ottoman Empire would re-establish the Egyptian administration in the Sudan.<sup>2</sup> Salisbury rejected the proposal, mainly objecting to the third condition: "It will be impossible for us to consent to limit our right of re-entry to a fixed number of years."<sup>3</sup>

The Ottomans considered these points as necessary preconditions for agreeing to the British right of re-entry

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, telegraphic, April 10, 1887. no. 58.

<sup>2</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, telegraphic, April 16, 1887. no. 61.

<sup>3</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Wolff, private, telegram, July 11, 1887. no. A 51/189.

into Egypt. They believed these were the only terms the other powers would accept. If the Europeans refused to ratify an agreement between the Ottomans and England, the British occupation would continue indefinitely.

Salisbury asked Wolff to insist on three years as the minimum period before British troops would be withdrawn. He also insisted that British officers remain in command of the Egyptian army even longer: "We are prepared to agree to the term of three years. I think that the English officers should be retained in the Egyptian army for a couple of years longer."<sup>1</sup>

During the negotiations there were rumors that England might agree to allow the sultan to send troops to Egypt. When the French heard of this, they informed the sultan that they would not accept such a plan. The French feared that the British would gain control over the militarily weak Ottoman sultan. Salisbury, with no European ally willing to support his policy to hold Egypt, had no choice but to use the Wolff mission to buy time: "We must keep it diplomatically in our power."<sup>2</sup> Salisbury admitted that it was only because the

<sup>1</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, telegraphic, May 2, 1887. no. 72.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Wolff, private, February 23, 1887, no. A51/149.

British occupied Egypt that the European powers were trying to gain concessions in exchange for their support. He thought that if the Gladstone government had tried to secure British interests without direct military occupation, Britain would be in a better position to resist European pressure. We should "satisfy France on account of Bismarck's attitude. His policy, in a humbler walk of life, would be called chantage . . . . I heartily wish we had never gone to Egypt. Had we not done so, we could snap our fingers at all the world."<sup>1</sup> However, since the occupation had taken place, he believed that his task was to secure the British position.

The Egyptian question also created problems for Salisbury at home. During the negotiations there were intimations, leaked through the diplomatic circle at Constantinople, that Salisbury might agree to leave Egypt. This aroused considerable opposition among officials, the press, and the public. Salisbury, who was annoyed by such rumors, instructed Wolff to be more careful in his contact with people there: "Choose your confidants carefully--reports of your private conversations come home in odd sorts of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

ways, and the business of explaining away is sometimes perplexing."<sup>1</sup>

Among the officials who opposed evacuation was Baring. He feared that such an agreement would destroy British interests in Egypt and would raise Egyptian nationalist's hope of getting rid of the British altogether:

Evacuation would mean retrogression . . . . On no account agree to fixing unconditionally a date for our departure. I think we must leave a door open in case we should not think it wise to go . . . . I am not in the least prepared to say with any degree of certainty that at the end of say, five years, we shall be able to go.<sup>2</sup>

Wolff supported Baring on the ground that such a move would destroy the unpopular Khedive Tawfik and his puppet cabinet. "Nubar [the Egyptian prime minister] feels his position and that of the Khedive untenable without the British occupation."<sup>3</sup> But Salisbury had no intention of withdrawing; he assured critics that he did "not see any probability of our leaving Egypt under six years from this date and our stay

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, April 1, 1887, no. 94., P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

<sup>3</sup>Wolff to Salisbury, May 8, 1887, P.R.O. F.O. 78/2823.

may be much longer."<sup>1</sup> He also reminded the public that it was Gladstone's government which had entangled him in the Egyptian occupation, and that he merely was trying to find a proper solution: "We are bound hand and foot by the pledges of retirement which our predecessor have given, and which we impliedly confirmed."<sup>2</sup>

During the negotiations in 1887, Salisbury made it clear that abandoning Egypt would be seen by the British as a move to destroy their empire, especially because of Egypt's strategic value. Salisbury, an avowed imperialist, also viewed Egypt as the essential link between Britain and India and the Far East. He was aware that "English opinion is not prepared for an evacuation of Egypt. Still less for the abandonment of it."<sup>3</sup>

The idea of the British leaving Egypt annoyed Bismarck. His son, Count Bismarck, the German foreign minister, told Malet, the British ambassador at Berlin, that his

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 11, 1887, no. 55, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, May 6, 1977, no. 92, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>3</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Wolff, private, February 23, 1887, no. 51/149.

father disapproved and thought such an action might cause the fall of Salisbury's cabinet:

He had reminded the Ambassador that the English intervention in Egypt was the work of the liberal government under Gladstone. It might happen that, were you to make too great concessions, the unionists who still called themselves liberals might unite on the (Egyptian) question with Mr. Gladstone and so produce the fall of the present government.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury admitted that he could not agree to withdrawal from Egypt, even with guarantees which would secure British influence there, since that would mean the end of his ministry and the return of Gladstone. In a private letter to Wolff dated March 23, 1887, he stated the matter clearly:

(It) is to a certain extent unfortunate for your negotiations, because it is not easy to come to a conclusion on the question of guarantees. There is also another difficulty. We do not even yet know our exact Parliamentary footing . . . in other words, how many people there are who are willing to see Gladstone back in office. Till we know this, I expect my colleagues to be very nervous about guarantees, lest they should give to Gladstone the weapon he wants.<sup>2</sup>

In April 1887, after several meetings with Sultan Abdul Hamid II and the European representatives at Constantinople, Wolff came to a conclusion that the best way to

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<sup>1</sup>S. P., Malet to Salisbury, private, June 25, 1887, no. A61/29.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Wolff, private, March 23, 1877, no. A51/155.

solve the issue was to place Egypt under international control. Salisbury rejected the idea on the ground that it would put England at the mercy of the Germans and the French:

Referring to your private letter, I do not see my way to any acceptance of international control. It means, to us, slavery to Germany. We must normally be the rivals of France, and can never escape from that position: and therefore we can never have an international majority without the help of Germany. And Germany will sell that help very dear.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the French and German challenge to British interests in Egypt, Salisbury also feared that the small powers would find an opportunity to demand concessions from England in return for their cooperation. He believed that if such a plan were worked out, the United States, whose relations with England were not good, would create trouble:

The setting up of any such council would be a matter of extreme difficulty, because the smaller powers would insist on their share. I do not see my way out of this difficulty, specially on account of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

In response to Ottoman and European pressure, and in an attempt to gain time, Salisbury authorized Wolff to state that British troops would withdraw from Cairo within three years

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Wolff, private, April 6, 1887, no. A51/158.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

and from Egypt within five, if order and security in the interior were undisturbed. But the right to reoccupation was essential in Salisbury's view:

The end to which I would like you to work is evacuation, but with certain privileges reserved for England. I should like a treaty right to occupy Alexandria when we pleased.<sup>1</sup>

Agreement was reached on May 22, 1887, according to the British terms, and the sultan was inclined to accept it. However, France and Russia opposed the convention because of the reoccupation clause. They believed it gave England rights equal to those of the Porte, which would mean that England and the Ottomans were to be joint sovereigns of Egypt. The French warned the sultan that if he ratified the convention he would be handing over a part of his territories to England. The British would be released, unlike the other powers, from the obligations of the Treaty of Berlin, which maintained the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The French and Russians also told the Porte that since the convention gave no advantages to the Ottoman Empire, they considered it a treaty of alliance; if it were ratified, they would no longer consider the Ottoman Empire a neutral state. Furthermore, they warned Sultan Abdul Hamid II that if he accepted the treaty, they

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil, op. cit., III, p. 235.

would thereby assume the right to occupy other provinces of the Ottoman Empire and to leave only after a similar convention had been concluded. Thus France might occupy Syria, and Russia might move into Armenia.

Under such pressure, the sultan asked Salisbury to delay ratification of the treaty by Queen Victoria. He first wanted to submit the convention to the other powers. The Ottomans suggested that the matter might better be discussed in London or Paris, rather than Constantinople. Salisbury firmly rejected these suggestions: "Her Majesty's government cannot consent to postpone the ratification of the convention; still less can they discuss the convention with the other powers before the exchange of ratification."<sup>1</sup> He threatened the sultan by adding that should

the Porte refuse to ratify on the appointed day, the treaty will, of course, fall through, but the position of this country will be entirely changed. Her Majesty's government will be released from their engagements with the Porte in regard to Egypt, and will remain free to take their own course.<sup>2</sup>

Since it was clear to Salisbury that achieving an agreement with the Ottomans would be better than nothing, he agreed to give the sultan five days in which to reconsider ratification

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, Telegraph, June 4, 1887, no. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Salisbury informed Bismarck, hoping the latter would urge Sultan Abdul Hamid II to sign: "Count Bismarck told me that your Lordship had accorded a prolongation of five days for the ratification."<sup>1</sup> The sultan, who feared the French and Russians more than the British, refused to ratify, and Wolff's mission ended in failure.

The French attitude enraged Salisbury: "They are the most unreasonable people I have ever heard or dreamt of."<sup>2</sup> He became more determined than ever to hold Egypt, and his mistrust of France grew. But the French remained firm in their resolve to thwart any agreement between England and the Ottoman Empire which would strengthen the British and weaken French interests in the Mediterranean. The French believed they had little choice but to protect their empire in Indo-China and North Africa, and they felt it imperative to prevent Britain from gaining a strategic position in Egypt unless France received important concessions. They wanted some African territories and British recognition of their interests in Tripoli and Tunis. Those demands were unacceptable to Salisbury: "I would not allow him (the French foreign Minister)

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Malet to Salisbury, private, June 21, 1887, no. A 61/28.

<sup>2</sup>Cecil, op. cit., IV, 34.

for a moment to believe that such a proposition will be listened to. We at least cannot go with a policy of exchange."<sup>1</sup>

In January 1888, the sultan approached Salisbury with a new suggestion. In an attempt to overcome the Franco-Russian opposition to the right of re-entry, the sultan told the British that he would agree to allow them to keep their troops and a naval base in Alexandria. Salisbury rejected the proposal:

[Sir Henry Evelyn] Woods Pasha (the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian army) came to me and proposed--or professed to propose--on behalf of the Sultan that we should accept some hold upon Alexandria . . . . I doubt this being more palatable to the French, and it would not give us an equally effective leverage for protecting Egypt from external and internal enemies.<sup>2</sup>

The sultan, regretful that he had not ratified the convention of 1887, tried to induce the British to renew negotiations in 1890. He authorized his Grand Vizier to negotiate on the basis that he would accept the right of re-entry if the British would withdraw their troops within a year. Once more, Salisbury refused on the ground that England no longer believed it should fix a date for

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Lytton, private, September 1890, no. 95.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, January 20, 1888, no. 97, P.R.O F.O. 633/7.

withdrawal: "The sultan has made new and wholly unacceptable proposals with respect to evacuation. He must perfectly well know they are unacceptable. I cannot make out what object of policy he has in view in making them."<sup>1</sup> Salisbury suspected that the sultan had been encouraged by the European powers, mainly France and Russia, to submit such a proposal. Therefore, he believed it would be against British imperial interests in Egypt and the Mediterranean to accept.<sup>2</sup>

One might ask whether Salisbury seriously intended to end the British occupation. It could be argued that careful study of Salisbury's private and official correspondence reveals that he thought the occupation was to England's disadvantage since the European great powers were opposed. Salisbury believed that it was only the Egyptian issue which caused the friction with France, the German pressure for concessions, the hostility to Britain in the Muslim world, and the danger of reduced British influence on the sultan. But it was obvious that Salisbury opposed ending the occupation unless he received the great powers' consent that they would

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Baring, private, April 25, 1890, no. 55/54.

<sup>2</sup>Mahumd Y. Zayid, Egypt's Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: 1965) p. 47.

officially accept British supremacy in Egypt. This was quite clear from his insistence on England's right of re-entry.

The failure of Wolff's negotiations upset Salisbury and revealed to him how strong was the French and Russian influence at Constantinople and how weak was that of the British. Moreover, Salisbury believed the failure of the negotiations greatly affected the balance of power in Europe and weakened British imperial interests. Therefore, he decided to abandon his efforts to settle the Egyptian question by direct dealings with the sultan. Instead, he concluded, the best course for securing British interests in Egypt and elsewhere was to seek closer relations with the central powers. This policy will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter III  
SALISBURY, THE GREAT POWERS,  
AND EGYPT: 1885-1892

To understand Great Britain's relations with the European powers and their effect on the Egyptian question, it is necessary to review the European situation during the period 1885-1892. France faced difficult problems arising from its loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany and its conflict with Britain over Egypt. Bismarck's plan to isolate the French by forming an alliance with Austria-Hungary and Italy also weakened France and prevented it from taking any active role on the Continent. Although the alliance system kept Britain isolated, the British were willing to remain aloof from continental conflict. They did, however, make it clear that if war should break out in Europe, they would intervene to maintain the balance of power and to protect their own interests.

Germany

In 1885, Bismarck was, of course, aware of Salisbury's attempts to solve the Anglo-French conflict over Egypt by sending the Drummond Wolff mission to Constantinople. Bismarck appreciated Salisbury's dilemma and sought to benefit from it. He knew that Salisbury needed German support to ease the Egyptian situation. Salisbury remarked: "It is only Egypt that puts us in this difficulty--for otherwise Bismarck's wrath would be of little moment to us. It is heartily to be wished we were delivered from this very inconvenient and somewhat humiliating relation."<sup>1</sup> Germany's importance stemmed mainly from Bismarck's good relations with Sultan Abdum Hamid II: "He [Bismarck] has obtained considerable hold over the sultan's mind."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Germany had a vote through its representative at the Caisse, which controlled the financial administration of Egypt. Therefore, German support was essential. As Baring said, "Berlin and not Cairo is the real center of gravity of Egyptian affairs."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Scott, private and confidential, May 4, 1887, no. A64/10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Marquis of Zetland, Lord Cromer (London: 1932), p. 128.

Realizing this, in 1885 Salisbury urged Malet to seek German support for Wolff's first mission to Constantinople:

I have thought it better not to give you a personal instruction to ask for his [Bismarck's] assistance as it might draw down on us a snub. But if you should see any opportunity of asking for assistance at Constantinople and think it will be favourably received, pray consider yourself instructed to ask for it.<sup>1</sup>

More generally, Bismarck worked to bring Britain into the orbit of the Central Powers. His efforts were rewarded when Britain and Italy signed a secret convention on February 12, 1887, and reached an understanding which became known as the Mediterranean Agreement. The two agreed to consult on maintenance of the status quo in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Sea. Italy accepted the British position in Egypt, and Britain agreed to support Italy in North Africa. A few months later, on December 12, 1887, Austria-Hungary became party to the understanding. The main aim of the agreement was to prevent the Ottoman Empire from ceding any rights in the Balkans or the Near East and to prevent Russia from gaining any concession from the Ottomans. On November 30, 1887, Salisbury stated in a letter to Bismarck:

I believe that the understanding into which England and the other two powers are now prepared to enter

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Malet, September 1, 1885, no. A 44/14.

will be in complete accordance with her declared policy, and will be loyally observed by her. The grouping of states which has been the work of the last year will be an effective barrier against any possible aggression of Russia, and the construction of it will not be among the least services which your Serene Highness has rendered to the cause of European peace.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Mediterranean Agreement, Italy and Austria-Hungary were given assurance that Britain would support them diplomatically at the Straits and in the Mediterranean. But since Britain was a parliamentary state, there was no guarantee that the British would offer military and naval assistance to the two countries in case of war.

The main reasons for Britain's support of the Triple Alliance were that it strengthened the British position in the Mediterranean and Egypt and weakened French opposition to the British occupation of the latter. The agreement was intended to maintain the balance of power in the Mediterranean and bring peace to the area. It was an attempt by Salisbury to gain German support in the matter of the Egyptian question. Furthermore, Salisbury feared Franco-Russian relations might undercut his plan for a Mediterranean balance of power. He also hoped to ease the tension existing between France and Germany at the beginning of 1887, which

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil, op. cit., p. 77.

might lead to war, which in turn would adversely affect the Near Eastern situation. Salisbury foresaw that such a war would mean the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, which would seriously affect the British position in Egypt.

The Mediterranean Agreement was a great success for Bismarck, the result of his efforts in the late 1880s to maintain friendly relations with Britain. In exchange, he had acquired potential British support for Austria regarding the Straits. As the British navy was the strongest in Europe at that time, the British could decide the future of the Straits.

But the agreement did not bring about a change in Germany's attitude toward the British in Egypt during 1887-1890. Salisbury's failure to gain German support there was due mainly to Bismarck's continuing desire to take advantage of the Egyptian question to separate Britain and France.

Salisbury was not ignorant of these intentions:

Bismarck's criticism of our Egyptian policy is discouraging. He is hard to please--we have willingly ranged ourselves with the Central European Powers--but when he wants us--as he evidently does--to quarrel with France down-right over Egypt, I think he is driving too hard a bargain.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Malet, private, February 23, 1887, no. A 64/3.

Even though Salisbury was aware of German policy and tried to thwart it, he had few alternatives. Germany was the strongest state in Europe, and the British needed its cooperation to maintain the balance of power there. Furthermore, the German representative to the Caisse at Cairo was an important factor in Britain's Egyptian policy. When these German agents tried to play a decisive role in Egypt, Salisbury protested to Berlin:

It might be well to suggest to Hatzfeldt that the two German representatives in Egypt, the Consul General and the member of the Caisse, do not seem to have realized that Berlin and London are at present upon friendly terms.<sup>1</sup>

The Caisse de la Dette Publique had been established in May 1876, when Egypt became bankrupt. From 1876 to 1885, England, France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy were members. After the occupation, British diplomatic pressure succeeded in gaining full membership for Germany and Russia in 1885. In 1887, Salisbury believed German support was needed in the Caisse. He anticipated a possible change in government in Paris which might draw Italy and Austria-Hungary closer to France. Therefore, German support would enable the British to rule Egypt smoothly.

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Malet, private, August 18, 1885, no. A 44/12.

Salisbury soon grew tired of depending on German goodwill. He thought it would be in the British interest to find a way to ease the European powers' pressure on Britain regarding Egypt. Sir Drummond Wolff's missions to Constantinople during 1885-1887 were deemed by Salisbury as the best solution to relieve this pressure and gain time: "A little further on in the history of Europe the condition may have changed and we may be able to get some agreement arrived at which will justify evacuation."<sup>1</sup>

In a final attempt to gain Bismarck's support for his Egyptian policy and in order to overcome Franco-Russian opposition to the Anglo-Turkish agreement signed in May 1887, Salisbury sent a copy of the draft to Bismarck. Germany was the only great power to receive one: "I send you a draft of the convention which Wolff is negotiating at Constantinople. I have allowed Hatzfeldt to see it: and Wolff has shown it to Calice. But beyond those two powers we do not wish it to be known at present."<sup>2</sup> But Bismarck, who was benefiting from the friction between England and France, was unwilling to press the sultan to ratify the agreement.

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Lyons, July 20, 1887, Newton, II, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Malet, private, April 13, 1887, no. A 64/5.

Early in 1889, Bismarck tried to pull Britain into a closer alliance with Germany, but Salisbury was not willing to agree to formal ties. He viewed such an alliance as damaging to the balance of power in Europe and as more advantageous to Germany than to Britain. He believed that a thorough but informal understanding would better serve British interests.

Salisbury saw the necessity for colonial concessions to Germany in exchange for its support. At the end of 1889, he accepted Bismarck's proposal to transfer the East African colonies of Uganda and Zanzibar to British rule in return for German access to the Zambesi River and the granting of Heligoland Island to Germany. Salisbury defended this arrangement to the Queen, who did not approve:

Any indefinite postponement of a settlement in Africa would render it very difficult to maintain terms of amity with Germany, and would force us to change our system of alliances in Europe. The alliance of France instead of the alliance of Germany must necessarily involve the early evacuation of Egypt under very unfavorable conditions.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury believed that an agreement with Germany would shape the political future of a large part of Africa. The agreement would have given the British absolute domination over

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Queen Victoria, cypher, June 10, 1890, no. A46/65.

the entire Nile Valley and would have secured their position in Egypt. The sudden fall of Bismarck on March 20, 1890, gave Salisbury a great opportunity to obtain what he wanted from the new German government. Sir William Malet, the British ambassador in Berlin, expressed his view about what Britain could expect in a private letter to Salisbury:

I suspect that the German government are even more anxious than we are to get all the African questions in dispute between us definitely settled. It would be a feather in the cap of the new government while failure would be ascribed to the absence of the master directing mind of Prince Bismarck.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury and the Germans resumed negotiations in April 1890 and reached agreement on July 1. This Anglo-German colonial agreement, which was known as the Heligoland Treaty, stipulated that the Germans would abandon large claims in East Africa and receive in return the Island of Heligoland which Britain had obtained from Denmark in 1815. At the time, the island was regarded as virtually useless to the British. Britain was given supremacy in the Nile Valley. The treaty was regarded as a striking demonstration of Emperor William II's readiness to establish close friendship with England. It was one of the most important achievements of Salisbury's Nile Valley policy.

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Malet to Salisbury, private, April 19, 1890.  
no. 63.

The French received the news of the Heligoland Treaty with consternation; they believed that it would seriously weaken their position in Africa, especially in Egypt.

On July 4, 1891, William II, still courting British friendship, visited London. He tried unsuccessfully to associate Britain with the Triple Alliance. Nevertheless, during 1892, Germany applied no pressure on Britain regarding the Egyptian question, which might reflect William's continuing desire to cultivate the British.

These new developments in Anglo-German relations enabled Salisbury to devote more time to dealing with the French. Their influence in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt was still tremendous,<sup>1</sup> and without French favor, British interests in Egypt and the Mediterranean would always be in some danger.

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<sup>1</sup>The Ottomans obtained most of their needed funds from French financial houses. Trade with France was most important for the Ottoman Empire, and French investments in the empire were great. France supplied the sultan with many advisors, who were attached to Ottoman government service. Ottoman students were sent to France for their higher education, and French teachers were taught at Ottoman schools; therefore, the French language was widely spoken in official circles and among the elite.

France

France was the first European power to develop an interest in Egypt and the Near East, mainly in Syria and Lebanon. The French became involved in Egypt in the second half of the eighteenth century. France, which dreamed of establishing an empire with India as its core, decided to occupy Egypt, believing its strategic location would facilitate such an empire. But the European powers forced the French to abandon this plan and withdraw from the country in 1763. The French, under Napoleon, again tried to occupy Egypt in 1798, but they met strong opposition from the sultan and the European powers, who forced the French army to leave Egypt forever.

Despite their formal evacuation, the French maintained great influence in Egypt during the reign of Mohammed Ali and his successors. For more than fifty years, French lawyers, engineers, military experts, and scholars imported into Egypt most of what that country was to borrow from European culture. Even after twenty years of British occupation, French was second only to Arabic as the language spoken in official and bureaucratic circles. Egyptian postage stamps and street names were in Arabic and French. Egyptian

law codes were based on French models. Some Egyptian newspapers were published in French. Paris was the first choice of Egyptian students and scholars who had a chance to go abroad. Most of the credits and funds the Egyptian government obtained came from French banks. Moreover, on November 30, 1854, Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat and promoter, through his friendship with the Khedive Said, succeeded in obtaining the Suez Canal concession. This further promoted French influence in Egypt. Britain was vigorously opposed because of the supposed threat to its interests in India. The canal was considered entirely a French enterprise; the board of directors and most of the employees were French. France was aware of its influence and unwilling to give it up. M. de Freycinet, the French Prime Minister, said:

From the time of Napoleon onward, France was never indifferent to the affairs of Egypt, not for a single day. At times it even seemed to her that her prestige in the world was to be measured by the role which she played on the banks of the Nile.<sup>1</sup>

Wolff admitted the importance of Egypt to France: "Our permanence in Egypt would be a cause of offence to France as bitter as Alsace-Lorraine."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph J. Mathews, Egypt and the Formation of the Anglo-French Entente of 1904, (London: 1939) p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Wolff to Salisbury, private, May 3, 1887, no. A 51/80.

The creation of the Suez Canal focused European attention on Egypt, mainly that of Britain. Viewing the canal as so vital to its empire, the British were determined to have some control over it. They achieved that aim in 1875 by purchasing the Khedive Ismail's shares in the canal, and Britain eventually became the largest single shareholder. France did not oppose the sale, mainly because of its tense relations with Germany and its desire to maintain good relations with Britain.

The sale of the Khedive's shares initiated a new era of Anglo-French cooperation in Egyptian affairs. Each realized that since both had deep interests in Egypt, it was to their mutual benefit to cooperate, since neither would allow the other to dominate.

During the financial crisis in 1876, France and Britain established the Caisse to manage the Egyptian debt. On November 18, 1876, they established an Anglo-French condominium to deal with Egyptian financial affairs. Furthermore, both countries insisted that the Nubar Pasha ministry, formed on August 15, 1878, should have a minister from each of their countries. Sir Rivers Wilson, a British official, was appointed as minister of finance, and André de Blignières, a Frenchman, was appointed minister of public works.

Cooperation between France and Britain continued for several years. When the Egyptian nationalist movement arose, primarily directed against foreign control and influence, both countries saw a serious threat to their interests. On January 8, 1882, they issued a joint note intended to cow the nationalists. On May 2, 1882, a French squadron accompanied the British force to Alexandria in a demonstration of power against the nationalists and as a show of support for the khedive.

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 ended French cooperation. Because the French were suspicious of British intentions, they refused to join a military action, hoping that their refusal would dissuade Britain from occupying the country.

On November 9, 1883, Britain abolished the Anglo-French condominium. The move was considered an indication that the British meant to stay in Egypt and rule alone. The French, of course, were upset, and they regretted their cooperation in establishing the condominium. In his memoirs, Freycinet wrote:

From the French standpoint the condominium of England and France was a mistake, and . . . . complete freedom of action would have served French interests more effectively.<sup>1</sup>

France firmly opposed the occupation and put great pressure upon the sultan to insist on a British evacuation. The French attitude created serious difficulty for the British. France constantly told Britain that it was ready to maintain good relations if the British would fix a date for their evacuation.

During Wolff's mission (1885-1887) to Constantinople, France was the main European power which worked to thwart any Anglo-Ottoman agreement unless it specifically stated a date for British troop withdrawal. France believed an Anglo-Ottoman agreement would affect the balance of power in the Mediterranean and would constitute a serious threat to French interests in the area.

After the failure of Wolff's mission in 1887 and the British decision to stay in Egypt, the French tried to challenge the British in an attempt to end their occupation. Salisbury thought the French might even wage war:

[The French] already, I am told, look upon war with England as the cheapest of the alternatives open to them. They are so unreasonable, and have

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<sup>1</sup>Langer, op. cit., p. 257.

so much incurable hatred of England, that I should dread any very glaring exhibition of our sovereignty in Egypt at this moment.<sup>1</sup>

But instead of war, France concentrated on showing its naval strength in the Mediterranean. This challenge to British sea power forced Britain to reassess its naval forces, which were found wanting. Salisbury's government determined to strengthen the navy as a symbol of British power and prestige. The government succeeded in passing the Naval Defence Act in 1889, which sought to make the British fleet equal to the combined force of the two next strongest fleets in Europe. The naval race between Britain and France reached tremendous proportions. France adopted the Gervais program, which, in cooperation with Russia, was intended to establish French naval superiority over the British by 1893.

In response to this situation, Salisbury believed it was necessary to continue the policy that Britain had followed since Palmerston's time, namely, to assure the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and prevent Russia from reaching Constantinople. Through maintaining good relations with the sultan, the British could secure their interests in Egypt

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 17, 1888, no. 98, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

and prevent other European powers from obtaining concessions from the Ottoman empire. Britain's best course now lay in regarding Egypt as the keystone to its Mediterranean defense plan, as well as its Indian empire.

Salisbury's Mediterranean policy and his approach to the Triple Alliance bore its first fruits in June 1889, when Spuller, the French foreign Minister, approached him with a proposal for a withdrawal from Egypt. The French were willing to accept the British right of re-entry, if the situation required it, a right they had denied in 1887. The French ambassador expressly told Salisbury: "We should not raise any insuperable objection to the re-entry of British troops."<sup>1</sup>

To Salisbury this offer did not seem consistent with the current international situation, especially in light of the recent Franco-Russian understanding. A French guarantee of British re-entry would not secure British interests and supremacy in Egypt and the Suez Canal. Hence, Salisbury rejected the French proposal. He feared the Ottoman Empire would collapse if Britain left Egypt, which would jeopardize British interests in Egypt, the Mediterranean, and India.

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, op. cit., p. 282.

To justify his rejection of their offer, he told the French that he could not fix a definite time for British withdrawal because of Egyptian internal affairs. If the British left now, the khedive and the pro-British administration would fall. On July 1, 1889, Salisbury told the French: "I cannot see that there is anything more to be done for the present."<sup>1</sup> It was clear that he did not want to risk British interests by any further talk about the evacuation of Egypt.

Even though Salisbury had succeeded in reaching agreement with Germany in April 1890, French influence in Constantinople and Egypt was so enormous that without French favor the Egyptian question would remain unresolved. France supported the sultan in his demands for British evacuation in April and June 1890. Salisbury sought some compromise with the French to calm the situation. Salisbury and Ribot, the French foreign minister, opened negotiations in 1890 over the Zanzibar issue, bearing in mind the Egyptian situation. The French also wanted British recognition of their rights in Tunis. Salisbury was willing to conciliate France if he had a guarantee that the Franco-Russian pressure over Egypt would be abandoned.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Salisbury was prepared to give France some compensation in Africa, but not in Egypt. The French made their demands clear on July 1, 1890:

They wanted recognition of their special position in Tunisia, of a protectorate over Madagascar and a delimitation of their sphere along the Niger and in West Africa generally.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury was inclined to agree to these demands if the French officially would recognize the British position in Egypt, but this they could not do for fear of French public opinion. Since France could not agree to the British conditions, it sought another compromise, involving West Africa alone. The issues of Egypt and Tunisia were left unresolved. On August 5, 1890, both governments signed an agreement which gave France Madagascar and huge parts of central and western Sudan; in return, a British protectorate over Zanzibar and Pemba was granted. The French gains seemed inconsequential to Salisbury, since most of the area was desert. In his speech in the House of Lords on August 11, 1890, he defended his approval:

I will not dwell upon the respective advantage of places which are utterly unknown not only to your Lordships, but to the rest of the white human race . . . . Anyone who looks at the map and merely measures the degrees will perhaps be of the

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, op. cit., p. 302.

opinion that France has laid claim to a very considerable stretch of country. But it is necessary to judge land not merely by its extent but also by its value. This land is what agriculturists would call "very light land"; that is to say it is the desert of Sahara.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, the agreement was viewed as a gain for Salisbury's African policy. It eased Anglo-French tension in Egypt and the Mediterranean area, and it paved the way for the Anglo-French Entente of 1904.

During 1891-1892, France continued to oppose the British presence in Egypt. The French tried to convince the sultan that if he would continue to reject British pressure to settle the Egyptian question, they were prepared to enter into a close alliance with the Ottoman Empire and would assist it in every way possible.

In summary, the most significant development in French policy in the 1890s was the Franco-Russian alliance. It was a serious threat to British interests in Egypt, the Mediterranean, India, and the Far East, and it upset the European balance of naval power.

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<sup>1</sup>Hansard, 3rd series, CCCXLVIII, cols. 458-9.

Italy

Although Italy was an official member of the Caisse de la Dette Publique from its creation in 1876, it did not play a decisive role in British policy in Egypt. But Italy, as did the other European powers, tried to gain what advantages it could from Britain in return for its support.

In February 1885, the British allowed the Italians to occupy Massowah, which was part of the Ottoman Empire and was ruled directly by the Egyptians, by ordering the Egyptian garrison to withdraw. Britain wished to demonstrate to Italy its goodwill, in return for which Italy might support the British in Egypt. On December 22, 1884, Lord Granville had said:

I have informed Count Nigra (the Italian Ambassador in London) that Her Majesty's government were desirous of showing their friendly feeling towards Italy in all ways . . . . I was able to inform him that Her Majesty's government had no objection to raise against the Italian occupation of Zulla, Beilul or Massowah.<sup>1</sup>

The Italians well aware of the British dilemma in Egypt, were not satisfied with Massowah. In 1887, they planned to extend their African empire to include the Red Sea

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<sup>1</sup>Granville to Baring, December 22, 1884, P.R.O. F.O. 78/3681.

coast and part of the Sudan. These new demands were unacceptable to Salisbury, who told Baring in a private letter dated May 6, 1887: "The demand for the Red Sea coast which the Italians have put forward is rather impudent."<sup>1</sup>

During Wolff's negotiations with the Ottomans in 1887, Salisbury, seeking to ease international tension over the Egyptian question, signed the Mediterranean Agreement with Italy and Austria-Hungary. He thought this agreement with Italy, a German ally, would result in German support of the British right of re-entry, should the British agree to evacuate. Salisbury expected the agreement to affect the balance of power in the Mediterranean, which would have a considerable impact on the French:

It [the Italian alliance] is valuable to us chiefly because it is essential to Germany, and the friendship of Germany is very important to us because she keeps Russia and France in order.<sup>2</sup>

But it was obvious to Salisbury that the Italian alliance would not bring much advantage to Britain, except as a means of pleasing Germany:

[It] is not very advantageous, and has several drawbacks, and one of them has the habit of quarreling

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, April 1, 1887, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Baring, private, August 31, 1890, no. A55/58.

with her neighbors, and asking us to back her. I do not therefore put friendship of Italy so high as some other objects of political desire . . . . it is not worth a very great price, even in African square miles.<sup>1</sup>

After the collapse of Wolff's mission in 1887, Britain decided to make Cairo the center of its Mediterranean strategy. The Italians threatened this policy when they advanced troops from the Red Sea Coast toward the eastern Sudan in 1889. Furthermore, in May 1889, the Italian Prime Minister, Crispi, reached an agreement with Ethiopia which gave the Italians great influence in the Blue Nile Basin. Also, the Italians laid claim to Kassala, which would give them firm control of the Nile. This was a serious threat to the British, for from Kassala the Italians could reach Khartoum by both the White and Blue Nile. More important, control of the Nile waters, so essential to the Egyptian economy, by another European could not be countenanced. As Baring told Salisbury:

A civilized European power established in the Nile Valley . . . . could so reduce the water supply as to ruin the country [Egypt] . . . . whatever power holds the upper Nile Valley must by the mere force of its geographical situation, dominate Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, Secret, December 15, 1889, F.O. 7814243.

Salisbury, although upset by these developments, was unwilling to use force to stop the Italians. He preferred diplomacy, for he needed Italian support of his Egyptian policy. He also hoped this approach would please the Germans and weaken French opposition.

After the British signed the agreement with France in August 1890, Salisbury turned to Italy to balance his policy in Egypt and the Mediterranean. He believed it would be easier to negotiate with Italy than with Germany and France; as he told Baring: "We are negotiating on these African matters with somewhat greater ease now than we have agreed with Germany and France."<sup>1</sup> Salisbury authorized Baring to meet Crispi in Naples in September 1890 to discuss Italy's position south of the Sudan and around the Red Sea.

Salisbury, who was in a strong position, wanted to show clearly that Britain would gain a sphere of influence in that area, at the expense of Italy if necessary. In his instructions to Baring, he wrote:

We should insist on the command of all affluents of the Nile, so far as Egypt formerly possessed them . . . . we have no such well defined and imperative interests to safeguard on the Red Sea slopes.

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<sup>1</sup>S. P. Salisbury to Baring, Private, August 31, 1890, No. A55158.

Salisbury added:

There is only one point that interests me in that direction . . . namely that you should not sanction the tribal theory of dominion . . . . We shall have to oppose it vigorously to the southwest of Abyssinia . . . . It is possible that you may not persuade the Italians to accept this principle; or to keep their hands off the affluents of the Nile. In that case, we must be content to let the negotiation be adjourned . . . . I do not think England will lose by delay.<sup>1</sup>

Crispi refused to accept the British conditions, especially withdrawal from Kassala, and negotiations broke off on October 10, 1890. This came as no surprise to Salisbury, who had predicted that Britain might have a difficult time with the Italian prime minister. As he told Baring on April 25, 1890:

I quite admit that there is one circumstance which is apt to embitter all discussion with the Italians, and that is that they are far less sincere than any other nation we have to deal with. They seem to look upon the tradition of Machiavelli as a sacred heritage to which they must not be untrue.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Salisbury was confident that an agreement would be reached. He was aware of Italian financial problems, which would prevent them from carrying out any vast military action in Africa:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Baring, private, April 25, 1890, no. A 55/54.

It must never be forgotten that their African enterprise, as it develops, must be very costly, that it can bring them no return, and that their finance is in that condition of extreme strain that any tendency to increase its burdens may at any moment produce grave political results.<sup>1</sup>

Events in Italy proved Salisbury correct. After Crispi fell in February 1891, his successor, Marquis Antonio di Rudini, surrendered most of the Italian claims in the Valley of the Nile by signing two agreements with Britain. In effect, Salisbury was given a free hand in the Nile Valley.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Russia

Before Salisbury fell from power in 1892, Russia was the only important state with which an agreement was not achieved. The two nations had been enemies since 1820; they had struggled over India, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt.

In 1885, when the Mahdist movement in the Sudan threatened the British presence in Egypt, Britain was unable to send troops to the area. One important reason was a Russian war scare arising from the Penjedd Incident. Unable to take military action against the Mahdists, the British decided to abandon the Sudan. They claimed that their decision had been reached on strategic grounds; as Gladstone said: "I am not prepared to go on [in the Sudan] upon any terms, Russia, or no Russia."<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury believed Russia was the only power which might threaten British interests in the Ottoman Empire and Asia. He determined to use any means, even military force, to stop it. In September 1886, he wrote to Lord Randolph Churchill: "If Russia attacked Constantinople, and all the other powers refused to intervene, I am rather disposed to

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, op. cit., p. 155.

the idea that we should have to act in the Dardanelles."<sup>1</sup>  
 In Salisbury's view, the protection of Constantinople was essential to securing British interests. Malet told the Germans that Salisbury believed "if the Russians hold Constantinople, we shall be quite unable to keep Egypt and . . . India also."<sup>2</sup>

A major impetus behind the Mediterranean Agreement with Italy and Austria-Hungary in 1887 was the British fear of Russia. Salisbury believed close ties with the central powers would dissuade the Russians from taking any military action. As he wrote to Bismarck on November 30, 1887:  
 "[The Triple Agreement was] an effective barrier against any possible aggression of Russia."<sup>3</sup>

Russia was the only major European power to support French attempts to thwart Wolff's mission to Constantinople in 1887. The Russians warned the sultan that, should he ratify an Anglo-Ottoman agreement, they would advance troops into Asia Minor and toward Baghdad.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Churchill, September 1886, quoted in R. Rhodes James, Lord Randolph Churchill (London: 1959), p. 555.

<sup>2</sup>Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 267

<sup>4</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, Telegraphic, July 9, 1887, no. 45.

Salisbury saw in the Franco-Russian agreement of 1890 a serious threat to British imperial interests in Egypt, the Mediterranean, and the Far East. The agreement was a great blow to the European balance of power, especially as far as Britain was concerned. In response, the British Navy prepared a study of British strength. The Admiralty believed Constantinople and Egypt could be protected against a Russian threat only if France stayed neutral. After reading the report, Salisbury drew this conclusion:

If the opinions of the directors of naval and military intelligence held good, the protection of Constantinople from Russian conquest must cease to be regarded as a aim of British policy, for we can not defend it, and our policy is a policy of false pretences.<sup>1</sup>

As the French and the British had committed themselves to a vast scheme of shipbuilding to strengthen their navies, the Russians planned to follow suit. It was estimated that, by 1893, the Franco-Russian sea forces would be larger than the British.<sup>2</sup> Such a change in the naval balance showed the British that their Naval Defence Act of 1889 was incapable of maintaining the security of British interests in Egypt and the Mediterranean.

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, op. cit., p. 313.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Salisbury believed that Russian opposition to the British occupation of Egypt was designed to gain concessions in India, Afghanistan, Persia, China, and the Balkans. But since Russia could not seriously challenge Britain in Egypt or India without help from another European power, Salisbury was in no great hurry to reach agreement.

Before his fall in 1892, Salisbury's diplomatic achievements in Europe reflected his determination to keep Britain in firm control of Egypt and to strengthen British interests in the Mediterranean:

In the Anglo-German agreement he edged his most immediate rival out of the Nile Valley. In the Anglo-French agreement he set the seal on the strategy of buying off French threats to Egypt and the Mediterranean by agreeing to a huge French empire in the western Sudan. In his negotiations with the Italians he showed once more that Britain was determined to keep all comers out of the eastern Sudan and the Nile Valley.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury's success was due to the tension between France and Germany and to Bismarck's system of alliances.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

During the period 1885-1892, Salisbury devoted most of his time and energy to easing international tension surrounding the Egyptian issue. He knew that his failure would be a severe blow to British imperial interests and would adversely affect his political career. With skill and determination, he maneuvered deftly to strengthen Britain's position and prevent open conflict.

Chapter IV  
THE BRITISH OCCUPATION AND EGYPTIAN  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS: 1885-1892

British Influence on the Egyptian  
Government

The British maintained their veiled protectorate over Egypt through the power of the British army of occupation, the British consul general, and British official advisers and employees in the Egyptian government. The policy was to appoint Englishmen as advisers to important Egyptian ministries: in the Ministry of War was Sir Evelyn Wood; in the Ministry of Interior was Clifford Lloyd; in the Ministry of Finance was Edgar Vincent; in the Ministry of Public Works was Colin Scott-Moncrieff; and in the Ministry of Justice was Benson Maxwell. These advisers played a decisive role in shaping Egyptian internal policies. In many cases, their influence was stronger than that of native ministers. Afaf al-Sayyid, in Egypt and Cromer, mentions one example:

They [the British] took over the departments, and inevitably the minister became a figurehead whose

decision could be overruled by the Adviser. An anecdote ascribed to Ibrahim Pasha Fuad, a cabinet minister, was a telling example of the power the adviser wielded. Fuad's secretary had brought in a sheaf of documents with a request that the minister sign them. The minister asked if the adviser had seen them, and, when the secretary answered in the affirmative, he waved a hand towards the ministerial rubber stamp on his desk, and said: "There is your minister."<sup>1</sup>

Englishmen also held high offices in Egypt: Mr. Caillard was director of the customs department; Mr. Gibson, director of the tourism bureau; Mr. Blunfield, director of Alexandria's port; and Mr. Fitzgerald, general director of the account department in the ministry of finance. Not only British civilians but also British soldiers were placed in key positions. The commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Army was an Englishman, Sir Evelyn Wood, and a majority of the superior officers in the army were Englishmen.

The Egyptian government was obliged to follow the suggestions of British officials. Lord Granville clarified the British policy in these terms:

It should be made clear to the Egyptian ministers and governors of provinces that the responsibility which for the time rests on England obliges Her Majesty's Government to insist on the adoption of the policy

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 80.

which they recommend, and that it will be necessary that those ministers and governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their offices.<sup>1</sup>

This policy, later known as the "Granville Doctrine," was adopted and closely followed by successive British governments. Baring was to adhere firmly to this approach, which was to create many problems in Anglo-Egyptian relations for years to come.

The first major crisis between the two governments centered on the Ministry of Interior. The British made Clifford Lloyd Under-Secretary of the Interior in 1884 in Prime Minister Nubar Pasha's cabinet. Lloyd insisted that police affairs be left to the British, and relations with Nubar deteriorated as their differences over this issue and over the role of provincial governors increased. By the end of 1887, the British held police authority in the main cities. As Baring told Salisbury: "Up to the present time the [police] central department has been in the hands of Englishmen."<sup>2</sup> The British insisted that each police division must be directed by an English officer, with the title of deputy Inspector general, who was to report directly to the British

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>S. P., Baring to Salisbury, private, January 9, 1888, no. A 53/14.

inspector general of police. The Egyptian government tolerated this domination in such major cities as Cairo and Alexandria, but it could not agree to Lloyd's demand that the provincial police be attached to the general police department. Lloyd ordered the local police commanders to report directly to the inspector general in Cairo, which meant sidestepping the authority of the provincial governors. The Egyptian government believed that since the governor was responsible to the minister of interior for keeping order in his area, the police commander must report to and take orders from him. Nubar Pasha argued that bypassing the governor would weaken his authority and prestige among his people and would lead the populace to believe that the police commander was more powerful than the governor. In a message to Salisbury, Baring agreed with the Egyptians:

It is alleged, and probably with some truth--they go further and more or less usurp the function of the Moudirs [Governors] . . . . The System creates a division of responsibility, and that the authority of the Moudirs is weakened by the control of the English officers.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Nubar Pasha opposed the appointment of British advisers in the Ministry of Interior, which he believed should be left to the Egyptians. To show his disapproval, Nubar

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

offered his resignation, but the British, knowing that Nubar favored them, fired Lloyd instead and kept Nubar in his post.

Emboldened by his success, Nubar thought that he could gain other concessions, and in 1887 he tried to ease Baring out. Salisbury was startled when the Egyptian arrived in London to discuss the issue, and Nubar returned home without achieving his major aim. Nevertheless, he managed to convince the khedive that the British would recall Baring and replace him with Sir Henry Wolff. According to G.H. Portal:

It is an open secret in "official circles" here that Nubar while in England made a regular campaign against Baring--in his letters to his friends here Nubar did not attempt to conceal this, and even caused an impression to gain ground that he had succeeded and that Baring would in likelihood be replaced by Sir H. Wolff.<sup>1</sup>

To persuade Salisbury's government to take action against Baring, Nubar decided to send Tigrane Pasha, the Egyptian Under-secretary of Foreign Affairs and Nubar's son-in-law, to London in the summer of 1887. Tigrane complained about Baring's policy, mainly concerning the police. The mission upset Baring, who told Salisbury that these efforts undermined his authority in internal affairs. Baring asked

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S.P., G.H. Portal to Eric Barrington, private, July 31, 1887, no. A52/61.

for support to counter the effect: "Tigrane's mission has done harm for the moment, but I am sanguine that it eventually will clear the air and do a great deal of good if the khedive and Nubar get frightened they will run straight."<sup>1</sup>

Baring, who considered himself solely responsible for Egyptian internal matters, was angered by Nubar's challenge to his authority. He thought that Nubar had received some encouragement while in London: "Nubar is a changed man since his visit to London and very difficult to manage."<sup>2</sup> Salisbury, who had full confidence in Baring and never considered removing him, assured Baring that Nubar had received no encouragement from anyone connected with the Foreign Office.<sup>3</sup> Salisbury thought the sultan might be supporting Nubar: "I suspect however that it is from Constantinople that he gets any external stimulus to revolt that he may have received."<sup>4</sup> In an attempt to calm Nubar, Salisbury told him that he would study the internal Egyptian situation and

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, February 25, 1888, no. A53/28.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, January 30, 1888, no. A53/14.

<sup>3</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 17, 1888, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

would ask the British agent at Cairo to cooperate with the Egyptian government.

Baring was unhappy that Salisbury had not backed him completely. He strongly expressed his worries in a private letter: "Would you mind telling me privately how far I can count upon your support. I hope you will not consider me in the matter. I should be perfectly ready to go if you thought a change desirable in the public interest."<sup>1</sup> The friction between Baring and the Egyptian officials annoyed the Queen, who urged Salisbury to take measures to calm the situation. In response, Salisbury told the Queen that he had "urged Baring to avoid conflict. He must be supported and the khedive made to feel that any disloyal conduct may cost him his throne."<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury asked Baring to avoid a confrontation because of the challenge posed by the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean. He feared the creation of a causus belli over Egypt:

Try and manage to postpone any breach with him [Nubar] to a more convenient season. We are at this moment on the sharp ridge that separates the slopes towards

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, February 15, 1888, no. A53/22.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Queen Victoria, cypher, February 17, 1888, no. A46/38.

war and peace. It is a matter of great uncertainty down which we shall slide; but a very slight push either way may decide the issue, and the slide will be a tremendous one if we go toward war. It is a matter, therefore, of no common importance to avoid any unnecessary cause of conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury made it clear that his attitude toward the conflict between Baring and Nubar was based on an evaluation of the international situation. He told Baring that he did "not wish our administration in Egypt to be the cause to which the long European war is to be ascribed by the future historians."<sup>2</sup> Salisbury wanted Baring to string Nubar along until the British could be rid of him: "When you advance on a dog he runs away, when you walk away he does not wait till you are far off, but begins barking at you that very moment you begin to retreat--even so with Nubar."<sup>3</sup>

Salisbury's decision to keep Nubar was based on political considerations, not disapproval of Baring's policy. He assured Baring that when the right moment arrived he would back him, even if he believed that Baring was mistaken in his management of Egyptian affairs: "Of course, whenever

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 17, 1888, no. 98, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

the row comes, we shall support you heartily and thoroughly. I believe you are right in this controversy. But if I thought you wrong, I should still think it impossible to retreat before Nubar in the face of the whole East."<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 1887, Valentine Baker, head of the police, died. Baring insisted on replacing him with an Englishman, but Nubar wanted the post occupied by an Egyptian. Under pressure from Baring, Nubar accepted the nomination of Herbert Chermside, hoping he would cooperate with native officers. But the conceited Chermside wanted full authority, even over the minister of the interior. Baring reported Chermside's demands to Salisbury: "If I am to be completely subordinate to the native minister, the place is not good for me. But if you want a strong man to guide and dominate you, I am just the right man."<sup>2</sup> Nubar, of course, refused to appoint him.

Aware of the difficult British position after the collapse of Wolff's mission to Constantinople in 1887, Nubar thought pressing the police issue might induce Salisbury to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, February 19, 1888, no. A53/26.

remove Baring. The latter warned Salisbury about yielding to Nubar: "European supervision is necessary or things will go from bad to worse, and then we should be obliged to interfere once more and in a more objectionable manner."<sup>1</sup> Baring urged Salisbury to tell Nubar that he must consult him about any internal issue and must accept his views and advise:

I am convinced that if Nubar is told in very plain but not menacing language, that he must follow my advice on this and other local matters, and if the same language is used to Tigrane we shall pull through without any ministerial change or other serious upset."<sup>2</sup>

Nubar seriously overestimated his strength by challenging Baring, who was the real power in Egypt. When Baring felt he could no longer be tolerated, he instructed the khedive to fire Nubar Pasha. Otherwise, Baring warned, Britain would allow the former Khedive Ismail to return to Egypt:

Nubar could remain in power only so long as Baring and/or the Khedive gave him their support. When Baring withdrew this, the Khedive--realizing that Nubar had almost brought him to the edge of a

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<sup>1</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, February 25, 1888, P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, February 26, 1888, no. A53/29.

crisis--also withdrew his support. It is significant that he did so soon after the conversation between him and Baring had taken place. During the conversation, Baring had suggested that Nubar should go, and hinted that Ismail was ready to return to Egypt at any time.<sup>1</sup>

On June 9, 1888, Riaz Pasha replaced Nubar as prime minister, an appointment which revealed the strength of British influence in Egypt. In a private letter to Salisbury, Baring described the new prime minister as "the most honest man . . . a stern disciplinarian, he does not intrigue. Though not liked he is feared and respected."<sup>2</sup>

But he added in the same letter that Riaz Pasha was

stupid, obstinate and violent . . . his manners are barbarous . . . he had not the most elementary ideas of government by law.<sup>3</sup>

The British felt free to interfere in the formation of Riaz's cabinet. They wanted him to choose ministers who would be willing to cooperate with the British and would not create any problems. Baring wrote to Salisbury on the day that Riaz announced his appointments, describing his role in forming the new cabinet:

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, April 18, 1889, no. A53/90.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

I can scarcely tell the Khedive that he is not to name "a capable man" to be public minister. It would not sound well in an official dispatch to be laid before Parliament. Yeky? Zaki Pasha has been named--a respectable quite old Turk--and Moncrieff and his officers are now happy. Unfortunately he [Riaz] put Omar Pasha Loutfi into the War Office. So Grenfell and some of his officers wished to resign. It would, however, have been impossible to work the army with Omar Pasha Loutfi. I let the Khedive and Riaz know this through a third person. They behaved very well, although since they had let the nomination become public property, it was rather a bitter pill to swallow. Mustapha Fehmey will take the War Office and Zulfikar Pasha, who is quite harmless, Foreign Affairs. On the whole the crisis has, I think, gone off satisfactorily. I have interfered very little. Indeed except about the war office, there has been no occasion for my interference.<sup>1</sup>

British influence in and penetration of Egyptian affairs continued. In November 1889, Alfred Milner was appointed general director of governmental accounts, and in 1890 he became under-secretary of the Ministry of Finance. Sir Eldon Gorst was appointed in November 1890 to be general inspector of budgetary affairs.<sup>2</sup>

In 1890 a new crisis occurred, centered on the ministry of justice. The British government, at the request of

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<sup>1</sup>S.P. Baring to Salisbury, private, June 11, 1888, no. A53/39.

<sup>2</sup>Abd-Al-Rahman, Al-Rafii, Miser Wal Sudan (Egypt and Sudan) (Cairo: 1948), p. 201.

Baring, brought judge John Scott from India to study and reform the ministry. He recommended many changes in the judicial system, and he insisted on replacing Egyptian with European inspectors and giving them power over judges. The Minister of Justice, Fakhri Pasha, objected to Scott's reforms. Nonetheless, the British imposed the program by pressing the khedive to appoint Scott as judicial adviser to the Ministry of Justice. The khedive did so on February 15, 1891, and Scott became the first British adviser to be attached to this ministry since the occupation began in 1882. Riaz was opposed, but he could not resist British pressure.<sup>1</sup>

Since he could not prevent Scott's appointment, Riaz decided to play a game with Baring by naming Herbert Kitchener as head of the police. Riaz hoped the appointment might create a conflict between Kitchener and Scott which would enable him to get rid of both. Riaz repeated Nubar's mistake by overestimating his power in challenging the British. Scott and Kitchener worked well together and reported directly to the khedive.

Relations between Riaz and Baring deteriorated rapidly. Riaz regretted his approval of Scott's appointment, and he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 202

tried to restore his authority, maintain himself in power, and provide good government for Egypt. Baring, who wanted absolute control, saw in Riaz Pasha's attitude a threat to the British administration. Therefore, in the summer of 1890, he asked Salisbury to allow him to remove Riaz. Salisbury feared that such an action, just before the French election, would create problems for the British:

Your question about Riaz is a hard nut to crack. My fear is lest it should bring our domination in Egypt so forcibly before the minds of the ordinary French elector that he will force his government to be troublesome to us on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Riaz Pasha's position was weakened by lack of support from the khedive. Tawfik did not back his prime minister for fear of British reprisals, and he had no objections to Riaz's resignation. Baring told Salisbury:

The Khedive would want to govern more actively himself with the help of a retrograde and savage old Turk as prime minister. I like bringing the Khedive forward, but the combination would not work. It is not desirable that the Khedive should be himself too much pledged to one side in any of the numerous disputes which arise here.<sup>2</sup>

Under British pressure, Riaz's cabinet resigned in May 1891.

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, January 23, 1891, no. 112, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, April 18, 1889, no. A53/96.

Mustafa Fahmi Pasha replaced Riaz. Fahmi was pro-British and was willing to cooperate. Baring supported his nomination:

The only other man is Mustafa Fahmi Pasha, and we should probably have to insist on him. He is excellent but very weak. His nomination would mean increased English interference in reality and the appearance of still greater interference.<sup>1</sup>

But because of his weakness and the British belief that they could not depend on him, Fahmi almost lost his post only two months after his appointment. Salisbury was worried about such action and warned Baring:

Your position as "Maire du Palais" will be too plainly revealed if Riaz follows Nubar at the distance of two years, and Fahmi follows Riaz at the distance of two months.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, Salisbury recommended continuing Fahmi in office for the time being.

A turning point in Anglo-Egyptian relations occurred when Khedive Tawfik died suddenly on January 7, 1892. The new khedive, Abbas Hilmi, was born in 1874. He had left for Europe while still very young, and he had been educated at

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, April 18, 1889, no. A53/96.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, January 23, 1891, no. 112, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

the Theresianum in Vienna. He was eighteen years old when he was named khedive. He arrived in Egypt full of stories of the nationalist movement in Hungary, Bohemia, and Italy. He wanted to rule Egypt, but he decided to wait and judge the situation before taking any action. Baring described him to Salisbury.

He resembles a very gentlemanlike and healthily-minded boy fresh from Eton or Harrow . . . . not at all devoid of intelligence, but a good bit bored with el-Azher . . . . I really wish he was not quite so civilized.<sup>1</sup>

Khedive Abbas, a young and ambitious ruler, thought he could challenge British authority in Egypt and become the true governor of his country. He believed that because Khedive Tawfik had yielded, Baring had maintained his influence over Egyptian internal affairs. Abbas was idealistic and more given to theories than reality. He was not familiar with British imperial policies, and he thought that as a khedive of Egypt he should maintain and exercise full authority. He believed Baring had no legal right to intervene in Egyptian internal affairs. Furthermore, he thought that since the British advisers were officially employed by his government, he had the right to dismiss them. He imagined that, in theory,

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<sup>1</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, April 15, 1892, no. 177.  
P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

he could ask the British to withdraw their troops if the European powers were willing to back him.

The young khedive was encouraged by several incidents. The most important was Gladstone's speech at Newcastle on October 3, 1891. Gladstone said that the occupation of Egypt was a burden to Britain, and he hoped Salisbury would end it before he left power. The speech had a great effect on the British administration in Egypt and on Salisbury's government. The Queen, who was upset by the speech, urged Salisbury to counter by announcing the official British policy toward Egypt. She wrote Salisbury: "It is very important that the false rumours produced by the shameful speech of Mr. Gladstone should be firmly contradicted."<sup>1</sup> Baring also asked Salisbury to declare that British policy in Egypt would continue unchanged: "If you could take some public occasion to say the policy of the British government about Egypt was unchanged, it would have an excellent effect here. All the talk about evacuation is doing a good deal of harm."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, in a speech at the Guildhall,

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Queen Victoria to Salisbury, deciphered telegraph, November 1, 1891, no. A45/107.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, decypher and private, October 29, 1891, no. A54/75.

Salisbury declared that even if Gladstone were to come to power, Salisbury believed that England would not relinquish its occupation of Egypt. In a private letter to Baring in December, Salisbury told him that the effect of Gladstone's speech had diminished:

The trouble raised by the unfortunate utterances of Gladstone and Morley about our occupation, has nearly subsided, both at Paris and at Constantinople: and I am in hope we shall not hear much more of it. But the situation is not as good as it was before. Everybody is more jealous, and less certain of the future. My Guildhall speech was a necessity under the circumstances: but it has acted as an irritant and I heartily wish the G.O.M. had spared me the necessity of making it.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Khedive Abbas believed that if Gladstone were in office, he would evacuate Egypt. Abbas also was aware that several famous British political figures, such as Sir Charles Dilke, John Morley, and Randolph Churchill, favored evacuation. Churchill visited Egypt from December 1890 to January 1891. Baring reported to Salisbury that Churchill "came [, however,] with the strong opinion that we should clear out Egypt and thus get on good terms with the French."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Baring, private, December 4, 1891, no. A55/71.

<sup>2</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, January 19, 1891, no. A54/50.

Abbas was also encouraged by articles in the British press which stated that he had the legal authority to conduct Egyptian affairs without any interference from British agents at Cairo. One appeared in the Spectator on January 16, 1892. Abbas thought such articles would affect British public opinion and policy. Baring was annoyed by the articles and urged Salisbury to use his unofficial influence with the British press:

If you have any influence with friendly outsiders who speak or write about Egypt, I hope you use it to make them crack up the Khedive and keep me in the background. To compare small men and things to great, I do not want to pose as Bismarck to an Egyptian William II.<sup>1</sup>

Khedive Abbas, as were most Egyptians, was further encouraged by French attitudes toward British rule in Egypt. Particularly important were M. Deloncle, Eugene Etienne, and various anti-British members of the Chamber of Deputies. Among the French journalists, Mme. Juliette Adam and Pierre Loti devoted most of their articles to urging the French government and other European states to take action against the British occupation. Abbas believed that the French would back him in any attempt to lessen British control over his authority..

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Baring to Salisbury, private, January 16, 1892, no. A54/87.

Finally, Abbas was emotionally impressed by his people's welcome. He interpreted their fervor as the hope that he would try to achieve Egyptian independence. Abbas felt that if he could unite the country behind him, he could loosen Britain's hold on Egyptian internal affairs.

Abbas's first action was to appoint his Austrian tutor, Louis Rouiller, to the post of European secretary in his cabinet. He hoped through Rouiller to establish a connection with the French.

As Abbas attempted to free himself from Baring's absolute authority, their relations began to deteriorate. Baring told Salisbury that Abbas

has been foolish about a number of small things, but he is so young and inexperienced that he ought not be judged too harshly. I lectured him in plain but friendly terms, and I do not anticipate that for the time being I should have much difficulty with him.<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1892, Abbas announced his desire to visit Constantinople. Salisbury was upset and thought that the khedive might ask the sultan for Ottoman troops to oust the British. Salisbury's first reaction was stated in a private letter to Baring:

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<sup>1</sup>Zetland, op. cit., p. 196.

It looks as if the poor young Khedive would have to go to Constantinople. Would it be possible to send him in the "Nile"? If the "Nile" once got into the Bosphorous the Sultan's only thought would be to get her out again.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury did not agree with Baring that the khedive's visit would not harm the British. His objection was stated clearly in a private letter to Baring:

I gather from a recent letter that you are seriously thinking of letting your young ruler go to Constantinople. Has it ever occurred to you that when once the Sultan has got him into his palace the young man will be at the mercy of any moral engines of torture the Sultan may care to apply, and that merely to get away he may be persuaded into signing any paper which is put before him . . . or a statement that so long as the English are in Egypt he is not a free agent?<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury decided to prevent the visit unless measures could be taken beforehand to assure there would be no anti-British results. He told Baring that if the khedive insisted on visiting Constantinople, the British should think about two possible cautionary measures:

I doubt whether even a fleet at Besika Bay would impress him [the Sultan], or perhaps a council of Regency appointed to come into existence three weeks after the Khedive's departure, if he did not return

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<sup>1</sup>The "Nile" was a Britain warship. Salisbury to Baring, private, February 5, 1892, no. 117, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, March 4, 1892, no. 118. P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

and numbering you or Grenfell among its members, might have a sufficiently deterring effect upon the Sultan.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of Salisbury's objection, Abbas delayed his plans, but Salisbury fell from office on August 12, 1892. The khedive went to Constantinople in July 1893. His visit proved that Salisbury was incorrect in his expectation. Primarily because he was busy dealing with difficulties in the Balkans, Sultan Abdul Hamid II did not, in fact, give Abbas any encouragement which might upset the British. He also thought that the new British government under the leadership of Gladstone might try to find a solution to the Egyptian question.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

The Impact of the British Occupation  
on Egyptian Life

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 had a profound effect on Egyptian life. Britain's defeat of the nationalist revolution, which had hoped to free the country from foreign control, badly wounded Egyptian pride. To the majority of Egyptians,<sup>1</sup> who were Muslims, the control of their country by non-Muslims meant the loss of dignity and independence and a serious threat to their faith.

The British claimed that they had to come to restore the authority of the khedive and to maintain stability and order. When this was accomplished, they would leave. They also indicated that they would introduce many beneficial reforms. During the early days of the occupation, most Egyptians believed the British would introduce these reforms and depart. Initially, the British did effect changes in administration, justice, agriculture, and taxation. After a decade, however, the Egyptians realized that the occupiers had done nothing about the capitulations, which still functioned, and that foreign domination of Egyptian financial

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<sup>1</sup>The population included a sizeable Christian community and a smaller Jewish community. Their attitudes toward the British occupation remain to be studied.

affairs was still effectively maintained through the Caisse. The British had also neglected to make badly needed welfare and social reforms.

### The Egyptian Governmental System

British changes in the governmental system were the most effective. Before 1882, Egypt was semi-independent and had its own constitution. Under the British, it became a subordinate state. The British dismissed the Egyptian army and created a small force with British officers. The occupiers imposed their authority over the government by insisting that Egyptian officials heed the British advisers attached to every important branch of administration. The Egyptian constitutional system, established in the period between 1879 and 1882 as a result of Arabi's revolution, was abolished. Moreover, the British insisted on using the same social class, the pashas, to rule. This meant continuing in office the khedive and Ottoman Circassian pashas, whom the native Egyptians hated as aliens. The former cooperated with the British in order to protect their privileges. They recalled that the Egyptian nationalists had tried to oust them, and they might have succeeded had the British not

intervened. Consequently, this class always sided with the British, carried out their policies, collected the European debts willingly, and abandoned the Sudan.

When Sir Evelyn Baring, who had colonial experience in India, was chosen consul general, the Egyptians viewed this as an indication that the British intended to govern Egypt directly for an indefinite period. Baring, the iron governor, ruled from 1883 to 1907. During 1885-1892, Baring had the full support of Salisbury, which enabled him to exercise absolute power over the Egyptian government. Some what disingenously he remarked: "We do not govern Egypt, we only govern the governor of Egypt."<sup>1</sup>

Baring, well aware that Britain was an alien occupier, thought the only way to strengthen British rule was to maintain a strong hold on the Egyptian administration. Furthermore, as a true imperialist, Baring did not believe the Egyptians were capable of running their own affairs. He sought to restructure the Egyptian political community along the lines of European values and Christian ethics. These attitudes created many problems for the British in Egypt.

In the early days of the occupation, Britain had adopted the policy of British heads and Egyptian hands, which

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 68.

meant importing highly skilled and experienced men to serve in important positions. When the Wolff mission collapsed in 1887 and the British decided to stay in Egypt, this policy was altered. Untrained and unskilled Englishmen were now sent, one purpose being to provide career opportunities for those unable to find jobs at home. The British claimed they could not find capable Egyptians. It is far more probable that they preferred to depend on their own people, rather than train Egyptians who might be unwilling to cooperate with the occupiers. The British were more dependent on people than on institutions in ruling Egypt.

By 1890, the number of British subjects in Egypt was 336, earning a total annual salary of £150,317.<sup>1</sup> Most of these Englishmen knew nothing about their new jobs or local customs. This was especially true of those working in such sensitive areas as the Ministry of Interior, the police department, and the courts. Most of the British officials lacked the experience and skills needed for the posts they were recruited to fill:

The inspector for Agriculture of the Delta turned out to be the geography teacher. Mr. Swift had not gone home to England for the summer vacation, so he was delegated to inspect the countryside. As he

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<sup>1</sup>Baring to Salisbury, January 26, 1890. British state paper. Egypt no. 2.

knew less than anything about agricultural conditions in the Shargiyya province he accepted my word that all was well and happily returned to Cairo, so to report.<sup>1</sup>

Despite their inadequacies, the Egyptian government was obliged to use these British officials and pay them high salaries.

The Egyptians felt that Britain wanted to great their country like other British colonies, to which Englishmen were sent to obtain experience and achieve fame. A letter from Salisbury to Baring confirms this policy:

We are sending to you Arthur Hardinge, who I think you know. He is one of the cleverest men in the service. He wants experience and that is one of the considerations that have led me to send him to so valuable a school as Cairo.<sup>2</sup>

A large gap developed between British officials and the Egyptian people. The British behaved as masters of Egypt and did not care about establishing friendly relations with the population. Humphry Bowman, a British teacher in an Egyptian high school, described those relations:

As soon as their work was over, the English masters escaped on their bicycles to the sporting club at Gezira . . . they referred slightly to their pupils as the 'walads' [boys] and hardly less so

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 13, 1887, no. 114, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

their Egyptian colleagues as the 'effendis'. They even had separate common rooms.<sup>1</sup>

During the years 1885-1892, the British depended on the Ottoman-Circassian pashas and British subjects to run the administration. The exclusion of native Egyptians from high governmental posts upset the populace very much. In April 1887, Wilfred Scawen Blunt wrote to Salisbury explaining that the Egyptians were dissatisfied with the British policy which prohibited Egyptian Arabs from being appointed ministers. Salisbury sent Blunt's letter to Baring:

I have received--some time ago--a letter from Mr. Wilfred Blunt. I do not quite know what to do with it. Perhaps the best solution from my perplexity that can be suggested is to send it on to you--of course quite unofficial.<sup>2</sup>

In his reply, Baring admitted that not one Egyptian Arab had been appointed minister or head of a department:

Under present conditions, however, I should regard a proposal to make one of Blunt's friends ruler or prime minister of Egypt as little less absurd than the nomination of some savage Red Indian Chief to be Governor General of Canada.

He added that the native Egyptians were "corrupt and ignorant biggots."<sup>3</sup> Salisbury did not inquire into the issue any

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, April 22, 1887, no. 911, P.R.O., F.O. 633/7.

<sup>3</sup>S.P. Baring to Salisbury, private, May 8, 1887.

further, and Egyptian Arabs remained excluded from ministerial posts.

The impact of this policy upon the Egyptian political structure was clear. Most Egyptian notables and educated men avoided any attempt to revive the nationalist struggle. This caution was necessary if they wished to hold jobs in the administration, for the British insisted that no Egyptian with nationalist sympathies be allowed to occupy any official post.<sup>1</sup>

### Education

Education in Egypt before the British occupation was free to all.<sup>2</sup> All subjects were taught in Arabic, except at the law school, where French was the main language. In 1884, the British abolished free education, charged fees to all students, and replaced Arabic with English.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Rafii, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>There are no reliable figures for the period, but the few existing estimates indicate that, during Mohammed Ali's time, not more than 5 percent of the children between the ages six and twelve received any formal education. In the course of the century, this percentage rose to about 17.5 in 1875 and a little less than 25 in 1913-1914.

<sup>3</sup>Al-Raffi, op. cit., p. 216.

British also prohibited the teaching of Egyptian nationalist history and political discussion of any kind in the schools; the latter was considered a major crime and could lead to imprisonment.<sup>1</sup>

Under the British, the budget for education was severely reduced: in 1883 it was £99,549; in 1887, £68,452; and in 1892, £90,848.<sup>2</sup> As a result, many Egyptian schools closed, and by 1892 no higher education institutions remained open except the law, medical, engineering, and teacher training schools. The curricula were altered to serve British interests by graduating officials to work for the occupiers.<sup>3</sup>

Even though Egyptians continued to be sent abroad to study, the British made an important change. During Ismail's reign, 80 percent of these students went to France, and 96 percent of them studied technical subjects. During the British occupation, 75 percent were sent to Britain, and they took subjects related to the humanities and social sciences.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Zayid, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Rafii, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>3</sup>Zayid, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of Political Community (Cambridge, Mass.: 1961) pp. 55-6.

The British policy hindered educational progress and had a deleterious effect on Egypt's cultural life. The Egyptian dream, since Mohammed Ali's days, of making Egypt the cultural center of the Arab world was seriously impeded.

### Economy

The Egyptians were aware of British economic and financial reforms, but most believed that these were instituted mainly to repay European debts and finance the occupation army. Most British officials, both at Cairo and Constantinople, were aware of Egyptian feelings and their tax burden. Sir H. Drummond Wolff felt that he should inform Salisbury about the Egyptian financial situation. On June 14, 1887, he wrote:

I have the honour to call your Lordship's attention generally to the abnormal condition of the financial system of Egypt and the very great hardships it inflicts on the people of the country.<sup>1</sup>

In the same report, Wolff mentioned the main reason Egyptians believed that British financial reforms were made merely to justify and prolong the occupation. Egypt was obliged to cut its budget by half in order to pay the European debts:

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, June 14, 1887, no. 96.

By taking the above figure (9,628,961 E.Lire) as the expenditure of Egypt, it will be found that more than half of it goes out of the country. The Tribute of Egypt and the consolidated and unconsolidated debts amount this year to 5,043,976 Egyptian lire, the whole of which, though drawn from the labour and property of the Egyptian people is encased by foreigners and spent abroad.<sup>1</sup>

The Egyptians also were deeply upset by the British government's decision to collect the British share of dividends in the Suez Canal Company directly from the Egyptian budget, although in 1869 the former Khedive Ismail had sold these dividends in advance to the company.

[The Egyptians] are now paying the interest on those shares to Her Majesty's Government, instead of the dividends which the ex-Khedive had in 1869 alienated for 30,000,000 Fr., which sum was handed over to the Canal.<sup>2</sup>

The British concentrated most of their efforts in agriculture. They tried to convince the Egyptians that, owing to the fertile soil around the Nile, this was the backbone of their economy. The British promoted cotton cultivation by improving the irrigation system and by opening many canals. Other crops, such as sugar, rice, and corn, were neglected, which convinced the Egyptians that the British

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, June 17, 1887, no. 97.

were mainly interested in their country as a source of cotton for the British textile factories in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Furthermore, the British closed most of the Egyptian textile mills, one being Al-Mahala Al-Kubara, which was opened in Muhammed Ali's time.

The British opposed industrial development on the ground that Egypt was an agricultural country, and they closed many factories. It was obvious that the British began to use Egypt as an open market for their products. European goods, mainly British, began to flood the local market, and local industry could not compete. Egyptian handicrafts began to vanish, as Wolff told Salisbury:

It would be a blot on any permanent arrangement if some attempts were not made to alleviate the heavy burden entailed on the fellaheen by the debt which crushes their industry and often deprives them of their property and means of livelihood.<sup>1</sup>

There was a mass migration from the countryside to the main cities, which increased unemployment and created housing problems. Family income was severely reduced, and poverty spread among the people.

In financial matters, Britain treated Egypt as one of its colonies. British subjects were encouraged to invest

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, June 14, 1887, no. 96.

in Egypt. They established and directed interests in banking, real estate, agriculture, construction, transportation, and hotels:

The railways, the telegraphs and the port of Alexandria are equally owned by the bondholders, and thus, from a country consisting of 6,000,000 feddans, or about 6,000,000 acres of cultivable land, and with a population of about 6,800,000 including foreigners, an annual sum is extracted and exported of 5,043,976 Egyptian lire or 5,170,150L.<sup>1</sup>

In a report published by the Egyptian census bureau in 1913, it was stated that during 1883-1904 the Europeans established sixty companies.<sup>2</sup> The report did not cover individual European investments during the period. In staffing these companies, only Europeans were used, the effect being to prevent Egyptians from acquiring knowledge and experience.

Europeans, mainly the British, also invested in the mortgage and loan business. In 1881, total Egyptian individual debts were £12,000,000; in early 1891 the sum was £20,000,000. According to Wolff's official report to Salisbury dated July 14, 1887, more than 15 percent of arable land was owned by the European creditors:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Raffi, op. cit., p. 223.

The cultivable land of Egypt amounts to about 6,000,000 feddans. Of these, I believe nearly one-sixth, which were extorted from the people by very doubtful means, are the property of foreign creditors.<sup>1</sup>

By 1891, 1,300,000 acres and 9,100 real estate properties were mortgaged.<sup>2</sup> Since most Egyptians were poor and could not pay their debts, these accumulated. As a result, Egyptians felt that they merely worked as servants for the Europeans in order to meet these obligations.

### Social Life

The British did not initiate social reforms in Egypt except for the abolition of the Corvee. The British did not allow the Egyptian government to allocate part of its budget for social welfare. The Egyptians thus believed that since the British controlled the government, they were responsible for the mass misery.

The wealthy class associated itself with the occupation authority in an attempt to secure its position and privileges. This class separated itself from the mass of Egyptians and tried to imitate the European life-style,

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, June 14, 1887, no. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Raffi, op. cit., p. 225.

giving lavish parties, and traveling abroad. The wealthy turned their backs on the suffering of their fellow Egyptians and on the nationalist movement.

The Egyptian lower class, which included most of the population, suffered from disease and ignorance, unassisted by social welfare programs. Low wages and unemployment were seriously debilitating and helped alienate most Egyptians from their traditions and beliefs. Family and interpersonal relationships were weakened.

The British brought social disorders, too, in the form of usury, liquor stores in cities and villages, and night clubs in the main cities. These and other factors contributed to a rapid change in people's morals and behavior. The crime rate increased throughout the country. It seemed to ordinary Egyptians that the British occupation was a punishment by the Almighty:

It was customary for fallah mothers to frighten their children with the Injilzi "Englishman" as a variant to the time-honoured bogey, the afrit. But apart from such comment, the occupation, when thought about at all, was regarded as an affliction from the Almighty, similar to a flood, to punish the faithful for their iniquity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Sayyid, op. cit., p. 145.

During 1885-1892, the British authority in Egypt, which had the full support of Salisbury, deeply touched every aspect of Egyptian life. The people, frustrated by British policy, believed they had been deceived by promises to introduce genuine reforms. In 1887, Wolff, who was considered a specialist in Egyptian affairs, warned Salisbury about the consequences:

It is impossible to measure the political effect of the state of things on a population thus mortgaged to the foreign creditors of former bad masters. It must always be the cause of a discontent not the less deep from not being manifest, and it would always render the fellaheen anxious to join any popular leader who would promise them relief.<sup>1</sup>

Wolff's predictions proved accurate. The suffering of the people during this period undoubtedly contributed to the rising of the second nationalist movement in the early 1900s.

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, June 14, 1887, no. 96.

Chapter V  
SALISBURY AND THE SUDAN QUESTION  
1885-1892

The Egyptian-Sudanese Connection

From ancient times, Egypt has considered the Sudan, source of the headwaters of the Nile, its lifeline. It has regarded domination of the Sudan as vital, since the Nile is Egypt's main water supply. As early as 2800 B.C., the Egyptian's through military raids, maintained trading rights with the northern Sudan. In about 2000 B.C., the Egyptians occupied most of the Sudan and appointed their own governor at Kerma.<sup>1</sup>

This period of control ended with the Hyksos invasion of Egypt in about 1700 B.C. The Sudanese enjoyed self-rule until the Arabs conquered Egypt and extended their dominion to the northern Sudan (Nubia) in 651 A.D.

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<sup>1</sup>L.A. Fabunmi, The Sudan in Anglo-Egyptian Relations (London: 1964), p. 22.

In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans occupied Egypt and, nominally, the Sudan. In 1820, after Mohammed Ali had become viceroy of Egypt he sent troops into the area to rule in the name of the sultan. In 1840, the sultan recognized Mohammed Ali as governor-general of the Sudan.

Khedive Ismail, seeking to imitate the Europeans, claimed that Egypt should have its share in the partition of Africa. In 1869, Ismail sent an Egyptian expedition under the command of a British explorer, Sir Samuel Baker, into the area on the pretext of ending the slave trade. Baker was succeeded in 1874 by Colonel Charles Gordon, who was appointed Governor of the Equatorial Province by Ismail. In 1876, Gordon was promoted to Governor-General of the Sudan. He remained in charge of the Egyptian administration there until his resignation in 1881, in protest against the British government's desposition of Khedive Ismail: "It pains me the sufferings my poor Khedive Ismail has had to go through."<sup>1</sup>

The year 1881 was one of revolution in the Nile Valley. In addition to Arabi's revolt in Egypt, there was a Sudanese uprising. Mohammed Ahmad of Dongola, known as the Mahdi, fought to free his country from foreign interference.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31

The British saw the Mahdi's movement as a serious threat to their presence in Egypt, and in 1883 they sent Egyptian troops, under Colonel William Hicks, to subdue the revolt. Hick's troops were defeated.

Sir Evelyn Baring's arrival in Egypt on September 11, 1883, was a turning point in Egyptian-Sudanese affairs. Baring advised his government to halt military action against the Mahdists because he believed British troops and huge expenditures, which people at home would be unwilling to pay, would be required to subdue the Mahdi. Gladstone, who shared Baring's belief, felt that any British involvement in the Sudan would be opposed by the European powers, still clamoring against the British occupation of Egypt. Britain's attitude convinced the Egyptian government that past British assistance had stemmed mostly from a desire to strengthen British influence in the Nile Valley. This intention emerges clearly in a remark by Samuel Baker:

My chief endeavour was to work for the interest of Egypt, at the same time that I sustained and advanced the influence of England. General Gordon, who succeeded me, was actuated by the desire and died in the hope that England would reach Khartoun."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

In 1883, Gladstone's government decided to withdraw Egyptian troops from the Sudan. Granville informed the Egyptians that

Her Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for the operations in Soudan which have been initiated on the authority of the Egyptian Government.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt viewed this decision as dangerous to its security, as it deprived the country of a natural frontier and might open it to the Mahdi's invasion. The Egyptian prime minister, Sherif Pasha, resigned in protest on December 21, 1883. The British administration in Egypt was thus faced with a ministerial crisis, as all Egyptian leaders refused to participate in a new cabinet. The British made it clear that their policy must be executed; Britain would insist that only Egyptian leaders who agreed to follow its policy would be appointed to high office. Granville instructed Baring to inform the Egyptians that

it is essential that in important questions affecting the administration and safety of Egypt, and advice of the British Government should be followed for as long as the present occupation continues. Ministers and Governors must carry out the advice or forfeit their posts. The appointment of British ministers would be most objectionable, but it will

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<sup>1</sup>Granville to Cartwright, May 7, 1883, P.R.O. F.O. 78/3550.

no doubt be possible to find Egyptians who will execute the Khedive's orders under British advice. The cabinet will support you.<sup>1</sup>

Nubar Pasha, the only Egyptian leader of consequence, chose to acquiesce. He formed a new cabinet pledged to the abandonment of the Sudan. Sultan Abdul Hamid II reminded the khedive of the Firman of August 1879, which denied the khedive the right to surrender any part of Egyptian territory, but the protest had no effect.

The British decision strengthened the Mahdi's movement, which gained support and prestige among the Sudanese masses.

In 1884, the British decided to evacuate the Sudan; Gordon was chosen to conduct the operation because of his knowledge of the country. Khedive Tawfik, under British prompting, appointed Gordon Governor-General of the Sudan in January 1884.<sup>2</sup> He arrived in Khartoum the next month, and instead of evacuating the area, he tried to restore Egyptian rule. Gladstone's government insisted on evacuation. Gordon thereupon complained:

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<sup>1</sup>Granville to Baring, January 4, 1884, in correspondence respecting the affairs of Egypt - Egypt no. 1 (1884). p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Fabunmi, op. cit., p. 35.

I must say I was surprised to see such a thing. A Government like ours governed by men who dare not call their own . . . . I have written letters to the Foreign Office that would raise a corpse; it is no good; I have threatened to go to the French Government about the Soudan, it is no good.<sup>1</sup>

Gordon seriously misjudged the strength of the Mahdist forces, with the result that he was besieged at Khartoum and cut off from both Egypt and the Red Sea. The British sent a relief force, but it arrived too late. Gordon was killed on January 25, 1885. There is some evidence that the Mahdi wanted to save Gordon and exchange him for Ahmed Arabi, but that the Mahdi's soldiers were unaware of their leader's desire.<sup>2</sup>

Gordon's death deeply affected the British people and created a split among politicians about what action should be taken to avenge him and to restore British prestige. Leonard Courtney and John Morley demanded abandonment of the Sudan. They believed that the Sudanese must be left free to rule their own country. On February 5, 1885, in his speech at Torpoint, Courtney said:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 38

If I stood alone, I would protest against the notion of war against the Mahdi . . . . simply for the purpose of showing our might.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Randolph Churchill and the Lord Mayor of London were two among many British politicians who urged action. Salisbury, leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, called upon the government to establish peace in the Sudan, which in his view was essential to the security of Egypt. The Gladstone government stood firm.

When the Mahdi died on June 21, 1885, the British thought the crisis had passed. In her speech from the throne, the Queen said:

The death of the Mahdi will probably enable me to perform with less difficulty the duties toward the ruler and people of Egypt which events have imposed upon me.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Annual Register (London: 1885) pp. 22-3.

<sup>2</sup>Parliamentary Debates, vol. CCCI, August 14, 1885, pp. 31-2.

The Dervish Threat

When Salisbury came to power on June 24, 1885, he chose to follow Gladstone's Sudanese policy. He wanted to ease the tensions surrounding the Egyptian question and conciliate the sultan, who still nominally ruled the Sudan. Also, Salisbury preferred to wait until conditions should make occupation of the Sudan less difficult and more profitable. He hoped that the Mahdi's death might mean the end of the movement.

In the event, the Mahdi's demise did not solve Britain's problems. His successor was the Khalifa Abdullah-al-Taashi, under whose leadership the Mahdi's followers, the Dervishes, scored a triumph on July 30, 1885. They took the key town of Kassala, which gave them control of the Sudan except for the Red Sea fortresses. They then captured and destroyed most of the Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan.

These victories alarmed Salisbury, to whom it now seemed that the Dervishes were more powerful than he had thought. The first action of Salisbury's government was to order Wolsley, who had led the British expedition to aid Gordon, to abandon Dongola and avoid any contact with the Dervish forces. Salisbury was more concerned with

strengthening Britain's position in Egypt and with defending Egypt from the Dervish threat, than with restoring Egyptian rule in the Sudan:

For the present, the view of Her Majesty's Government is that the direct dominion of the Khedive should not be carried further in the Valley of the Nile than the region which may be conveniently controlled from a military station at the furthest terminus of the railways.<sup>1</sup>

He hoped that the issue might be settled through cooperation with the Porte.

Salisbury sent Henry Wolff to Constantinople in 1885 to try to find a solution for the Egyptian question as a whole. He also hoped that the sultan could be persuaded to take military action to maintain his authority in the Sudan. Salisbury believed it would be a severe blow to the Dervishes if they were to face Muslim troops. He wrote Wolff:

The co-operation of the Sultan will doubtless exercise a marked influence on the minds of large bodies of the inhabitants who profess the faith of Islam, and will neutralize any evil effects arising from any suspicion they may have entertained that it was intended to subject them to the domination of nations differing from themselves in faith.<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury instructed Wolff to tell the sultan that such action would "add lustre to the prestige which the name of

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, August 7, 1885, no. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

his government enjoys in the more distant provinces of his Empire."<sup>1</sup> He assured the sultan that if the latter accepted his suggestion, England would do all it possible could to assist. At the same time, Salisbury told Wolff to warn the sultan that if he rejected his suggestion, Britain could find help elsewhere:

It will not be open to his Government to complain if the assistance of others is invoked. It will be the duty, in such a case, of Her Majesty's Government to ascertain how far a native influence may be available on which a settled form of government can be built, or whether in any degree it is necessary to recur to foreign assistance.<sup>2</sup>

Sultan Abdul Hamid II refused to take military action against the Sudan, fearing this would damage his prestige throughout the Muslim world. As Wolff reported to Salisbury:

The Plenipotentiaries then with some hesitation entered into an explanation to the effect that there was great disinclination on the part of the Sultan to associate his troops with ours. The result of the brilliant but fruitless operations of our forces having been the destruction of many thousands of Mussulmans make it repugnant to the Sultan to be identified with us as against races of his own faith.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, September 4, 1885, no. 19.

Furthermore, the Egyptians did not favor any joint action between the Ottoman Empire and England. After the Hicks expedition in 1883, they preferred that they themselves or the Ottomans deal with the Sudanese issue. Wolff wrote Salisbury on September 4, 1885:

An Egyptian of high rank has informed me that the dispatch of Mussulman troops under Hicks Pasha, an Englishman, did more than anything else to promote the power of the Mahdi.<sup>1</sup>

The sultan countered the British plan with a proposal to establish a civil commission to settle the Sudanese issue. To make the arrangements more acceptable to the Sudanese, the sultan insisted that negotiations should be conducted by the khedive and the Ottoman commissioner; the English commissioner should not take part but would be informed at each step Salisbury authorized Wolff to accept:

I see no objection to Turkish proposal contained in your telegram of yesterday if it understood that nothing is settled without assent of English commissioner.<sup>2</sup>

On October 24, 1885, a convention was signed between England and the Ottoman Empire. Article II stipulated that Yousouf Pasha Shuhdi, chosen by Sultan Abdul Hamid II and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, October 2, 1885, no. 32.

the khedive, should conduct negotiations with the Sudanese. Shuhdi's mission was successful in opening avenues of trade between Egypt and the Sudan, but it failed to end the Dervishes' threat to Egypt. On March 3, 1887, Wolff reported to Salisbury:

With respect to this Article [Article II], I stated, in answer to questions, that His Highness the Khedive and Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pasha had together selected Yousouf Pasha Shuhdi, and dispatched him to the frontier, from which he sent reports home to the Khedive. Those reports as well as the information furnished by our own military authorities, showed that there had been no attack in any force, that matters were quieting down, and that no aggression was apprehended beyond perhaps the marauding raids which were often taking place in all uncivilized countries. The Soudan, as far as Egypt was concerned, was now quiet, so much so that trade was now being reopened with the Soudanese.<sup>1</sup>

This trade was more beneficial to the Sudan than to Egypt because of the nature of the Sudanese economy. Since the latter depended on primitive agricultural techniques which did not meet the people's needs, the Sudanese viewed the opening of the frontier as essential and to their advantage. They could import Egyptian goods and benefit from Egypt's commercial connection with Europe.

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, March 3, 1887, no. 33.

Salisbury was unhappy with the results, particularly since Egypt's pressure to restore its authority in the Sudan continued. Therefore, on February 26, 1887, he asked Wolff to press the sultan for direct military intervention. The sultan resisted and told the British that the best solution was to strengthen the Egyptian army sufficiently to enable it to restore Egyptian hegemony in the Sudan: "His Highness [told me] 14,000 [men] would be required if Dongola were again annexed to Egypt."<sup>1</sup> But Salisbury feared that a strong Egyptian army might endanger the British position in Egypt. He told the Ottomans through Wolff that England would not permit the Egyptian army to number more than 10,000 men.<sup>2</sup>

The failure of the 1887 negotiations left the Sudanese issue unresolved. The Egyptian government was deeply upset by the British refusal to take any action to allow the Egyptians to restore authority themselves. Furthermore, the British policy strengthened the Dervishes' forces and prestige. In a private letter to Salisbury, dated March 10, 1888, Baring wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>W.C., Wolff to Salisbury, March 26, 1887, no. 54.

<sup>2</sup>W.C., Salisbury to Wolff, telegraphic, March 30, 1887, no. 49.

I am rather concerned at the state of things up the Nile. The Dervishes are beginning to trouble, and some of the inhabitants of Assouan have found out that they ought to pray six times a day instead of five . . . . in fact that Kahlifa Abdullah is the high priest of the prophet. I fear we shall have some trouble.<sup>1</sup>

The Dervishes, aware of Egyptian weakness, wanted to seize the opportunity to free their country. In 1888, they laid seige to Suakin, the only major town still under Egyptian rule in the eastern Sudan. Riaz Pasha, the Egyptian prime minister, urged the British to send troops to the town, but Salisbury was against taking any action. His attitude shocked the Egyptian and British military men in Egypt. Baring wrote to Salisbury: "Kitchener is rather unhappy about what you said in connection with Suakin."<sup>2</sup> There were differences of opinion among British officials in Egypt about the value of Suakin to Egypt. As Baring told Salisbury:

Vincent and some others would like to get rid of it at almost any price; the soldiers, on the other hand, share Kitchener's opinion.<sup>3</sup>

Baring himself favored strengthening Suakin:

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<sup>1</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, March 10, 1888, P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, April 12, 1888, P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

It would never do to let Suakin fall into the hands of Dervishes. Their presence at Suakin would at once make itself seriously felt in the Valley of the Nile. So far I think Kitchener is right.<sup>1</sup>

After some hesitation, Salisbury yielded and authorized a small British force to be sent from Cairo to Suakin, under Sir Francis Grenfell, the commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army. The expedition lifted the Dervish seige on December 20, 1888.

Since 1885, when the British had made patently clear their intention to abandon the Sudan, the Egyptians had tried to persuade them to change their policy. In late 1888, encouraged by success in The Suakin matter, Riaz Pasha demanded the reconquest of Dongola in the northern Sudan.

Baring informed Salisbury:

If once I let them think that the Soudan is a purely Egyptian question and nothing else, and that they can not expect much help even of a diplomatic kind, in settling it, they would naturally reply, "then let us do what we like about it."<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury did not favor partial operations such as the conquest of Dongola. He believed the Egyptians either should

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, May 2, 1890, no. 155, P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

defend what was left them or try and retake the entire Sudan. But the latter alternative required an improvement in Egyptian finances, which Salisbury thought were still far from adequate. As he told Queen Victoria:

There had been a possibility of restoring the power of the Khedive over the Nile but that depended on Egypt footing the bill since the House of the Commons would refuse to pay.<sup>1</sup>

In early 1889, there was optimism that the rising of Abu Jummaiza in Darfur, in the western Sudan, against the Khalifa Abdullah might weaken the Dervishes. Abu Jummaiza was a follower of the Sanusi sect of Cyrenaica. His movement was viewed by the British as a new challenge to the khalifa, and if it succeeded, Egypt might retain its influence in the Sudan because of the good relations between Egypt and the Sanusi. However, these hopes were much exaggerated,<sup>2</sup> and in 1889 Abu Jummaiza was defeated and killed by the Khalifa Abdullah.

After his victory, the Khalifa decided that the time was ripe to invade Egypt. His troops, under the command of

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Queen Victoria, December 25, 1888, no. D186/510.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, May 12, 1889, P.R.O. F.O. 78/4240.

Amir Abd al-Rahman al-Nujumi, were sent to the frontier, where Al-Nujumi engaged in quick raids on the Egyptian side. To the amazement of the British, the Egyptian people sympathized with the Dervishes:

However the raids and frontier disturbances which take place from time to time have met with considerable sympathy, if not assistance, from the riverain population between Aswan and Wadi Halfa.<sup>1</sup>

Many Egyptians believed that a Muslim movement was the only way to oust the British. To meet the threat, the British moved most of the Egyptian army to Wadi Halfa in an attempt to stop al-Nujumi's troops. The Dervishes were defeated at Taski on August 3, 1889, and this serious danger to Egypt receded.

The Dervishes' defeat greatly affected their power and prestige. The Egyptian government felt that the time had now arrived to restore its authority in the Sudan. Baring, who supported the Egyptian view, urged Salisbury in the spring of 1890 to allow the Egyptians to advance on Tokar. Baring argued that the capture of this strategic location in the eastern Sudan would weaken the Dervishes throughout the country. Although Baring assured Salisbury

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<sup>1</sup>Baring to Salisbury, March 18, 1887, P.R.O. F.O. 78/4044.

that Tokar could be taken without difficulty, the idea was rejected. Salisbury still insisted on maintaining a defensive attitude. On March 28, 1890, Salisbury, in a private letter to Baring, explained his position:

The argument against Tokar appears to me that the operation must involve some money, and may involve very much, and that the finances of Egypt, though no longer in an embarrassed condition, are only convalescent and a very slight imprudence might throw them back into the condition from which they have been so painfully and laboriously drawn. Again when once you have permitted a military advance, the extent of that military advance scarcely remains within your own discretion. It is always open to the military authorities to discover in the immediate vicinity of the area to which your orders confine them, some degree against which it is absolutely necessary to guard, some strategic position whose invaluable qualities will repay ten times any risk or cost that its occupation may involve. You have no means of arguing against them. They are upon their own territory and can set down your opposition to civilian ignorance, and so step by step the imperious exactions of military necessity will lead you on into the desert.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury reminded Baring of Gordon's military defeat and death in 1885. The disaster still lived in British minds, a factor which must be considered in deciding any course in the Sudan:

To these considerations, I must add that they will appear infinitely magnified to the terrified minds of people here at home. They were so deeply impressed with the disasters of six years ago, and

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, March 28, 1890, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

the apparently inexorable necessity which had driven them into situations where those disasters were inevitable, that they shrink instinctively from any proposal to advance into the Egyptian desert.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury did tell Baring that he might reconsider if he had more evidence that such an action could be carried out without difficulty and that it was necessary for the defense of Egypt:

I do not say that this is a sufficient argument to prevent such an advance, if there is a clear balance of undoubted advantage in its favour, but in the absence of any such evidence it must be accepted as a strong presumption.<sup>2</sup>

Baring kept up his demands for military action against Tokar. Salisbury was unprepared for the Queen's support of Baring: "But to my great surprise the Queen expressed herself warmly in favour of the recapture of Tokar."<sup>3</sup> Under this pressure, Salisbury telegraphed Baring on February 7, 1891, that the government sanctioned the occupation of Tokar.

The town was captured on February 19, 1891, thus removing most of the eastern Sudan from the Dervishes'

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 13, 1891, no. 114, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

control. Salisbury's reaction was stated in a private letter to Baring dated February 27, 1891:

The Tokar business was very well done, but the evils of Egyptian leakiness were well illustrated. If we had known the Osman Digha was likely to be there with 4,000 men, we might have hesitated to approve. But all is well that ends well.<sup>1</sup>

Before he left office in 1892, Salisbury was confident that he had calmed the Sudanese question to the extent that international circumstances and Egyptian financial capabilities allowed. He was satisfied with events: the defeat of the Dervishes at Suakin in 1888, the defeat of al-Nujumi's troops at Tuski in 1889, and the capture of Tokar in 1891. It seemed to him that peace had been restored to the southern border of Egypt and that the Dervishes would not menace the country for the time being.

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, February 27, 1891, no. 115, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

The Italian Threat

In addition to the Dervishes' threat during the period 1885 to 1891, Italy created serious trouble for Anglo-Egyptian interests in the Nile Valley. Italy was aware of Britain's need for Italian support of its Egyptian policy, primarily due to Italy's close ties with Germany. The British had paid for this support in 1885 by allowing the Italians to occupy Massowah, in the eastern Sudan, but this proved insufficient. The Italians wanted to expand their African empire to include most of the Sudanese coast along the Red Sea. These demands were unacceptable to Salisbury. In a private letter to Wolff, dated May 4, 1887, he wrote:

It is evident that blackmail is the order of the day. Germany and Italy saw that the moment for selling their services had come . . . . Italy wants a long strip of Egyptian coast. It would be very difficult to pay the price anyhow; for the coast does not belong to us, but to Egypt--and one thing on which the Egyptians are intractable is the cession of territory: as we found when Lord Granville gave up the Soudan.<sup>1</sup>

During Wolff's negotiations with the Ottomans in 1887, the Italians made it clear that they would not support the British in Egypt unless Britain yielded to their demands in the Sudan. Wolff informed Salisbury:

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<sup>1</sup>S.P. Salisbury to Wolff, private, May 4, 1887, no. A 51/170.

White and myself are of opinion from a multitude of small indications that Germany, Austria and Italy will delay an arrangement about Egypt so as to force Her Majesty's Government to come to some understanding with Italy, the nature of which we have not discovered.<sup>1</sup>

On May 2, 1889, the Italians and King Menelek of Abyssinia signed the treaty of Occiali, which placed Abyssinia under Italian protection, mainly in foreign affairs. Italy believed it was now free to expand its empire in the eastern Sudan. The Egyptians urged the British to take immediate action to help Egypt maintain its security and influence in the Sudan. The Egyptians believed that this European threat was more serious than that of the Dervishes. Although the latter had held the Sudan for six years, they were unable to affect Egypt's water supply, but a European power would have the ability to tamper with the Nile's flow. The Egyptian prime minister, Riaz Pasha, called Britain's attention to this new danger:

The Nile is the life of Egypt . . . . the Nile means the Soudan . . . . if [any European power] took possession of the banks of the Nile it would be all over with Egypt . . . . the Government of

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Wolff to Salisbury, private and confidential, May 3, 1887, no. A51/79.

His Highness the Khedive will never willingly consent, not without compulsion, to such an attack on its existence.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury was worried about Italian intentions, and he realized that Egypt was unable to respond because of its financial difficulties. Nevertheless, he was not sure that Italian finances would permit any large-scale plans. He was inclined to view Italian pressure as a means to gain more concessions, particularly since their maneuvers followed so closely on the collapse of Wolff's mission to Constantinople in 1887:

The Egyptian force is not strong enough to coerce them, and England has no interest in Egypt sufficiently definite or permanent to justify her in quarrelling with the Italians upon the question of the boundary. The Italians know that very well, and will treat mere diplomatic pressure with much disregard. They will not do anything flagrantly unjust or in violation of distinct agreements or evident, adverse title, for that might alienate the sympathy of people in this country from them, and I do not think they will do anything which will lead to a great expenditure of money, for the state of their finances is a great embarrassment to Crispi.<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury did admit that developments in Africa, especially the new Italian threat, forced him to devote most of his

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<sup>1</sup>Riaz Memo, December 9, 1888, enclosed in Baring letter to Foreign Office, January 15, 1889, C. 5668.

<sup>2</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, May 2, 1890, no. 108, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

time to African Affairs: "Africa is the subject which occupies the Foreign Office more than any other."<sup>1</sup>

In 1890, the Italians laid claim to Kassala, an important strategic point in the eastern Sudan, because they believed it could enable them to occupy Khartoum. The Italian claim again stirred fears about Egypt's water supply. The British viewed this demand as unfriendly and felt it seriously affected their interests in Egypt and the Nile Valley. They became convinced that they had been mistaken to abandon the Sudan in 1885. Baring explained his views in a private letter to Salisbury:

I have never denied nor do I now deny, that the abandonment of the Soudan was very much to be regretted, that the country naturally belongs to Egypt and that the government which rules the Delta of the Nile should also hold the banks of the river, if not to its source, at all events for a long way up its course.<sup>2</sup>

The Italian challenge put the British in a difficult situation. They considered themselves responsible for the defense of Egypt as long as their occupation lasted. They admitted that they had pressed the Egyptians to evacuate the Sudan, which they would not have done except under compulsion

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup>Mekki Shibeika, British Policy in the Sudan 1882-1902 (London: 1952), p. 322.

from Britain. The British felt that any reluctance to halt Italy would damage their prestige in Egypt and elsewhere. Furthermore, permitting Italy to establish an influence in the Sudan might eventually jeopardize the British position in Egypt. Baring called Salisbury's attention to this possibility:

It will go down to history that the English government found Egypt extending from Alexandria to the sources of the Nile and left it shorn of half its territory and dominated by an European power [Italy] which, though now friendly, at some future time be hostile, occupying the head water of the river on which the whole life of the country depends. I confess I can not look forward to the possibility of any such consummation without the greatest regret.<sup>1</sup>

In March 1890, Salisbury asked Baring what policy he recommended. Baring replied:

It is most desirable to come to an early settlement with the Italian government as to its territorial limits; that the first essential basis of any such arrangement is to exclude the possibility of the Italians establishing themselves in the Nile Valley or at Kasalah.<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury was convinced that Egypt could not afford to send troops to the Sudan; the European powers which supervised Egyptian finances would never permit such a step. Nor could

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Page 323.

Britain intervene militarily. He also rejected the suggestion from the British military authority at Cairo that the Ottomans be asked to send troops. Salisbury had little regard for military advice:

I would not be too much impressed by what the soldiers tell you about the strategic importance of these places, it is their way. If they were allowed full scope, they would insist on the importance of garrisoning the moon in order to protect us from Mars.<sup>1</sup>

Since force was out of the question, Salisbury favored diplomacy as the means to keep the Italians out of the Nile Valley. He entered into negotiations in London with the Italian ambassador, Count Tarnielli, in an attempt to settle the Sudanese question peacefully. Salisbury accepted a draft of a demarcation of spheres of influence, with Tokar on the Egyptian side. The draft was criticized by the Egyptian government and Baring on the ground that it gave Italy a strong hold on the Nile, which should belong to Egypt. Baring told Salisbury:

I hope my telegram will have made it clear that the main objection to the Italians' proposal is that it involves no settlement at all on the points which from an Egyptian point of view are the most important.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Earl of Comer, Modern Egypt (London: 1908), vol. 11, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Salisbury, private, May 2, 1890, no. 155, P.R.O. F.O. 633/6.

Salisbury agreed that the draft would not satisfy the Egyptians. Although pressed by the Germans to reach a settlement, he decided to leave the negotiations to Baring, who would arrive in London on leave in the summer of 1890:

Your dispatch on the subject of the Italian frontier confirms me in the impression that the settlement of it had better be delayed till you can discuss it here in London yourself . . . . However, as the Egyptian government know that you are in earnest on their side in this matter, I should prefer that you conducted the negotiations yourself.<sup>1</sup>

Salisbury's decision was based on his confidence in the man on the spot:

It is probable that you will come to a better conclusion than I should do, with my imperfect conviction of the advantages which the possession of the Sudan territory is likely to confer upon Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of going to London, Baring went to Italy, preferring to negotiate directly with Crispi. The Italian prime minister was in Naples, away from the mass media and the influence of the diplomatic circle in Rome.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Salisbury to Baring, private, May 2, 1890, P.R.O. F.O. 633/7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>S.P., Baring to Barrington, private, August 26, 1890, no. A54/27.

In his instructions to Baring, Salisbury insisted that all the affluents of the Nile that Egypt formerly had possessed should be secured. He warned Baring that he might find Crispi a hard bargainer, and he let Baring know that he was free to halt negotiations:

I do not think England will lose by delay. Italy is pursuing a policy which is financially impossible. Sooner or later she must recede from it and then she will not be so particular about frontiers. I dare say things will go on as they do now as long as Crispi is at the head of affairs. But he is 71.<sup>1</sup>

As Salisbury had predicted, Crispi rejected the British position that Italy must not tamper with any of Egypt's former dominions in the Nile Valley.

In February 1891, Crispi fell from power and was succeeded by Di Rudini, who expressed a desire to reach a settlement with the British. On March 24, 1891, an Anglo-Italian agreement was signed. Italy recognized Egyptian claims in the Sudan, including Kassala, and agreed not to interfere with the water supply of the Atbara River. Britain recognized the Italian protectorate over the whole of Abyssinia to within 100 miles of the Nile.

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<sup>1</sup>S.P., Salisbury to Baring, private, August 31, 1890, no. A55/58.

The agreement was considered a great success for Salisbury. It prevented the penetration of European influence into the Nile Valley, and it showed the Egyptians that the British were willing to protect their interests in the Sudan.

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSION

The British occupation in Egypt in 1882 met with European and Ottoman opposition from the outset, and this pressure made the British position in Egypt vulnerable. In response, British policy went through two phases. Failing to obtain the European powers' consent to the occupation, Britain declared that its primary aim in Egypt was to maintain the khedive's authority; it would evacuate its troops as soon as this goal was achieved. Britain then claimed its intention was to make Egypt financially solvent. Clearly, the British could attain neither objective without the cooperation of the great powers. In 1885, the task of easing the international situation fell to Salisbury.

Salisbury's policy toward Egypt during the period 1885-1892 emerges from his formal correspondence and private papers. Several observations and conclusions can be drawn.

Salisbury's policy evolved in two distinct stages. The first began immediately after his appointment as prime

minister in 1885, when he inherited the Egyptian issue from Gladstone's government. Salisbury sought a diplomatic solution to the Egyptian question, and to that end he sent Henry Wolff to Constantinople in 1885. Salisbury felt direct negotiations with the Ottomans might appease the European powers, especially when he realized that Britain had depended too heavily on Bismarck's good offices in dealing with the major European powers over the evacuation of Egypt. This diplomatic phase ended with the breakdown of Wolff's mission in 1887; France and Russia persuaded the sultan to refuse to ratify the agreement the Ottomans had reached with the British. The failure of negotiations convinced Salisbury that the British policy of isolation should be abandoned.

In the second phase, emphasis shifted to an extended occupation of Egypt. Salisbury decided to focus not on Constantinople, but on Cairo, using it as a center for British policy in the Mediterranean. To secure that end, Salisbury believed Britain should seek closer relations with the European central powers in an attempt to counterbalance French opposition to the British presence in Egypt. Nevertheless, Salisbury opposed formal ties with the central powers or any special alliance with Bismarck. He believed that such

affiliations would lead Britain to a direct involvement in continental conflicts and would increase the tension between Britain and France. Salisbury's main purpose was to obtain Bismarck's full support for his Egyptian policy.

The conciliation of France was a cornerstone of Salisbury's policy. He was convinced that Britain's difficulties in Egypt stemmed mainly from France's attitude. He acknowledged that France had interests and influence in Egypt that it could not easily abandon. For that reason, the French refused to join the British in crushing the Egyptian nationalist movement in 1882, and they continued their opposition to British control of Egypt until 1904, when both countries signed the Anglo-French Entente. This agreement ended French aspirations in the country and strengthened British control over Egypt. The agreement could not have been concluded had Salisbury not worked assiduously since 1885 to convince the French that Britain had a genuine desire for good relations with France. As evidence of this, Britain was prepared to discuss possible colonial concessions if France would recognize the British occupation of Egypt. To leave the door open for such a possibility, Salisbury steadfastly resisted Bismarck's pressure to bring Britain into

his alliance system, which would have tied Britain formally to the central powers. It was obvious to Salisbury that Bismarck was trying to take advantage of the Anglo-French disagreement over Egypt. By exacerbating the tension, Bismarck hoped to isolate France and prevent it from challenging the German occupation of Alsace and Lorraine.

As his policy entered its second phase, Salisbury instructed Baring to concentrate his efforts on reforming the Egyptian government and preparing for a long-term British administration in Egypt. With this new focus in mind, in 1888 Salisbury reassessed British policy in the Nile Valley. He began to think of the need for asserting British influence in the Sudan as an added measure to secure Britain's presence in Egypt. Salisbury came to see the importance of recapturing several strategic points in the Sudan that had been Egyptian possessions until taken by the Mahdist forces in 1885. His decision was prompted by Italian interest in the area, which became apparent in 1888.

The Italian threat alarmed Salisbury, for it was obvious that Britain could not tolerate any European presence in the Nile Valley. However, reconquest of the Sudan required funding; the Egyptians were very weak financially, and British

taxpayers would never agree to bear the cost for such a military operation. Salisbury's only recourse was diplomacy. These peaceful methods bore fruit in 1891, when the Anglo-Italian agreement was signed. Italy officially acknowledged that the Sudan belonged to Egypt and abandoned any claims in the area. Although relieved of the Italian threat, Salisbury still was faced with the problem of reconquest of the Sudan. This issue occupied his mind until his fall from power on August 12, 1892.

The Sudan operation was a very important item on Salisbury's agenda when he returned to office on June 29, 1895. On March 13, 1896, Salisbury informed Lord Cromer that his cabinet had officially decided to conquer the Sudan.

In studying the Egyptian question, three important observations can be made about Salisbury's policy during 1885-1892. First, he had full confidence in Baring. Although Baring caused much trouble for Salisbury through his rough handling of Egyptian officials, Salisbury believed that Baring was the right man in the right place. Without any hesitation he gave Baring his full support, even though he admitted that Baring occasionally made mistakes.

The second observation concerns Salisbury's policy toward the Ottoman Empire. Although the sultan was the

formal sovereign of Egypt, Salisbury believed he could not be permitted to do anything to endanger the British presence in Egypt. During 1885-1887, in an attempt to ease European pressure, Salisbury tried to induce the sultan to reach a settlement over Egypt. The failure of Wolff's mission, in 1887, convinced Salisbury that the sultan was very weak and unable to take any action. At that time Salisbury decided to abandon attempts to solve the Egyptian question through direct dealings with the Ottomans.

The sultan was obviously unhappy about the British occupation of Egypt. However, since he did not have the power to oust the British, he could offer only verbal protests. The sultan had to rely on European pressure and on British promises to maintain his position as sovereign of Egypt. He was deceived by British declarations that they would evacuate Egypt as soon as they could restore order. He was forced to yield to the British presence in Egypt, and this had a profound effect on the Ottomans, the Egyptians, and the entire Muslim world. Events revealed the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and the strength of the Europeans.

Fears were aroused in Syria, Iraq, Armenia, and elsewhere that the sultan's policy might encourage other European

powers, mainly France and Russia, to take similar action and occupy countries which they regarded as being in their sphere of influence. French and Russian threats were officially expressed to the sultan in 1887. As a result, he refused to ratify the agreement concluded between the Ottoman Empire and England in 1887 regarding the Egyptian question.

From the point of view of this study, the Porte's inability to act had its most profound effect in its impact on Egypt. The Egyptians were deeply affected by the Ottoman Empire's weakness and by the sultan's attitude toward the British occupation. They felt Sultan Abdul Hamid II should at least have applied diplomatic pressure, especially since the major European powers opposed the British move. The lack of Ottoman support was a major factor in preventing an open Egyptian struggle against the British occupation.

The final observation that may be made about Salisbury's policy involves Egyptian internal affairs. Despite Salisbury's success in 1891 in easing European pressure on Britain, primarily by making concessions to Germany and France, he failed to obtain Egyptian acceptance of the British presence. Salisbury's policy ignored Egyptian demands for British evacuation, ignored their social, educational,

and medical needs, and ignored their desire for self-government. Moreover, the Egyptians were deeply distressed by Salisbury's decision in 1889 to rule the Sudan, formerly an Egyptian dominion, directly. Salisbury's failure to respond to Egyptian demands for improved living conditions might be explained by his preoccupation with his responsibilities, for he insisted on conducting foreign affairs himself. It seems impossible that Salisbury and other government officials did not know about the situation in Egypt. Over the years, they received several letters from the prominent Englishmen describing socio-economic conditions. Although some improvements were made, military expenditures outweighed the monies spend on social betterment. It seems clear that the British were far more interested in securing their strategic interests in Egypt, and ultimately in India, than in the welfare of the Egyptian people. This neglect damaged Anglo-Egyptian relations for years to come. After two revolutions at thirty-year intervals, the pattern finally was broken in 1952.

## APPENDIXES

## Appendix A

CONVENTION BETWEEN HER MAJESTY AND HIS  
IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE SULTAN OF TURKEY,  
RELATIVE TO EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS SIGNED  
AT CONSTANTINOPLE, OCTOBER 24, 1885.  
W.C. NO. 65 (RATIFICATIONS EXCHANGED  
NOVEMBER 24, 1885.)

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, having agreed to send Commissioners Extraordinary to Egypt with a view to the settlement of Egyptian affairs, have resolved to conclude a Convention, and have named as their Plenipotentiaries for this purpose:

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, the Right Honourable Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, a member of Her Britannic Majesty's Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Member of Parliament, and her Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan on a Special Mission having particular reference to the affairs of Egypt;

And His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, Mehemmed Said Pasha, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, decorated with the Grand Cordon of the Osmanie in brilliants and the Grand Cordon of the Medjidie;

Who, after having exchanged their full powers, found to be in good and due form, have agreed upon the following Articles, adopted upon the basis and within the limits of the Imperial Firmans now in force:--

#### ARTICLE I

Her Britannic Majesty and His Imperial Majesty the Sultan will respectively send a High Commissioner to Egypt.

#### ARTICLE II

The Ottoman High Commissioner will consult with His Highness the Khedive, or with the functionary who shall be designated for that purpose by His Highness, upon the best means for tranquillizing the Soudan by pacific measures.

The Ottoman High Commissioner and His Highness the Khedive will keep the English High Commissioner currently informed of the negotiations, and as the measures to be decided upon form part of the general settlement of Egyptian affairs, they shall be adopted and placed in execution in agreement with the English High Commissioner.

## ARTICLE III

The two High Commissioners will reorganize, in concert with His Highness the Khedive, the Egyptian army.

## ARTICLE IV

The two High Commissioners, in concert with His Highness the Khedive, will examine all the branches of the Egyptian Administration, and may introduce into them the modifications which they may consider necessary, within the limits of the Imperial Firmans.

## ARTICLE V

The international engagements contracted by His Highness the Khedive will be approved by the Ottoman Government in so far as they shall not be contrary to the privileges granted by the Imperial Firmans.

## ARTICLE VI

So soon as the two High Commissioners shall have established that the security of the frontiers and the good working and stability of the Egyptian Government are assured, they shall present a Report to their respective Governments, who will consult as to the conclusion of a Convention regulating the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt in a convenient period.

## ARTICLE VII

The present Convention shall be ratified and ratifications shall be exchanged at Constantinople within the space of fifteen days, or sooner if possible.

In faith of which the two Plenipotentiaries have affixed their signatures to it and the seal of their arms.

Done at Constantinople, the twenty-fourth day of the month of October, of the year eighteen hundred and eighty-five.

(L.S.) H. Drummond Wolff.

(L.S.) Said.

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In proceeding to the signature of the Convention dated this day, the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Turkey declare that the French text shall be binding.

Done in duplicate, the 24th day of October, 1885.

(L.S.) (signed) H. Drummond Wolff.

(L.S.) (signed) Said.

Appendix B

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY TO SIR H. DRUMMOND

WOLFF, F.O. JANUARY 15, 1887, W.C.I.

Sir:

In the opinion of H. M. Gov. its desirable that in returning to your post at Cairo you should make some stay at Constantinople, in order to ascertain the precise views of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan with respect to the future arrangements which are to be made for Egypt, and also to lay before him the considerations by which the course of English Gov. is guided.

It has become evident from the discussion of the last few months, that the date at which the retirement of the English army shall become possible will depend not only on the progress we are able to make in pacifying the frontier and strengthening the Egyptian administration, but also on the nature of the arrangements by which the Khedive's Gov. is to be sustained when British troops are no longer at Cairo. Under the circumstances, we can't leave Egypt to the danger of renewed anarchy, nor can we accept as an admissible

contingency that the void left by the retirement of our troops should be filled by the forces of any other Power. The Sultan is pressing the Gov. of G.B. to name a date for the evacuation of Egypt and in that demand he is avowedly encouraged by one, or perhaps two, of the European Powers. H.M. Gov. have every desire to give him satisfaction upon this point, but they can't fix even a distant date for evacuation until they are able to make provision for securing beyond that date, the external and internal peace of Egypt.

In these negotiations, therefore, it seems to them necessary, in the first place to investigate the nature of the guarantee which it is possible, by agreement with His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, to provide for the future security of Egypt when the normal state of things has been restored. It is to this task they desire that you should address yourself at Constantinople. It is obvious that for a considerable time the elements of such a danger as that which they apprehend will be found in Egypt. The existence of many foreign communities, guarded by extraterritorial privileges, and withdrawn, therefore, practically from the control of the Executive Gov., is in itself a fertile element of disorder, and however genuine may be the desire of the nations to which these communities belong to prevent

intrigue, past experience proves that their efforts to repress it will often meet with only a limited success. The existence of pretenders to the Throne, the foreign extraction and apparent unpopularity of the class from whom the governing administration is mainly drawn, the weak character of a large portion of the population, together with their liability to those sudden accesses of religious excitement to which all Mahomedan population are subject,--all these circumstances taken together attach a peculiar weakness to the Egyptian Gov. It is probable that very many years of undisturbed possession must pass away before it will have outgrown the danger of internal convulsion similar to those by which its existent has recently been put in peril. Such a calamity would not only arrest the industry of the country, and shatter its returning prosperity, but would imperil its external security at the same time. Whatever England might do, other nations would not permit the solvency of the Egyptian Gov. to be destroyed by anarchy; and as soon as it became evident that order could not be restored without foreign intervention, from some quarter or other that foreign intervention would arrive.

It is probable that some security against these dangers may be found by retaining an adequate number of British

officers in positions of command in the Egyptian army. Such a measure would be desirable both for the purpose of securing the efficiency and loyalty of the force, and also for supressing any small commencements of disorder that may arise. But it would be unwise to trust to this protection too implicitly. The presence of British officers in a military force composed of members of a different race and religion is not a guarantee against the occurrence of a mutiny. Any disturbing force which was strong enough to place the Gov. of the Khedive in peril would probably be strong enough to shake off the influence which British officers might have established over native troops. While, therefore, the provision that a certain number of British officers shall remain connected with the Khedivial army would probably be one of the conditions on which the British Gov. would insist before accepting the responsibility of evacuation, it would be impossible for them to regard such a stipulation as an adequate protection against the more serious dangers to which I have drawn your attention.

The object which the Powers of Europe have had in view, and which it is not less the desire of H.M. Gov. to attain, may be generally expressed by the phrase "the neutralization of Egypt," but it must be neutralization with an

exception designed to maintain the security and permanence of the whole arrangement. The British Gov. must retain the rights to guard and uphold the condition of things which will have been brought about by the military action and large sacrifices of this country. So long as the Gov. of Egypt maintains its position and no disorders arise to interfere with the administration of Justice or the action of the executive power, it is highly desirable that no soldier belonging to any foreign nation should remain upon the soil of Egypt, except when it may be necessary to make use of the land passage from one sea to another. H.M. Gov. would willingly agree that such a stipulation should, whenever the evacuation has taken place, apply to English as much as to any other troops; but it will be necessary to restrict the provision, as far as England is concerned, to periods of tranquillity. England, if she spontaneously and willingly evacuates the country, must retain a Treaty right of intervention if at any time either internal peace or external security should be seriously threatened. There is no danger that a privilege so costly in its character will be used unless the circumstances imperatively demand it.

Provisions, strictly defining the conditions under which intervention should take place, and placing it under

such limitations that the renewed presence of British troops in Egypt shall not extend beyond the time which the exigency demands, will probably be demanded by the Gov. of the Sultan, and may very properly be the subject of consideration on the part of H.M. Gov. They are very far from intending to use such a power, if it should be reserved to them by Treaty, for the purpose of exercising any undue influence, or creating a Protectorate in disguise; still less for unnecessarily renewing an occupation which has already imposed so many sacrifices upon G.B. But it will be difficult to provide in any other way for the security of Egypt, which they are pledged to assure before they retire from the country.

Questions affecting the finances of Egypt, the position of the Suez Canal and the modifications which seem necessary in the capitulation at present in force, will probably be brought to your attention by the Ottoman Government and you will report to me any proposition which they may submit to you. But before these can be satisfactorily dealt with, some progress must be made in disposing of the paramount question to which the negotiation conducted by you should in the first instance be directed.

## Appendix C

### LORD SALISBURY TO SIR EDWARD MALET

Private.

Foreign Office, Feb. 23, 1887. S.P.

Your account of Bismarck's criticisms on our Egyptian policy is discouraging. He is hard to please. Unless we take the chestnuts out of the hottest part of the fire, he thinks we are shirking our work. But we cannot go beyond a certain point to please him--especially as his quid pro quo is purely negative. We have willingly ranged ourselves with the central European Powers that has always been our policy. A distinct estrangement from France has followed, which has cost us a pack of bothers in various parts of the world. But when he wants us--as he evidently does--to quarrel with France downright over Egypt, I think he is driving too hard a bargain. It is not worth our while. Our policy is not, if we can help it, to allow France either to force us out of Egypt altogether, or to force us into quarrel over Egypt. Therefore, our negotiations must be circumspect, slow, and a little hazy and ambiguous. The Chancellor of course will

like clear statements, definite policies, and a breach as soon as possible. Our position in Egypt is one that the public opinion here will not allow us to abandon altogether, but it is a disastrous inheritance: for it enables the Chancellor to demand rather unreasonable terms as the price, not of his assistance, but of his refusal to join a coalition against us.

The point I understand him to be pressing now is that during our absence from Egypt, when we have gone, an Arabi movement may break out; and that before we get back again, a great deal of valuable German property may be destroyed. Of course, if this objection is pressed to the utmost it is unanswerable; it is fatal to any project of evacuation. But the danger is small. Our troops will be at Malta or Cyprus: and the knowledge that we are there, and are likely to return, will prevent any very dangerous riot.

The Sultan of Zanzibar is being hardly treated. But examples like that of Germany are contagious. I am afraid he has been misled into thinking that by delimiting his territory we engaged to guarantee it. But there is some inconvenience in this development of annexation among the smaller powers: as they are even less scrupulous than the Great Powers.

Appendix D

LORD SALISBURY TO SIR H.

DRUMMOND WOLFF

Private.

May 4, 1887, S.F. A51/170

It is evident that blackmail is the order of the day. Germany and Italy saw that the moment for selling their services had come. I have disposed of Germany. What they wanted did not engage the future. But Italy wants a long strip of Egyptian coast. It would be very difficult to pay the price anyhow; for the coast does not belong to us, but to Egypt--and the one thing on which Egyptians are intractable is the cession of territory: as we found when Lord Granville gave up the Soudan.

I had a little talk with Wadington to-day about your negotiations. I admitted you had asked for 5 years: he informed me his Government would be prepared to support 3 years: from which I inferred that 4 years was the right thing. I told him that people here would cry out terribly about 3 years--but I impressed upon him that the re-entry was the

point on which we most insisted and that we had no intention of leaving Egypt until that was conceded. He replied that in our conversations of last autumn that had been conceded in principle and that all that was required to be settled were the conditions under which the right was to be exercised. I replied that this was one of the cases where the principle was easily cut away by unfavorable conditions. I think we may have less difficulty with the French than we anticipate--if we can agree with Turkey. I do not think the mass of politicians here will object to our leaving Egypt in 3 years--but I anticipate some considerable storm in our own party. There are a certain number of Jingoos who on all questions between foreign countries and us or our colonies take the most extravagant view as a matter of course: and of late years they have gained greatly in strength and they may give us an evil quarter of an hour.

Vincent has been to Paris and settled the Corvee question; apparently with little difficulty. He has a scheme for a guaranteed conversion of the privileged debt, based on the increased worth of our Suez Canal shares.

Do not resume any negotiations about Zeilah. India which is hard up declines to find the money and to us of

course it has little interest--so we must for the present maintain the status quo.

Appendix E

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF TO THE MARQUIS  
OF SALISBURY. - THERAPIA, JUNE 14,  
1887. W.C. No. 96.

My Lord,

In connection with the signature of the Convention and the Protocols annexed, I have the honour to call your Lordship's attention generally to the abnormal condition of the financial system of Egypt and the very great hardship it inflicts on the people of the country.

It would be a blot on any permanent arrangement if some attempt were not made to alleviate the heavy burden entailed on the fellaheen by the debt which crushes their industry and often deprives them of their property and means of livelihood.

In the schemes which have at different times been put forward for the readjustment of the finances of Egypt, this important point has been constantly overlooked. Attempts have been made to establish an equilibrium of Egyptian finance in which the amount payable for the debt was an almost

inevitable basis, and even when the sinking funds have been suspended, this course has been taken rather to sustain the external credit of the country than to better the lot of the people.

One glaring instance of the hardship inflicted on the people is to be found in the sums allotted to the military defense of the country, in which out of a total expenditure of 9,628,961 Egyptian lire, the cost of the army, including that of the occupying force, is limited to a total of 325,000 Egyptian lire.

But taking the above figure as the expenditure of Egypt, it will be found that more than half of it goes out of the country. The Tribute of Egypt and the consolidated and Unconsolidated Debts amount this year to 5,043,976 Egyptian lire, the whole of which, though drawn from the labour and property of the Egyptian people, is encashed by foreigners and spent abroad. It may be said that a portion of this debt is paid by lands and the railways and telegraphs and port of Alexandria, but this is a comparatively small sum, the item above mentioned including 200,000l. deficit on the Domains Loan, and 200,000l. deficit on the Daira, and the amounts actually paid for the interests of those loans not being apparently included in the Budget. But the public works in

question were paid for by the money of the people. The cultivable land of Egypt amounts to about 6,000,000 feddans. Of these, I believe nearly one-sixth, which were extorted from the people by very doubtful means, are the property of foreign creditors. The railways, the telegraphs, and the port of Alexandria are equally owned by the bondholders, and thus, from a country consisting of 6,000,000 feddans, or about 6,600,000 acres of cultivable land, and with a population of about 6,800,000 including foreigners, an annual sum is extracted and exported of 5,043,976 Egyptian lire, or 5,170,050l.

If the debt had been run up by wars, or extravagance sanctioned by the people, it might be right to continue saddling them with this intolerable load. But they had no voice in the matter, and were passive instruments, almost beasts of burden, in the hands of the rulers, whose vices, ambition, and waste had accumulated this mass of debt. This evil has been recognized more than once, but no attempt has been made to diminish it, except on one occasion, when Lord Northbrook recommended the diminution of the land tax by the sum of 450,000l. annually. This measure has only been partially carried out by the abolition of the corvee at the cost of 250,000l. This sum, however, is still paid by the people.

It is impossible to measure the political effect of this state of things on a population thus mortgaged to the foreign creditors of former bad masters. It must always be the cause of a discontent not the less deep from not being manifest, and it would always render the fellaheen anxious to join any popular leader who would promise them relief. Such a condition does not exist, and would not be tolerated elsewhere, and in a settlement which it is hoped may promote tranquillity throughout the country, the present fiscal system is a danger which cannot be overlooked.

Appendix F

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF TO THE MARQUIS  
OF SALISBURY. - THERAPIA, JUNE 17,  
1887. W.C. NO. 97.

My Lord,

With reference to my despatch of the 14th instant, I have the honour to bring before your Lordship certain figures showing the drain on the resources of the Egyptians caused by the payment of the interest of the debts principally held abroad.

The following are the annual payments:

	£E
Tribute - - - - -	678,397
Guaranteed Loan - - - - -	307,125
Privileged - - - - -	1,086,969
Unified - - - - -	2,183,627
Domains - - - - -	352,000
Daira Sanieh - - - - -	336,720
Interest on Suez Canal shares paid to England - - - - -	193,858
	<hr/>
	5,138,696

(Or, 5,267,1631.)

Against this the assets, other than the taxation of the people, may be taken as follows:

Domains, after payment of	£ E.
administration expenses - - - - -	152,000
Daira - - - - -	136,720
Railways, &c. - - - - -	<u>835,000</u>
	1,123,720

(Or, 1,151,7631.)

Deducting this sum from the gross amount of debt as above stated, the amount annually drawn from the Egyptian taxes to be exported abroad is 4,115,4001., while the remainder, though not taken from the taxes, is abstracted from the circulation of the country.

As an illustration of the extent to which Egyptian stock is held in Europe, the following statement is interesting. This stock having only recently been admitted to a quotation at Berlin, the following have been the payments made at that capital this year by Messrs. Bleichroder on the coupons of the Privileged Debt due on the 15th April, and for the Unified payable on the 1st May:

	£
Privileged	95,000
Unified	<u>350,000</u>
	445,000*

This represents a capital of 3,800,0001. invested in the Privileged stock and of 17,500,0001. in Unified bonds, making a total of Egyptian stock held in Germany alone of 21,300,0001., or more than one-fifth of the whole debt.

\* This is a half-yearly payment and implies 890,000 L. per annum.

I have tried to ascertain as nearly as possible the amount of bonds held in Egypt; but the fluctuations in the number of coupons cashed in Egypt are so great that it is impossible to form even an approximate estimate. The reason for this is that coupons are made use of by capitalists in London and Paris and elsewhere for exchange operations. Thus the greater portion of the coupons cashed in Egypt are cut off from bonds held in Europe, and are given in payment for goods exported from the country.

There is a further hardship inflicted on the Egyptian people in connection with the Suez Canal.

Your Lordship is aware that the price of 4,000,000l paid for the shares of the ex-Khedive by Her Majesty's Government was originally expended by him out of the money collected from the people. In lieu of any profit accruing to the Egyptians under this head, they are now paying the interest on those shares to Her Majesty's Government, instead of the dividends which the ex-Khedive had in 1869 alienated for 30,000,000 fr., which sum was handed over to the Canal.

Moreover, the ex-Khedive had in 1864, paid under the arbitral decision of the Emperor of the French a sum of 84,000,000 fr. to the Canal Company. The sums thus contributed towards the Canal by the Egyptian people, though not

ear-marked, no doubt form a part of the present debt. Their amount is as follows:

	£
Shares - - - - -	4,000,000
Arbitral Sentence - - - - -	3,360,000
Dividends sold in advance - - - -	1,200,000
	<hr/>
	8,560,000

for which expenditure the fellaheen are now paying a further 200,000l. annually. Under the original concession 15 percent of the net profits of the Canal were to go to the Egyptian Government. This percentage amounted in 1885 to 204,172l. But this revenue was pledged by the ex-Khedive, and subsequently sold, thus depriving the Egyptian people of their last chance of obtaining any return for the sums expended out of their toil.

I have in my present and former despatch brought these matters before the knowledge of your Lordship, in the hope that some means may be found in the general arrangement, which I hope is imminent, to alleviate in a certain degree the very hard lot of the Egyptian people. This object, I believe, could be effected without inflicting any injury on the creditors of Egypt.

I should add that in aid of the administrative portion of the Budget there are certain sources of revenue,

derived from the sale of salt and natron and from Government properties, amounting altogether to about 235,000l. a-year.

Appendix G

SIR EVELYN BARING TO LORD SALISBURY

APRIL 18, 1889, S.P. A53/96

Private, Cairo

It is some long while since I wrote you anything about the general position of affairs here. I think that I had perhaps better do so now.

On the whole we are going on very satisfactorily. Looking to the administrative and political detail I see no subject that, so far as can be at present judged, is likely to give rise to any serious difficulties. I understand that your wish, looking at the matter from the broad political and diplomatic point of view, is to maintain the status quo. The general arguments in favor of this policy are obvious. Fortunately, local interests and necessities point in the same direction.

My only present anxiety is caused from the apprehension that at any moment some local mine may be sprung upon me which will render the maintenance of the status quo extremely difficult.

Whether this will happen or not depends mainly on Riaz Pasha. I think I had better tell you briefly what I think of him.

He is full of good intentions. He is the most honest man here. He is a stern disciplinarian, which is much wanted. He does not intrigue. He inspires confidence generally with the Musulman population. Though not liked, he is feared and respected. He is an immense improvement on Nubar.

These are good qualities--so good that I think it very desirable, in the absence of any competent man to take his place, that he should remain in power.

His defects are that he is stupid, obstinate, violent, and--which matters less--very vain. His manners are barbarous. He has not the faintest conception of how to conduct a diplomatic negotiation. It was only with considerable difficulty that the other day I prevented a serious quarrel between him and d'Aubigny about a trumpery question as to the pay of the French member of the Railway Board, all merely due to unskillful negotiation. Similarly a dispute with the Caisse about a Railway Extension project has given me a lot of bother, though I have now settled it. The inconvenient part of the whole thing is that I am generally not brought into these quarrels,

until, by sheer muddle, both sides have lashed themselves into a state of rage.

He has not the most elementary ideas of Government by law. For instance, I was rather horrified the other day at finding out that certain "commissions of Brigandage", which are really tantamount to Courts-Martial, had been freely extracting evidence by torture, and that Riaz himself had been ordering people to be imprisoned without any sort of legal formality whatsoever.

It is wise not to be utopian so I shut my eyes to a good deal but there is, of course, a limit to this process. I shall be able to get the particular points to which I have alluded above put right without any serious trouble, but with a man of Riaz's character and tendencies towards the extreme of patriarchal government I never can feel certain that he will not some day commit some enormity, which would be exaggerated by the press, and which would make it very difficult to keep him in office.

My principal fear, however, is not that I should fall out with Riaz (I do not think this is probable) but that he should quarrel with the Khedive.

The Khedive does not like him. He is too overbearing. He would greatly like to get rid of him and I feel certain

that he would take an early opportunity of doing so if he had the least inkling that such a step would be pleasant to me. Hence I have to be very cautious not to give the smallest hint in that direction.

If Riaz was turned out it would put us into considerable difficulties--much greater difficulties than at the time of Nubar's resignation and that is mainly why I want to keep him.

We should have to choose between two alternatives, neither of which are pleasant in themselves.

The Khedive would want to govern more actively himself, with the help of a retrograde and savage old Turk as a Prime Minister. I like bringing the Khedive forward, but the combination could not work. It is not desirable that the Khedive should be himself too much pledged to one side in any of the numerous disputes which arise here with Consuls-General, Commissioners of the Debt, etc.--and his old Turk (I believe he wishes to name his Private Secretary) would be quite impossible.

The only other man is Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, and we should probably have to insist on him. He is an excellent but very weak man. His nomination would mean increased English interference in reality and the appearance of still

greater interference. The French would not like it. Yet if Riaz goes it seems the only possible solution.

I tell you all this, not because I have any immediate reason to fear an upset, but because it is as well to be alive to the possible complications which the future may have in store for us.

Appendix H

SIR E. BARING TO THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY  
BRITISH STATE PAPER, EGYPT NO. 2  
CAIRO, JANUARY 26, 1890

My Lord,

Many exaggerated statements have often been made about the non-English official in the service of the Egyptian Gov. I beg therefore herewith a list showing the appointments at present held by Englishmen in the country.

It will be seen that the total number of Englishmen employed is 336, annual salary of £150,317.

List of Appointments held by  
English Baring Officials

Appointment	Number	Salaries	Number of Subordinate Appointment	Salaries
<hr/>				
<u>Financial Department</u>				
		£		£
Financial Advisor	1	2,000	2	770
Director-General of Accounts	1	1,500	2	900

Appointment	Number	Salaries	Number of Subordinate Appointment	Salaries
<hr/>				
<u>Customs</u>				
		fE		fE
Director-General of Customs	1	2,000	12	3,522
Assistant ditto	1	1,600		
Inspector-in-Chief, Coastguard	1	800	21	3,420
<u>Post Office</u>				
Deputy Postmaster General	1	660	6	960
<u>Khedivieh Postal Steamers</u>				
Director General	1	900	36*	9,100
<u>Lighthouse</u>				
Controller-General of lighthouse and ports	1	1,500	20	4,397
Assistant ditto	1	1,000		
Engineer ditto	1	780		
<u>Educational Department</u>				
Inspectors of Schoolmasters			9	2,460
<u>Police Department</u>				
Chief of Public Security Division	1	1,300		
Deputy ditto	1	1,000		

\*Chiefly engineers

Appointment	Number	Salaries	Number of Subordinate Appointment	Salaries
<hr/>				
<u>Police Department (cont.)</u>		fE		fL
Inspectors in-chief	2	2,000		
Divisional inspectors	4	2,800		
Officers and constable			19	3,596
Clerks			5	696
<u>Public Works Dept.</u>				
Under-Secretary of State	1	2,000		
Inspector-General of Irrigation	1	1,600		
Inspector of Irrigation	4	4,700		
Assistant ditto	3	1,600		
Director of Works	--		1	1,600
	--		8	2,016
<u>Prison Department</u>				
Inspector General	1	1,000		
<u>Native Courts of Justice</u>				
Judges	3	2,886		
<u>Sanitary Department</u>				
Director	1	1,200 )		
Sanitary Inspector	2	1,200 )		
Doctors	3	774 )	- - - 3	600
Sanitary Engineers	1	480 )		
Veterinary Inspector	1	420 )		
<hr/>				
Total	39	37,700	144	34,037

Appointment	Number	Salaries	Number of Subordinate Appointment	Salaries
<hr/>				
<u>Egyptian Army</u>		£E		£E
Officers	69	43,980	--	--
Non-commissioned officers	--	--	33	5,408
<hr/>				
Total	69	43,980	33	5,408
Mixed Administration				
<u>Public Debt Office</u>				
Commissioner	1	2,000		
<u>Domains Administration</u>				
Administrator	1	2,000	2	804
<u>Daira Sanieh</u>				
Controller	1	2,000 )	- - - 5	1,956
Engineer	1	1,000 )		
<u>Mixed Tribunals</u>				
Judges	3	4,616	1	192
<u>Quarantine Board</u>				
President	1	1,200	1	204
<u>Railway Administration</u>				
President	1	1,950 )	- - - 30	8,700
Locomotive Super.	1	1,000 )		
Deputy Chief Eng.	1	720 )		
Inspector-General of Telegraphs	1	850		
<hr/>				
Total	11	15,336	39	11,856

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Salaries</u>
		fE
Superior Appointment	120	99,016
Subordinate Appoint- ments	216	52,301
<hr/>		
Grand Total	336	150,317

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This thesis is mainly based on official and private correspondence between Lord Salisbury and the British embassies and legations in Europe, Turkey and Egypt. Salisbury's private papers are a good record of British foreign policy during 1885-1902. These have more value than his official correspondence. It is clear that Salisbury preferred to state his opinion more fully in private, and he usually expressed his attitudes and opinions with greater frankness in these papers. Therefore, the Salisbury papers, which are located at Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts, are the major source for this study.

In addition to Salisbury's papers, other private papers contribute valuable materials to the study of Anglo-Egyptian relations during 1885-1892.

The Cromer Papers, 1882-1908, at the Public Record Office, are very important because Cromer was the British

consul-general in Egypt during 1883-1907. Cromer wrote extensively about Egypt's internal affairs. He also gave many opinions about the Egyptian question in general.

The Harry Boyle Papers, 1885-1907, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, contain good materials about the British policy toward Egypt during the period under study. Harry Boyle was Cromer's oriental secretary. His papers were personal letters to his mother.

Gladstone's Private Papers, in the British Museum, London, are useful source for any study of Anglo-Egyptian relations, especially during 1882-1885. These contributed little in this case, however, because of the emphasis on Salisbury.

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W.R. 106-13 Egypt and the Sudan, defenses and operations, 1883-1901.

b) In the British Museum

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Wolff was chosen by Salisbury in 1885 and 1887 to be the British envoy to try to reach an agreement with the Turks regarding the Egyptian question. Wolff spent several months at Constantinople and Cairo trying to find a solution for the Egyptian issue. Therefore, this correspondence is a good source of information about Salisbury's diplomatic efforts to ease the tension surrounding Egyptian question. Wolff did not limit his writing to his diplomatic mission. He wrote extensively about Egyptian internal affairs and gave his opinion about the effect of British administration on Egyptian life. In fact, this proved most useful to this study.

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