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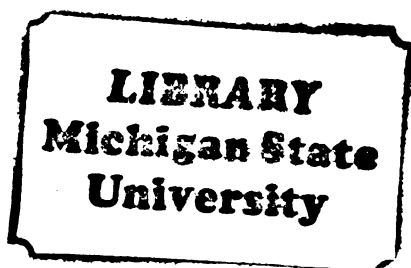
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THE ASCENDANCY OF FRANCE--A MICROCOSMIC STUDY
IN THE COMING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

by

Ronald D. Means

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ABSTRACT

SEARCHING FOR RICHELIEU: GABRIEL HANOTAUX'S QUEST FOR
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by

Ronald D. Means

In his youth Gabriel Hanotaux (1853-1944) responded to the trauma of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris uprising by searching for the foundations of French grandeur in the life and times of Cardinal Richelieu. Combining scholarship with a career at the Quai d'Orsay, he became Foreign Minister in 1894. He was elected to the French Academy in 1896. After Méline fell in 1898 he shifted to full time writing. Between 1907 and the end of 1914 he published his Études diplomatiques. Because of the unique, detailed, and continuous perspective these provide on the pre-war crises, on the alliance system, the policies of his friend, Raymond Poincaré, and the outbreak of the war itself, they make of Hanotaux a provocative subject for a microcosmic study of the coming of the war. Of particular interest are questions raised regarding the role of the "Mediterranean ententes" and the instability of the alliance system.

Hanotaux believed that geography, historical experience, and a pre-eminent civilization positioned France for an ascendant role as manager of the equilibrium among the powers. France must avoid subordinating her policy to that of another power (Russia or England,

for instance) while simultaneously avoiding diplomatic isolation. To achieve ascendancy she needed a statesman who would make the most of her opportunities. Between 1892 and 1914 Hanotaux conceived several elaborate scenarios whereby France might achieve diplomatic ascendancy. As Foreign Minister he moved opportunistically against great obstacles toward this goal. Between 1912 and 1914 he hoped that Poincaré would provide the necessary leadership. Many of Hanotaux's ideas later resonate unmistakably in the policy of Charles DeGaulle.

His pre-war writings, Jeanne d'Arc in particular, helped to shape French patriotism to react to the war as Jean-Jacques Becker says it reacted: indignant at Germany, convinced of France's innocence. His pre-war interpretations of German ambiguity on the issue of war and peace set the stage for accusing the Germans in 1914 of launching a preventive war--in an interpretation remarkably similar to Fritz Fischer's. By founding the Comité France-Amérique in 1909 Hanotaux in effect set the stage for his appeal to neutrals in August 1914.

DEDICATION

To my wife who endured it from its distant beginnings,
to my mother who thought that finishing it was far more important
than I ever did, to my children (the eldest who grew up with it
and the youngest who are now old enough to be relieved that it is
done), and, finally, to Frédérique Luce Schmidt, my mother's friend
for sixty years, a heroine of France in her own right ("Croix de
Guerre," "Medaille Coloniale," "Medaille Militaire") and, through
her grandfather, General Léon Cuny, my only link to Gabriel
Hanotaux.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Professor Emeritus Paul R. Sweet I owe my gratitude for encouraging a dissertation on a significant historian or statesman, for approving my choice of Hanotaux, and for his invaluable advice during the early stages of research and writing. To Professor Donald Lammers I owe special thanks for taking on the chairmanship of my committee when my manuscript was well advanced, for criticism which led to its considerable improvement, and for his insight and understanding in guiding the student and his work through the final stages. To Professors Warren I. Cohen, John W. Coogan, and Anne C. Meyering I owe much appreciation for accepting invitations to serve on my committee so near the conclusion of the process and for their thoughtful questioning and criticism. I wish especially to thank Dr. Coogan for his thorough and challenging critique of the positions which I have taken on Paul Cambon, Sir Edward Grey, and British policy. Should I choose to carry this work forward he has given me much to think about. I also wish to thank Professor Joseph I. Donohoe for serving as the "outside reader" and for his thoughts on Richelieu. Finally, I owe much to the MSU Interlibrary Loan Department which never failed to get me what I needed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of 1914 owes its continuing interest to the fact that it provides an opportunity of trying many different approaches and offering many different types of historical explanations. . . . The study of the minds of the men of 1914--whether they deliberately made war, or as Lloyd George claimed to believe, stumbled into it--is of obvious intrinsic historical interest. . . . It is only by studying the minds of¹ men that we shall understand the causes of anything.

James Joll
1914: The Unspoken Assumptions

Gabriel Hanotaux (November 11, 1853 - April 11, 1944) was a sophisticated and cultured Frenchman, one of the most distinguished statesmen, historians, and publicists of the generation which grew to maturity in the years following the Franco-Prussian War. He achieved his most impressive successes rather early in life as an historian of Richelieu and as Foreign Minister of the Third Republic. In fact, before his life was not quite half over, he was forced to leave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the last time. His departure came as a result of the fall of the Méline cabinet in June 1898. It came on the eve of the Fashoda crisis, a disaster for which he would be widely held responsible. He was then only forty-four years old, had served as Foreign Minister for the better part of the previous four years, had contributed mightily to the formation of the modern French Empire, and had forty-six years of life ahead of him.

Out of office, Hanotaux took up his pen and successfully defined a public role for himself as a conservative nationalist writer. Throughout the remainder of his long life he adhered steadfastly to his basic purpose: to serve France. In his writings, he promoted the nationalist faith, the republican ideal, and what he believed to be the traditional and proper course in foreign policy. From time to time, he served as an organizer or public emissary in roles appropriate to a private citizen possessing considerable prestige at home and abroad.

Between 1889 and 1914 Hanotaux wrote prolifically on a wide variety of subjects: contemporary history, careers for young Frenchmen, French history for young Frenchmen, travels in France and the Mediterranean, Joan of Arc, French traditions in the Americas, church-state relationships, the social question, constitutional issues, and international relations. He wrote a substantial number of prefaces to books by others which he felt were worthwhile enough to introduce to the public. In everything he wrote, he tried to strengthen the morale and patriotism of his countrymen and to guide French opinion onto the paths which he felt would be best for the country. Every book, essay and preface had a discernible purpose in Hanotaux's perennial campaign to strengthen and guide the French nation.

He succeeded to a point. No one acquainted with his prestige, the nature and extent of his publications, and his impressive network of friendships and connections will doubt that he contributed to the moral rearmament of the French people which preceded the First World War and which prepared them psychologically for the heavy sacrifices

which they were to make in their country's defense. But he failed too, and significantly. From 1907 until after the outbreak of the war in 1914, he produced a series of diplomatic studies which provide the most important primary source for this dissertation, and in which he argued that France should follow a more independent course. She must beware of her entente with England, for which she had paid too high a price and which could not be relied on with certainty. France must look to herself and assert what Hanotaux conceived to be her traditional role as manager of the equilibrium among the Great Powers. Many of his views were not only made irrelevant by the outbreak of the First World War, but the entry of England on the side of France made his prewar doubts appear wrongheaded.

Hanotaux did his best in his diplomatic studies to guide public opinion and through public opinion the French government toward peace. His equally sincere efforts to strengthen French nationalism and to cultivate peace were more paradoxical than contradictory. Being a fervent nationalist did not make him a chauvinist. In fact, he was a leading French advocate of principles which came to be expressed in the League of Nations, which he foresaw as an Estates-General for the world. That he both helped to prepare the lambs for slaughter in the trenches and tried to hold the butcher at bay is not the only paradox that one confronts in his life and work; nor for that matter is it the only one which could be extrapolated from the man and applied broadly to contemporary Europe.

Searching for Richelieu

The theme, "Searching for Richelieu: Gabriel Hanotaux's Quest for the Ascendancy of France," is intended to capture the essence of Gabriel Hanotaux's activities and purposes. Janus-like, it looks backwards and forwards from Hanotaux's ongoing present. It acknowledges the historian who sought in the past the secret of French "grandeur" by searching for and writing about Richelieu. It comprehends the goals, methods, and achievements of a Foreign Minister who actively sought to enlarge the influence and imperial possessions of France. Finally, it recognizes the statesman-publicist, who, out of office, sought to espouse the energy and greatness of his country, discern her opportunities, assess her dangers, and seek out pathways to her ascendancy.

"Ascendancy" is an interpretive word which I have imposed on my subject. Hanotaux did not use this word, but it catches what he was seeking better than any other word. The word is "ascendancy" and not "hegemony." The latter suggests domination backed by military might, encroachment on the rights and independence of others. What Hanotaux wanted was for France to assume what he believed to be her rightful position in Europe as manager of the equilibrium among the Great Powers. Further, he hoped that the scales would fall from the eyes of everyone at home and abroad who failed to perceive the striking pre-eminence of French Civilization.

If these aspirations constitute a quest for "hegemony," then it is hegemony in a curiously benign form, for Hanotaux had neither the intent nor the illusion of imposing French domination on the

other European Powers. In Hanotaux's opinion the first Emperor Napoleon had ultimately failed precisely because he had over-reached himself and tried to impose the hegemony of France on Europe. A preference for peace, a sense of measure, a spirit of moderation, were all, in Hanotaux's estimation, among the worthy virtues of France. "Ascendancy" suggests having risen to the top, having achieved a position more elevated than that of others, having become the recognized leader among peers, but it does not necessarily suggest encroachment or domination. Consequently, it is a much better word than "hegemony" for understanding and encompassing the ideas and aims of Gabriel Hanotaux.

"Quest" like "ascendancy" is an appropriate word for the theme because of its religious connotations: a search for the Holy Grail and for salvation. Hanotaux sought with mystical devotion the ideal of the ascendancy of France in a peaceful and prosperous Europe. It was the pilgrimage to which his long life was dedicated.

Hanotaux's quest for the ascendancy of France was at one with his search for Richelieu. For him the secrets of the "grandeur" of France were to be found in the historical study of her great builders, of Richelieu, in particular, but of Joan of Arc also, whom he revered as the symbol and incarnation of the French nation.

Hanotaux believed that the relations among the powers could be managed by individuals of sufficient stature, as Richelieu had managed these relations in the interests of France in his own time. Nothing disturbed Hanotaux more in the last years before the First World War than to perceive that events were, in fact, rushing beyond

the control of contemporary statesmen, that statesmanship was failing. As he looked into the future and tried to penetrate the gathering darkness, he was, in a symbolic way, searching for Richelieu, looking for a leader who, in full comprehension of the nature and interests of France, would somehow set things straight for France and for Europe. Between 1912 and 1914 his hopes centered in his friend, Raymond Poincaré, who became Prime Minister and Foreign Minister early in 1912 and then, a year later, President of the Republic.

A Microcosmic Study

My subtheme, "A Microcosmic Study in the Coming of the First World War," follows logically from my theme. To search for Richelieu, to seek the ascendancy of France, were Hanotaux's preoccupations. Although they were more benign than chauvinistic, they are sufficiently provocative to bear examination in the context of the coming of the war.

The word "microcosmic" may seem pretentious, and I use it mainly to emphasize the distinction between what I am attempting to do and what scholars such as Sidney Fay, Bernadotte Schmidt, Luigi Albertini, and others have attempted to do in their "macrocosmic" studies of the coming of the war. They have generally tried to seek out and describe the origins of the war, to understand the intentions and decisions of the various governments, and to assess the responsibilities of each of the Great Powers. I am trying to understand the views of a perceptive and influential mind along the approaches to the war and trying to add to our understanding of the coming of the war from within this microcosmic limitation.

In criticizing the German war guilt thesis of V. R. Berghahn, a disciple of the Fritz Fischer School, Joachim Remak has suggested that to search for the origins of the war in one country is like trying to explain a five car crash by looking exclusively at only one car and its driver.² To look at the coming of the war through the perspective of a single individual (however experienced, well-informed, and articulate), through the eyes of a person who was, so to speak, only a passenger in one of the cars, who was not at the controls and had no direct involvement in the diplomatic exchanges, whose influence on the directions in which the car was traveling remains obscure, is to look at events through an infinitely more limited and one-sided view than that even of the Fischer school.

But then, I am not attempting anything so ambitious as a definitive explanation of the origins of the war through Hanotaux. My study of Hanotaux, of a single mind wrestling with prewar events and crises, is intended to provide a portrait in depth, the kind of concentrated investigation of an engaged personality, which, in the main, is denied to the macrocosmic histories because of the immense range of personalities and events which they must encompass.

Hanotaux is well suited for such a study. After 1898 he was outside the government and could express himself both more theoretically and openly than statesmen with active governmental responsibility. He was a knowledgeable historian and had had years of experience in the conduct of foreign relations, including many years as an important career official at the Quai d'Orsay before becoming Foreign Minister. As the object of a microcosmic study in the coming

of the First World War, he is especially illuminating because he was, on the one hand, a part of the problem: in his devotion to the nation, for instance, and his support of military preparedness. On the other hand, he displayed considerable insight into what was wrong with Europe and was capable to a point of transcending his nationalism and of thinking and feeling as a European. He represents his age in the sense that he makes explicit many of the intellectual and spiritual ambiguities and tensions of the Europe which went to war in 1914.

Optimism and Fear

Optimism about the future of France was an article of Hanotaux's faith. He believed that whatever historical calamities might befall, France would rise again. But he knew calamities could occur and, in this knowledge, a profound current of anxiety was seldom far from the surface of his mind. He truly feared for France and these fears became manifest during difficult hours.

The anxiety of Hanotaux is, in part, attributable to his temperament, but cogent explanations are also to be found in the traumatic and personal experience which he had, as a teenager, of the debacle of 1870 and the Paris Commune. It is, perhaps, even more attributable to the immense burden of his lifelong commitment to the ascendancy of France (an ideal assiduously pursued against obstacles is a burden) and to the pressures built into his particular approach to diplomacy, which sacrificed the simplicity, clarity, and security of a straight-forward policy for the complex maneuvering and astute

risk-taking inherent in an attempt to manage the equilibrium among the powers. Most important of all was the range of Hanotaux's consciousness, his acute sensitivity to both the constructive possibilities in France's situation and to dangers. Although Hanotaux's perceptions of dangers sometimes seem exaggerated, they are explicable in light of his experience and his flexible "system." Moreover, they were generally real dangers, having at least an arguable presence in the contemporary situation.

Hanotaux's greatest fear was that of isolation. He was afraid that France would be isolated by the other powers and be humiliated. This was the other side of the coin of an ascendant France, which, in her beneficent greatness, would manage the equilibrium among the powers.

As long as France hovered in an intermediate position between isolation and ascendancy (with friends, but without the diplomatic position and influence necessary to manage the equilibrium) Hanotaux counseled patience. He asserted the view that France could rely on herself, that if she maintained her confidence and inner strength, if she lay back and waited, that she would find her hour, that Europe would have to turn to her before an important settlement could be made (as in an Eastern Crisis) and would await the decision of France.

But whenever it appeared to Hanotaux that France might be isolated, that a dangerous combination was developing which threatened to destroy her diplomatic position, such as a solid rapprochement between England and Germany or Germany and Russia, or even among all

three, then fear broke through in the intensity and thoroughness of Hanotaux's reactions. He always believed that such rapprochements were possible and dreaded them.

France, presumably, could avoid isolation by subordinating her policy to that of one or more of the other Great Powers. But Hanotaux also rejected and feared subordination. He insisted that France maintain her freedom of action, that she protect her options, and not allow her policy to be tied to that of any other power, not even to that of her friends. As Foreign Minister he had to undergo an exceptionally trying struggle to maintain the Russian Alliance, to keep France's commitment of military support to Russia limited to the terms of alliance and, most difficult of all, to keep French policy from being tied to the tail of the Russian kite.

Out of office, he was upset by the Entente Cordiale (1904) because he felt that France had made unnecessary sacrifices (residual rights in Egypt for a Morocco which had been destined to fall to France in any case), that she had subordinated her general policy to the policy of England (the most adroit, he felt, of all the powers at managing others), that she had abandoned the policy of equilibrium as he understood it, and that she had committed these various mistakes without even benefiting from the military guarantees of a true alliance. Hanotaux felt that for France to subordinate herself to any other power was an indignity. Clearly, subordination contradicted his exalted vision of his country and of her naturally ascendant role.

Fear of the outside world is detectable in Hanotaux. This is paradoxical, for he was not a hater, but a harmonizer, a reconciler, a negotiator. In his writings he does not express hatred of other peoples. Moreover, he was immensely interested in the outside world. There was in Hanotaux an openness to others, a fascination with other peoples and cultures. He loved to travel abroad, especially in the Mediterranean and the Americas, and he felt that world travel should be part of the education of all young Frenchmen for whom it was possible. He enjoyed friendships with foreigners, principally American, English, and Russian, and, before the First World War, advocated ideas which made him a spiritual founder of the League of Nations.

It could be argued that fear of the outside world is implied in the national ideal, that Hanotaux's commitments to the cultural superiority and diplomatic ascendancy of his country suggested a fear of others. But for Hanotaux they did not. He saw in the national ideal a peaceful and civilizing mission, not a war of revanche against Germany or a racial war against the "Yellow Peril" or a religious war against Islam. Hanotaux's fear of the outside world was something else and more subtle. His fear was the result of his world consciousness. He was afraid because his mind was open to the world, not because it was closed. He was afraid of the vastness of a world which had only been fully opened up in his own time, of the immensity of forces which were at work in this world and were transforming it rapidly, of the incipient anarchy in the

world beyond France which made it a world of dangers both for France and for Europe.

In the final years before the war Hanotaux sensed that imperialism itself had bred a dangerously chauvinistic state of mind among the European powers. He sensed that the European empire was a tenuous gamble that could be brought to ruin if, for example, Europe should bungle its way into precipitating a widespread uprising of Islam. He also sensed that the European countries were sowing the seeds abroad for the creation of "mother countries," and that the native peoples could be expected to assert themselves.

In the imperial domain Hanotaux's quest for the ascendancy of France, his hope that France could in fact succeed as an imperial power, rested on his cultural nationalism, on his faith in the attractiveness and educative power of French Civilization. Military and economic strength, however necessary, could not guarantee success. Before the First World War Hanotaux's imperialism was tempered with uncertainty and anxiety regarding where the whole experiment might be headed. Hanotaux was, in truth, an uneasy imperialist.

A Man of Faith

A person as extraordinarily complex as Gabriel Hanotaux is open to several differing interpretations, each of which has at least a minimal plausibility and none of which absolutely excludes all the others. Who was the real Gabriel Hanotaux? Which interpretation best seizes hold of him? Which best explains him? This study seeks to answer these questions.

Was Hanotaux, as Christopher Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner have argued in a jointly authored essay, a deeply flawed, neurotic personality, dangerous and erratic in a position of responsibility, a paranoid who was fundamentally unfit to serve as Foreign Minister? Must we assume by extrapolation from this interpretation of Hanotaux's personality and performance as a Foreign Minister that whatever he wrote may have been distorted by his neurosis? Were he the person that Andrew and Kanya-Forstner perceive, then he would be a most unpromising subject for a microcosmic study in the coming of the First World War. If his views were distorted by the unique difficulties of his individual psyche, if they were far more expressive of personal psychological difficulties than of the history of his country and the common experiences of his generation, then they would be of little significance in contributing to our understanding of the coming of the war.

What about this interpretation? Was the real Gabriel Hanotaux an unfit neurotic? Whether there were tendencies or strains in Hanotaux's personality that psychiatrists would identify as so severely neurotic that they would constitute genuine liabilities which would distort judgment and behavior cannot be convincingly determined from the record. It is clear that he was volatile, imaginative, and sometimes nervous, that he was under considerable pressure as Foreign Minister, that he was at times exhausted. Throughout his life he had optimistic and pessimistic moments. He appears to have had an almost stereotypical Latin temperament of the kind Anglo-Saxons sometimes find difficult to understand.

It is also clear, however, that he was sufficiently successful as Foreign Minister in preserving and advancing the interests of France against both domestic and international difficulties and that he was sufficiently consistent, coherent and persuasive in the views that he expressed as an historian and publicist that he must not be dismissed as a person whose mind and personality were fundamentally (or even periodically) out of synchronization with reality. It is true that he was sometimes optimistic and sometimes afraid. Although these attitudes have an emotional content which was sometimes passionate and powerful, they emerge, not as distortions imposed by a neurotic personality on the outside world, but as plausible responses to situations and events, derived from consistently held principles and interpretations of historical experience and correlated sharply enough with reality to pass any reasonable test for sanity.

Was Hanotaux a mere careerist, a professional nationalist who adapted himself to opportunities to advance himself? After he left the Foreign Office in 1898, Hanotaux's personal reputation, his authority, visibility, and livelihood all depended on his continuing success as a nationalist writer. But there is nothing to indicate that he was ever merely opportunistic, or that self-advancement was his transcendent purpose, or that he took on a purely careerist mentality, playing that role cynically or hypocritically. He was too passionately committed to what he wrote, too absorbed in his mission, too immersed in the history of France, both in what he wrote

and in the way he lived his life (self-consciously surrounded with the history of France) to be regarded as anything other than a sincerely committed nationalist for whom self-interest and national interest became in some sense identical.

Was Hanotaux, the committed nationalist, merely deceiving himself and others? Was he, at bottom, as Marxism would have us believe, a self-appointed defender of the established order, a high-sounding but frightened representative of the terrified elites who were trembling before the gathering forces of social revolution? Was he just another bourgeois intellectual and, hence, by Marxist definition, an unconscious but consummate hypocrite?

To see Hanotaux through Marxist eyes is to reduce him to a caricature to satisfy the requirements of an ideology. It is to place too much emphasis on the role of economic forces in determining his thought, and on his fear of revolution. It is to stand Hanotaux on his head and to make important but secondary themes and concerns into a monistic explanation. There was, it is true, in Hanotaux an underlying fear of revolution. France after all had gone through several revolutions. The commune had been a trauma of Hanotaux's youth. He devoted some of his work, quite consciously, to a defense against the forces of revolution, which he saw as gratuitously violent and divisive. His nationalism, particularly as he expressed it in the cult of Joan of Arc, was intended to heal the divisions in French society, to counter and overcome a struggle of class against class, as well as the bitter conflict between the church and the

positivist state. But, to understand Hanotaux correctly, "for" is more important than "against." The national ideal is a priori. It is the point of reference. It comes first. It is the essence of his world. It originated in the experience of his childhood and represented a conscious vocational decision of his youth to seek the recovery of the grandeur of France, a decision in which the trauma of defeat by the North German Confederation appears far more significant than the trauma of the Commune. Hanotaux felt that "defeat" was the worst thing he had ever seen.

Furthermore, Hanotaux consistently subordinated economic considerations to his nationalism. He felt that economic considerations were important in respect to the power, influence, and unity of France. He was particularly appreciative of French thrift and capital formation because of its usefulness to France in her relationships to Russia and in asserting her influence, particularly in the Balkans and Turkey. He thought of himself as an advocate of economic justice. He looked at a purely economic imperialism among backward peoples with a condescension bordering on contempt.

To see Hanotaux's nationalism as a mere derivation of fear, as a monomaniacal obsession with the revolutionary danger, as nothing other than an elaborately contrived defense against the threat of revolution, is nonsense.

Gabriel Hanotaux is best understood as a man of faith, a committed nationalist for whom (to borrow a phrase from the theologian Paul Tillich) the nation was the object of his "ultimate concern," whose vision of an ascendant France in a peaceful Europe was an

expression of this faith; who made, in the years before the First World War, an ongoing effort to apply the articles of his faith to the horribly complex realities of his contemporary world. Among these articles of faith were the natural pre-eminence of France as the manager of the equilibrium among the powers, a position she had acquired from her geography and history; the persuasive and civilizing power of French Civilization; the moderation and disinterestedness of France, and the reasonableness of her claims. Although Hanotaux succeeded in infusing his "theology" of France with a large measure of rationality, coherence, and consistency, it called for an overpowering abundance of faith. It required a belief that other nations and peoples could be brought to recognize the leadership of France, that they would properly appreciate her moderation and disinterestedness, that they would respect and respond to her civilizing power. It required a belief that the French, both statesmen and people, could be worthy of France, could live up to the national ideal, could bring "grandeur" to fruition.

Hanotaux was a man of good intentions, a banal point, but a saving grace, because it mitigates the charges of hypocrisy. His faith sometimes led him into wishful thinking, into exaggerating opportunities, into misreading the significance of events, into blindness as to how France might be viewed by others, into failing to realize that what appeared highminded and statesmanlike to him might convey to others an impression of self-serving hypocrisy. Hanotaux wrapped national ambition and realpolitik in benign effusions

of faith, obscuring egotistic motives and self-serving strategies beneath noble rhetoric and good intentions. Hanotaux was not significantly neurotic (unless faith is a neurosis); he was not a mere careerist; he was not principally a defender of the interests of the capitalist classes. He was a man of faith.

Although Hanotaux was a man of faith, there is a more general psycho-historical interpretation of French attitudes after the Franco-Prussian War and prior to 1914 which can be applied to Hanotaux. According to this view, the French were afflicted with a collective inferiority complex regarding the vitality and greatness of their society and the nation's quest for colonies and prestige were efforts to compensate for underlying feelings of inferiority. It can be argued that Gabriel Hanotaux appropriated this inferiority complex into his own psyche, that it became for him the fundamental motivation for his behavior, that his efforts to expand the French Empire, his search for Richelieu, his aspirations for the ascendancy of France, his exalted view of French Civilization, his defense of French "energy," and his efforts to strengthen French morale, were all attempts at the personal level to compensate for the feelings of inferiority afflicting the French nation.

This is a more convincing psychological interpretation of Hanotaux than the one mentioned earlier which dismisses him as unfit by virtue of personal neurosis. Clearly his nationalism offered psychological solace for himself and others from the trauma of defeat. It rationalized France's relative inferiority between the greater military power of Germany and the greater imperial power of England,

by insisting that France was not at all doomed to helplessness and frustration, but could achieve an upper hand through taking advantage of her natural position, through skillful maneuvering and negotiations, through her genius for statemanship. It could be considered reactive to the fact that hegemony had been foreclosed to France, a foreclosure which Hanotaux dismissed with the paradox that France's "disinterestedness will make her grandeur" and replaced with the virtuous and face-saving alternative of an ascendant France managing the equilibrium among the powers and leading the way to peace.

For Frenchmen whose psyches were bruised by the defeat of 1870, who suffered a loss of confidence in the vitality and greatness of their country, Hanotaux's nationalism threw open the door for a recovery of confidence (or less beneficially for self-righteous arrogance). It was a comprehensive and well contrived answer to the problem of demoralization.

This psycho-historical interpretation of Hanotaux contains some truth. The French nation, which Hanotaux consciously sought to represent within himself, suffered a humiliation in 1870 which was indisputably in part psychological. Being unable to achieve a literal healing of this wound through an immediate recovery of Alsace-Lorraine, the French nation sought psychological redressment along other pathways, in the expansion of the French Colonial Empire, for instance, and quite probably in the particular form of French nationalism articulated by Gabriel Hanotaux, as a self-appointed representative of the nation. This particular line of interpretation will appear even more persuasive when we see later how well Hanotaux's

conception of France fits into the pattern of the reaction of the French to the outbreak of the First World War.

But it is wise to be very cautious in the application of psychological concepts to individuals and to nations. Was the French nation afflicted with an inferiority complex which Hanotaux took into himself? In respect to Hanotaux, this is by no means provable.

There is nothing to prove that Hanotaux ever felt that France was inferior. His behavior simply does not require the positing of an inferiority complex. He reacted dramatically to the concrete fact that France was defeated in 1870. It was a traumatic experience. He was upset, angry, and humiliated. He devoted his life to recovering a grandeur which had suffered a terrible setback. But this does not mean that he ever felt consciously or subconsciously that France was inferior. As to the defeat, he blamed that on Napoleon III's non-existent foreign policy which had assured the isolation of France, not on the intrinsic inferiority of the French.

A further problem in reading a national inferiority complex into Hanotaux is that like the Marxist interpretation it tends to reduce him to a caricature, to trivialize him, to dismiss or under-rate the relevance of everything but the explanatory principle itself. Economic or psychological factors become more important than experience. To use the concept of inferiority complex to advance a monistic interpretation of Hanotaux is simply too narrow and too clumsy, even if it seems to help explicate the truth. It dismisses or underrates both the extraordinarily rich and complex combinations of experience, education, and personal influence which went into the formation of

the young Gabriel Hanotaux and the extraordinarily complex, difficult, and ambiguous realities with which he had to cope both as Foreign Minister and prewar publicist. Hanotaux dealt with the internal and external problems of France from a nationalist perspective which had multiple sources, which did not, by any means, entirely rest on the experience of 1870. And because this perspective is relentlessly engaged in events as they unfolded, it has a plausibility and persuasive force it could hardly have had if it were merely a psychological manifestation or an airy vision. It is this engagement of his comprehensive nationalist perspective with events which makes Hanotaux such an excellent subject for a microcosmic study of the coming of the war.

It is to the credit of the breadth and depth of Hanotaux's consciousness, if not necessarily of his analytical abilities, that in his struggle to apply his nationalist faith, his quest for the ascendancy of France, and his hopes for peace, to unfolding events, he was aware and made his readers aware of many of the complexities, ambiguities, paradoxes, uncertainties, dilemmas, and absurdities which bedeviled prewar France and Europe. Moreover, he carried within himself, in his own work on the edge of the future, a tendency to build paradox into his argument, to hold ideas in tension which were themselves reflective, or at least were thought to be reflective, of the uncertainties, ambiguities, dangers and opportunities which the future presented.

The Inner Tensions of a Visionary System

Hanotaux's nationalist system of ideas was complex, sophisticated, and plausible. It was made plausible in the way that theological systems are made plausible: by its coherence, consistency, and internal rationality, by an appealing imaginative and symbolic content, by the persuasiveness, power and grace with which it was presented, and by its pretensions to completeness, both as an historiographical interpretation and as guidance for the individual and the nation.

Hanotaux was not a notably profound historian. He was superbly trained and in a narrow, technical sense, brilliantly proficient. He did some excellent work. But his powers of critical analysis were subordinated to a search for the grandeur of France in the past and to instructing his countrymen in the national ideal. Although his principal ideas were ostensibly derived from the geography and history of France, they remained expressions of his faith, not fully proven propositions. They belonged to a cluster of ideas rooted more in faith than in convincing historical reasoning. When Hanotaux presented historical arguments in support of France's role as manager of the equilibrium among the powers, as he did, for instance in 1908 in two long articles on the Congress of Berlin, no one but a French nationalist would have been fully convinced. Surely, no one but a nationalist would have been convinced that French Civilization, whatever its real merits, was as powerfully attractive as Hanotaux believed it to be, say, to South Germans or the Moslems of North Africa. This faith in the attraction of French Civilization

is a key to understanding Hanotaux, but his historical proofs are thin. If Hanotaux is granted his faith in France, then his ideas make sense within his system. They are coherent, consistent, and rational expressions of it. The problem Hanotaux had was in giving convincing proof through history. History was not entirely cooperative. Hence, a thinness at key points.

Another related weakness appears in Hanotaux's appeals to authority. At times he relies too much on authority to support his case. During the protracted Eastern Crisis (1912-1913) which preceded the First World War, Hanotaux insisted that France was in a unique and hence decisive position in respect to events in the East because in a showdown she would be able to decide last where to throw her weight and that, consequently, all the other powers would await the decision of France. Hanotaux based his case on the authority of Bismarck because, in his memoirs, Bismarck had assigned this role to France. This required from Hanotaux's readers an acceptance of the relevance and applicability of Bismarck's possibly incorrect or outdated view to rapidly evolving circumstances in the East. In the event, in the crisis in the Balkans which actually preceded the First World War, France did not decide last. In fact, she did not decide at all. The decision for her participation was made by the German declaration of war. If Hanotaux's position (and Bismarck's) had had any validity at all it would appear to have been lost when the Germans adopted the Schlieffen Plan which required that France be attacked and defeated first in any war with Russia.

In his efforts to reconcile his faith in France, his aspirations for her grandeur, and the complex realities and uncertainties of her geopolitical situation, Hanotaux presented a system of ideas in which there was much inner tension. In presenting his ideas he labored skillfully to avoid outright contradictions.

There were profound tensions between Hanotaux's optimistic aspirations for the ascendancy of France and his fear of subordination to other powers, or far worse, his fear of isolation and possible humiliation. These tensions provide fundamental principles for the interpretation of his work as Foreign Minister. As Foreign Minister he welcomed the Russian Alliance because it protected France from isolation, but he also sought to avoid the subordination of France to Russia. Simultaneously he sought the diplomatic ascendancy of France in Europe. He himself applied these fundamental principles to the interpretation of events in his prewar essays. They are interpretative principles activated, in part, by the emotions of hope and of fear.

There was tension between Hanotaux's quest for an ascendant France which would manage the equilibrium among the powers and the idea, which was coupled with it, that an ascendant France could use its position and diplomatic genius to effect a peaceful settlement of Europe's quarrels. But how could an ascendant France, which had worked its way into a key position among the powers (assuming it were possible for France to achieve such a position) persuade those powers to accept French leadership? Would they not rather, at the first

sign that France had acquired an upper hand, reject her leadership either out of jealousy or out of a fear that they were witnessing a revival of the old French hegemonic ambitions in a new form?

Hanotaux's system attempts to reconcile the problem in the paradox that France's "disinterestedness will make her grandeur." This comes down to an act of faith on Hanotaux's part that other nations can be brought to view France very much as he views France himself, that they will recognize her moderation, her reasonableness, her genius for diplomacy, that they will accept her for what she claims herself to be and will respond positively to her leadership.

There was tension between Hanotaux's search for Richelieu, for the statesman who could achieve the ascendancy of France and the peace of Europe, and his commitment to the democratic Third Republic. On the one hand, Hanotaux advocated an approach to statesmanship which was highly fluid and dynamic, which placed great responsibility on the shoulders of the statesman, and required immense room to maneuver and negotiate. On the other, Hanotaux was very much aware of the fickleness of the parliamentary system in respect to foreign affairs. He had, for instance, seen his superior, Jules Ferry, overthrown in a moment of parliamentary panic over what was a minor setback in Indochina. He was aware from his own experience as Foreign Minister how difficult and at times impossible it could be within the parliamentary system, for the responsible statesman to impose his will on the direction of foreign policy.

Hanotaux's attempts to reconcile the tension between the requirements of effective statesmanship and the nature of democracy

can be seen in his efforts to bring about changes in government which would strengthen executive authority and thereby make effective statesmanship more possible. He hoped, for instance, when Raymond Poincaré became President of the French Republic in 1913, that he would exercise, if necessary, the dormant presidential power of dissolution in order to give to France strong and effective leadership at home and abroad. Later, when he was disappointed with the results of the Poincaré presidency, he proposed amending the constitution to give France an American style presidency.

Hanotaux's attempts to reconcile democracy and statesmanship can also be seen in the faith he placed in public opinion, a faith that the public, if properly informed, would back correct policies. He was especially pleased in his perception at the end of the Second Moroccan Crisis that public opinion had been ahead of France's leaders in standing firm against German demands. Hanotaux supported democracy and the Third Republic, but he was, at heart, a plebiscitarian who distrusted the parliamentary system.

There was tension between Hanotaux's dynamic, fluid, self-reliant, and opportunistic approach to managing France's relations with others and the fundamental need of France for security, for a structure of alliances which would protect her against the burgeoning power of Germany. When he was Foreign Minister, Hanotaux struggled both to maintain the Franco-Russian Alliance and to avoid subordination to Russia, that is, to protect the diplomatic independence of France. As Germany appeared to become more aggressive and difficult in the last years before the war this tension increased. Although

Hanotaux did not deny that the Triple Entente had value and by 1914 was speaking out rather eloquently on its behalf, he was never convinced that the English relationship offered France much security for a showdown with Germany, and he objected to this relationship insofar as Frenchmen were placing too much reliance on it and to the degree that it appeared to tie the hands of French policy.

The imaginative Hanotaux, moreover, was always looking for a pathway to the ascendancy of France through evolving conditions and events and was prepared to take risks and contemplate changes. Other French nationalists, André Tardieu, for example, Le Temp's influential commentator on foreign affairs, were more than prepared to settle for security against Germany, for a strengthening of the Triple Entente to achieve this security, and were not inclined to raise questions publicly about the reliability of the English relationship, or to foresee possible reorientations of French policy as, for example, in the establishment of a continental alliance with Germany and Russia. Hanotaux, on the other hand, saw such an alliance as a potential necessity for France in 1910 because of an apparent Russo-German rapprochement at Potsdam and an internal crisis in England.

Hanotaux tried to reconcile his criticism and his support of the Triple Entente by insisting on the immense value of Anglo-French friendship (he assumed that the Russo-French relationship was much more solid because it was based on an alliance) and by suggesting that even if the Triple Entente did not exist, the three Great Powers would of necessity join together to resist a German bid for hegemony. He did not, however, intend this observation to imply that England

would act immediately and effectively at the outbreak of a continental war to aid France, that she would send soldiers to fight in France because of a friendly entente which did not really commit her. His awareness of the public statements of English political leaders which seemed to deny a commitment of help to France, his concern with the failure of England to adopt conscription, and his almost certain ignorance of Anglo-French staff talks gives credibility to his doubts. He may have believed that although England would feel compelled to intervene against the prospects of a German victory, she might choose to intervene with her naval power only, and at the time and place of her own choosing.

There was tension between Hanotaux's support of the Triple Entente and his opposition to the encirclement of Germany which he understood to be dangerous and provocative fantasy. He dealt with this tension by insisting on the passive, peaceful, and static nature of the Triple Entente, which had, as its main value, a benign influence over world opinion, qualities which he contrasted to the dynamism of the Triple Alliance. The Triple Entente, loose knit, passive, peaceful, simply did not imply the threat to Germany connoted by the word "encirclement." Hanotaux denied the threat of an encirclement which the Germanic powers saw in the Triple Entente. In doing so he bathed the Triple Entente in virtue. In 1912, Hanotaux insisted that the best policy for Europe to adopt in dealing with the Balkan States, which had just achieved an impressive victory over Turkey, would be to take the disinterested stance of leaving the Balkans to the Balkan peoples. This position completely overlooked

the point that its implementation would tend to tighten the noose of encirclement on the Central Powers, that the Balkan Confederation, incubated by Russia and responsive to the influence of French money, would be perceived as a threat to Austria and as a hostile barrier across the expansion of German influence along the road to Baghdad. When Hanotaux's friend, Raymond Poincaré, proposed a policy of disinterestedness to Austria, he was forced by the negative reaction to re-explain himself and back away.

There was tension between Hanotaux's support of the Triple Entente and his desire, expressed with great urgency in 1912, at the time of the First Balkan War, for a resurrection of the European Concert and, through the Concert, for a settlement of the conflicts among the powers which would comprehend and be largely based on a settlement in the East. On the one hand, Hanotaux appears to have been ready to accept the alliance system as a given, as a guarantee of the balance of power and a means to stability, while, on the other, he hoped that these alliances would be transcended in a spirit of concert, which, if it were realized, and if it accomplished the mission of a general settlement, would, it would seem, turn the alliances into rather innocuous defensive guarantees or perhaps vaporize them altogether.

What Hanotaux was asking for in 1912 was an international conversion experience among the governments, a release from the violent mood of "panchauvinism" which seemed to have them in its grasp, a conversion experience stimulated and supported by the underlying will of the peoples for peace and by the realization that it

was in their mutual interests to work together for a definitive and peaceful settlement.

Finally, there was tension, a pervasive inevitable tension, between Hanotaux's aspirations for an ascendant France in a peaceful Europe, between his perceptions of opportunities through which these aspirations might be realized, between the vast geopolitical schemes he occasionally articulated to achieve these ends, and the seemingly intractable realities, the seemingly undivertable momentum of events, which confronted France and Europe and seemed to carry everything along. Hanotaux certainly opened himself to charges of wishful thinking and of promulgating empty dreams, to charges of misreading reality and of seeing opportunities which were not there.

Nevertheless, it seems wise not to dismiss the visionary side of Hanotaux's thinking out of hand. Seemingly impossible hopes are sometimes realized, and that which has not been tried cannot be proven impossible. In this regard it should not be forgotten what Hanotaux knew as well as anyone--that the nineteenth century had witnessed some remarkable performances in statesmanship; that Bismarck and Cavour, for instance, had achieved the seemingly impossible. Hanotaux was not a fool and he cannot be understood or appreciated in his visionary hopes without granting him his belief in the power of diplomacy to bring about constructive change.

It is not possible to reach a definitive judgment on Hanotaux's aspirations and dreams. On balance they are not convincing, not from what is known of what actually happened. But on the edge of the future, from Hanotaux's vantage point as he looked ahead, much

appeared possible--and may have been possible--that never actually occurred. So the issue, it would seem, in judging Hanotaux's hopes and dreams must be plausibility. Were the opportunities that Hanotaux perceived plausible opportunities for achieving his hopes and dreams? Were they plausible at the actual moment and in the particular context in which they were conceived? And do they acquire a higher degree of plausibility than they would otherwise have if Hanotaux is granted his assumption that the accomplishment of anything great for France and for Europe would require inspired statesmanship?

Visions of Ascendancy

Hanotaux continuously looked for opportunities to strengthen France's position and to enlarge her diplomatic influence. He looked for opportunities in the contemporary international situation which could be seized and exploited to achieve the ascendancy of France.

Hanotaux perceived such an opportunity in 1892, two years before he became Foreign Minister. He responded to this opportunity in a document in which he sketched a plan for achieving the diplomatic ascendancy of France. The plan was directed against England. A continental alliance under the leadership of France would overthrow the world hegemony of England. The quarrels of the continental powers would be settled by a division of the spoils. This plan will be discussed at length at the end of Chapter II, but suffice it to point out here that the international situation in 1892 offered what was at least a plausible opportunity for the realization of this

plan. The imperial ambitions of Russia, Germany, and France were frustrated by England. The Franco-Russian Alliance was being cemented and was directed against England as well as Germany, and England's naval power was, for the moment, perceived to be at a low ebb. Not surprisingly, considering the fact that the plan was dangerous and risky, Hanotaux was not encouraged by his superiors.

In 1898 Hanotaux hoped that he would be able to make use of the Marchand expedition to the Upper Nile to reopen the Egyptian question with the help of Germany and Russia. This again was a risky, but not entirely implausible long shot. France's diplomatic position vis-à-vis Germany and Russia was promising. And there was a variety of other perceived opportunities in the contemporary situation which gave Hanotaux some reason to think that England might be persuaded to talk. His confidence was no doubt enhanced by the success he had enjoyed in negotiating lesser issues with the English. He left office with the impression that he had been close to a major diplomatic success. This impression strengthened his faith in later years in what diplomacy could accomplish, and in the possibility of attaining for France an ascendant diplomatic position.

In 1903 Hanotaux published, under the title La paix latine, a collection of essays which had previously appeared in the periodical, La renaissance latine. In La paix latine he presented a vision of French ascendancy in the Mediterranean and through French ascendancy in the Mediterranean a vision of peace which would spread to all the world. This is the most vague and misty of Hanotaux's visions and was presented not so much as a response to a

clearly perceived diplomatic opportunity as to charges of decadence against the Latin peoples and to a perceived need to stake out for them a destiny analogous to that being claimed at the time for other peoples, for the Germans in Central Asia and the Russians in the Far East. In La paix latine, Hanotaux indulged himself to an uncommon degree in Latin cultural arrogance. He suggested that it was the French that best understood the Islamic peoples and how to win them over (through the protectorate), while others who were talking of a new crusade against Islam were running the risk of igniting a pan-Islamic jihad against them.

Because La paix latine was published before the Anglo-French settlement of the Egyptian question, it is almost certainly correct to read into it a new strategy for reopening that question. If Hanotaux is granted certain assumptions, then this strategy is plausible. If Germany sought her destiny in Central Asia (vis-à-vis England), if Russia sought hers in the Far East (vis-à-vis Japan and England), if the Latin sisters could work together under French leadership, if together they could win over and pacify the Moslems of the Mediterranean, then would not England's position in Egypt become untenable? But these are a lot of "if's." Could the Latin sisters work together? Franco-Italian relations were better, but . . . ?

Though stated far more explicitly, Hanotaux's geopolitical vision of peace radiating out to the world from the Mediterranean appears at least as hypothetical as the Egyptian strategy. It was based, in part, on the notion that Latin Civilization was superior,

and that it was the civilization from which other civilizations originated. A civilizing and pacifying influence would radiate from the Mediterranean into the rest of the world. Hanotaux appears to have thought that the Mediterranean was not only the cultural but the strategic center of the world. By establishing peace at the strategic and cultural center, France would be positioned to lead the way to peace on a world wide scale. This geopolitical (and geo-cultural) vision of a Latin peace rested on Hanotaux's faith, on an arrogant expression of his faith, not on a balanced, analytical presentation of real possibilities and obstacles. Hanotaux sought to inspire the realization of the vision mainly by announcing it. He sought to bring about the Latin peace by building up the confidence and inspiring the pride of the Latin peoples.

In 1910-1911 Hanotaux placed great emphasis on a Russo-German conversation at Potsdam which seemed to him to mark a significant rapprochement between the two powers which had the effect of leaving England, at a time of serious internal difficulties, highly exposed to Germanic expansion in the East, along the Berlin to Baghdad axis. To Hanotaux this seemed to signify the beginnings of diplomatic revolution. It placed France in a position in which she might be required to choose between joining Russia and Germany in a continental bloc or continuing the English relationship at great risk, a virtually impossible choice. Hanotaux was by no means alone in seeing great importance in the Potsdam conversations. They created a sensation in Europe at the time. But nothing ever came of them. They did not in fact alter Russo-German relations. They did not

initiate a continental alliance. But to Hanotaux the Potsdam conversations remained a missed opportunity. He believed that France should have participated in these conversations, but he did not make the precise outcomes of her doing so entirely clear. From her position between England and the new Russo-German combination, she could presumably have used her influence both to protect her own interests (especially in Morocco) and to lead the other powers to a peaceful settlement which would have ameliorated the tensions among them.

In 1912 Hanotaux hoped that the Great Powers would take advantage of an opportunity presented by the sudden victory of the Balkan League over Turkey-in-Europe and what then seemed like the imminent collapse of Turkey-in-Asia. He hoped that the Great Powers would abandon the fruitless policies, endlessly pursued, of trying to patch together remedies both to satisfy their conflicting interests in the Balkans and to save the tottering Turkish Empire. He thought that they should leave the Balkans to the Balkan peoples, transcend their alliances, and, in a spirit of concert, reach a definitive settlement of their differences in the East. Hanotaux proposed this approach in his diplomatic studies. For several reasons it does not appear very plausible. The Great Powers were divided, not only by their alliances, but even more fundamentally by conflicting interests as, indeed, were the Balkan States themselves. Hanotaux realized himself that a conversion of attitudes would be needed to resurrect the concert. But he does not appear to have appreciated how truly threatening the Balkan victory appeared to the Germanic powers. The best proof that this vision was not truly

plausible or, at any rate, was unrealizable, is to be found in the fact that Raymond Poincaré took what appears to have been preliminary steps, both in his actions and his rhetoric, toward its realization, but was quickly defeated by the Austrian reaction.

Hanotaux's last desperate effort to conceptualize and encourage the implementation of a vision of salvation both for France and for Europe came in the spring of 1914. This vision appears to have been rejected by Raymond Poincaré as too risky. Only Alexandre Millerand, an old friend of both Hanotaux and Poincaré and a future French President, was sympathetic. This vision was not and could not be articulated in Hanotaux's writings. But it was recorded in its essence in his notebooks and its additional features can be extrapolated from his published writings. Hanotaux envisioned a vast realignment of the Great Powers which would place France in the position of mediator between fresh groupings of Russia and Germany on the one hand, and Austria, England, and Italy on the other, and would enable her to lead the way to peace and to a settlement of Europe's quarrels. This vision of Hanotaux's was, to say the least, highly speculative. The degree of plausibility which might be seen in it is dependent on the degree of instability which can be discerned in the relations among the powers in 1914. If one were to decide that the alliances were planted in concrete, then Hanotaux's vision would become imaginative nonsense. If, on the other, one were to decide that there was, in fact, an underlying instability in the alliance system, that change was possible, and that among these possible changes was a Russo-German rapprochement and an Austrian

break with Germany, then Hanotaux's vision has at least a measure of plausibility.

Microcosmic Views of France and Europe

Hanotaux offers an informative microcosmic perspective on the French experience of the coming of the First World War. He offers broad and influential expression of contemporary French nationalism. He shows us an elaborately articulated nationalist viewpoint, in action so to speak, as it responds to events as they occur on the approaches to the war. He presents views which are connected in a revealing way to the policies which Raymond Poincaré pursued in 1912, a critical year in the coming of the war, and through which some fresh light is cast on these policies. His reactions to the outbreak of the First World War reflect and explain both the content of French "propaganda" on Germany's responsibility for the war, and the French belief in France's innocence. His prewar influence as a nationalist writer appears to be amply supported by the impressive consistency which can be shown between the pattern of Hanotaux's nationalism and the reaction to the war of the French people which has been documented recently by the historian Jean Jacques Becker in his 1914: Comment les français sont entrés dans la guerre.

Hanotaux's value as the subject of a microcosmic study is enhanced by the place his thinking occupies in a tradition of French statesmanship which, to reach beyond what are otherwise the temporal limits of this dissertation, is reflected in Charles de Gaulle, in his faith in France, in his attachment to Joan of Arc as the symbolic

representation of France, and, above all, in his conduct of foreign relations as President of the Fifth Republic where so many of Hanotaux's ideas (whether de Gaulle was influenced by Hanotaux or not) resonate unmistakably. Hanotaux and de Gaulle belong very much to the same tradition of French statesmanship. De Gaulle may be seen as the belated answer to Hanotaux's search for Richelieu. De Gaulle provides a sort of retroactive justification of this microcosmic study of Gabriel Hanotaux.

Hanotaux also offers an informative microcosmic perspective on the European experience of the coming of the First World War. He was deeply conscious of a strangely contradictory character in much of what was happening in contemporary Europe. Europe was both healthy and sick; prosperous beyond precedent, but in a nervous, agitated state; desirous of peace, but obsessed with a violent, "panchauvinistic," spirit. Everywhere the nations were assuming what was widely perceived to be crushing economic burdens to arm to the teeth for a war which they sought to prevent. Public opinion favored peace, but could not find its voice. Never was Europe in more need of statesmen who could guide the way to peace, but there was a curious dearth of statemanship.

The behavior of Germany and England disturbed Hanotaux and contributed to his feelings of uncertainty about the state of European affairs. There stood the Germans, helmets on their heads, in the center of Europe, divided in their souls on the issue of war and peace. There stood the English, dressed in civilian attire behind their moat, no more committed to France than absolutely

necessary, managing world opinion, prepared to resist a German bid for hegemony, but prepared as well to settle with Germany on terms consistent with their own security.

There stood the alliances on shaking ground, with the Great Powers committed to arrangements which were at best unstable, suspicious of their allies and courting one another across the groups, presenting, in their collective behavior prodromal signs of diplomatic revolution, of a massive displacement of forces. In this instability which he discerned, Hanotaux saw opportunities to realize his aspirations for France, in 1910 in the Russo-German conversations at Potsdam, in 1912 in the upheaval in the Balkans, in 1914 in a visionary dream of a complete reordering of relationships.

How unstable, really, were the alliances? Did Hanotaux exaggerate their instability? Macrohistorians have recognized a degree of instability within the alliances. They have recognized considerable interpenetration of the groups between the prewar crises, but they have also noted increasing rigidity at the times of confrontation. The fact that the alliances were still in place when the war began tends to confirm their stability. It seems reasonable to assume that the Triple Entente would have held together as long as Germany had seemed expansionistic in her aims, as long as she had clung to Weltpolitik and naval expansion, and as long as she had continued in her blustering and heavy handed ways in her dealings with others. The Triple Alliance (or at least the Austro-German Dual Alliance) would have held together, it would seem, as long as

the Germans had feared encirclement and as long as the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been threatened with collapse.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that Hanotaux's system, particularly insofar as it envisioned large solutions and definitive settlements, required a measure of instability in the alliance system or, at least, an elasticity which would permit diplomatic maneuver and change. If the system were frozen and immobile, it would immobilize France's diplomacy along with that of all the other powers. Hanotaux, in his aspirations, had a vested interest in a system unstable enough, or at least elastic enough, to permit change. A significant variant in Hanotaux's aspirations was that of 1912 when he was prepared to see the alliances stabilized, but transcended through a resurrection of the Concert. That not having worked, by the spring of 1914 he was convinced that what was needed was the radical rearrangement of the groups themselves which he discerned as possible within the European situation.

Gabriel Hanotaux's prewar writings do effectively underline uncertainties and potential instabilities in the alliance system. These have not always received as much emphasis as they deserve from the macrohistorians. In Hanotaux's exposure of the uncertainties and instabilities in the relationships among the powers before the war he casts significant light on the European experience of the coming of war. Even though fears that a nation's alliances were about to dissolve and that old friends might soon be enemies and old enemies might soon be friends were not the things that European

statesmen talked much about in public, there is ample evidence in the European record of these final years before the war to lend support to Hanotaux's perceptions of uncertainty and instability in the alliance system itself.

From the perspective of a microcosmic study of Gabriel Hanotaux, Europe went to war in an immensely contradictory state, armed to the teeth, chauvinistic, hoping for peace, terribly uncertain and insecure in its internal arrangements, and looking for solutions it could not find. From this perspective, the increasing rigidity of the alliances at times of crisis could be interpreted as the result of a growing fear of their dissolution, the interpenetration of the groups between the crises as a tacit search for something different.

Considerable attention has been given to the pervasive effects of Social Darwinism on the European mind prior to the First World War. The doctrine of survival of the fittest, that war is a test of national vitality and worthiness, was in the air. On the face of it, Hanotaux appeared to have been largely unaffected by Darwinist ideas. Classical and quasi-Christian conceptions ruled his thinking. Balance, harmony, and peace among nations, not survival of the fittest, were the goals of diplomacy. Civilization and justice were more admirable than war. The nation was founded on a spirit of sacrifice, a quasi-Christian virtue, and its self-consciousness had matured through suffering, a quasi-Christian value.

Nevertheless, there appeared in Hanotaux an incipient Darwinism, lying partially hidden behind his classical and Christian

conceptions. He recognized the role of struggle in the formation and survival of the nation. Sacrifice for the welfare of others is not only a Christian virtue, it is a concept of Social Darwinism. The species survives because its members sacrifice themselves in its defense. Hanotaux defended France against charges of decadence by proclaiming the "energy" of the French. But as long as peace was maintained in the last years before the war he resisted a whole-hearted acceptance of Social Darwinism by trying to believe that peace was the normal state of mankind, that Europe's troubles were amenable to diplomatic solutions, that all the Great Powers, including Germany, preferred diplomatic solutions to war. Once the First World War began, however, he converted with alacrity to the idea that war is the normal state of mankind, a symbolic surrender to the Darwinist world view. He carried in his own soul the conflict between less bellicose views of human society and nakedly warlike attitudes fostered by Social Darwinism. In this respect too, he is an illustration of the malaise of the European soul on the eve of the war. He reflected its deepest tension, its ambiguity on the issue of war and peace.

In 1912 Hanotaux found it deplorable that "each of the European megalomaniacs looks for its pathway." But what was his unending quest for the ascendancy of France, his visionary schemes for settling Europe's quarrels under French leadership, if not "megalomania" looking for a pathway? Did it cease to be megalomania because it was ostensibly moderate and disinterested? Was it peaceful and unaggressive for these reasons?

In considering this matter of "megalomania" it is enlightening to contrast Hanotaux's aspirations for the ascendancy of France with overtly vocalized German aspirations for Weltpolitik. Hanotaux's quest for ascendancy was discretely proclaimed. He did not use the word "ascendancy," but that this was the thrust of his intention was there for any perceptive reader to see. The German professors who proclaimed Weltpolitik from the lecturn seem, in comparison more forthright. They advocated a German quest for world power, an effort to extend the Rankean balance of power from Europe into the world. This quest was to be backed with military strength and a powerful battlefleet. Its purpose was to overthrow the world hegemony of England and to establish a balance of power in the world in respect to which Germany would have a crucial, perhaps ascendant, role.

Like Hanotaux, they also clothed their nationalistic aspirations in virtue. The German scholar, Hans Delbrück, for instance, saw the struggle against English world hegemony as analogous to the struggle in 1813 against French continental hegemony and thought that if other nations saw what Germany was after they would join her in this struggle.⁴ Curiously, this vision is very close to that of Hanotaux in 1892 in his unpublished plan in which he presented his scheme for a French-led continental alliance dedicated to overthrowing the world hegemony of England and effecting a division of the spoils which would satisfy the ambitions of all the powers. Hanotaux was prepared to deliver the coup de grâce to England with a cross channel invasion.

Hanotaux's quest for French ascendancy and German Weltpolitik had much in common. Both aimed, at least purportedly, at equitable solutions to the conflicting interests of the Great Powers. Both aimed at achieving a position for the nation which it had not yet attained, or if attained in the past, had been lost. Both assumed that the nation had a natural right to leadership among the powers. Both contained naive and unrealistic hopes that other nations would accept that nation's leadership and take its good intentions at its word. Paradoxically, these strong aspirations to leadership, the implicit struggle to position the nation as leader, may go a long way to explain (because of a deadlock of these ambitions) the failure of the statesmen to prevent the First World War.

Gabriel Hanotaux presents an exceptional and possibly unique opportunity for a microcosmic study in the coming of the First World War. No one else, to my knowledge, in France or in Europe combined so completely the nationalist historian and the experienced statesman, and also wrote so prolifically and regularly on the prewar crises and events, a sine qua non for such a study. This study has evolved from the historiographical opportunity for a microcosmic study in the coming of the First World War presented in the massive Hanotaux opus. In that opus Hanotaux sought to interpret the history of France to the French nation and to influence the nation's destiny. He elaborated a fundamentally consistent and relatively complete position on international affairs over many years. Because he is only a finite part, he cannot be taken for the whole, for the whole of France or the whole of Europe. He was an individual person who,

like all others and more than most, enjoyed a special measure of uniqueness. But so much that was important about France and about Europe was reflected in him that a study of him casts light upon the whole, offering a microcosmic perspective on the coming of the war which is at once informative and supplemental to the macrohistories.

CHAPTER I: FOOTNOTES

¹James Joll, 1914: The Unspoken Assumptions (London: Weiderfeld and Nicolson, 1968), p. 24.

²Joachim Remak, review of Germany and the Approach of War in 1914, by V. R. Berghahn, in Journal of Modern History, September 1975, p. 573.

³Gabriel Hanotaux, "La deuxième guerre des Balkans," Juin 12, 1913, Études diplomatiques: la guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 347.

⁴Ludwig Dehio, Germany and World Politics in the Twentieth Century, trans. Dieter Pevsner (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1967, c. 1959), pp. 43-50.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG GABRIEL HANOTAUX: THE EMERGENCE OF A NATIONALIST HISTORIAN AND STATESMAN

Young Hanotaux and the Grandeur of France

Gabriel Hanotaux was born at the village of Beaurevoir in the Aisne on November 19, 1853. His father was a notary, in France a kind of land lawyer concerned with legal documents and rights pertaining to real property. His family was bourgeois but had the close ties with the soil and the peasantry which had been typical of bourgeois provincial families for centuries. He had an older brother, Karl, and a younger sister, Theodora. Gabriel was destined by parental fiat for the "notariat."¹

His relationship to history began during his childhood at Beaurevoir when he and his companions played in the ruins of the castle of John of Luxemburg where Joan of Arc had once been confined and when they listened to stories told by veterans of the Napoleonic Wars.² His home stood near a frontier invasion route which was centuries old. As a child, when he failed to learn his lessons, he was threatened with the "Allies," sometimes even with the "Imperials." A grandmother remembered holding the bridles of Cossack horses.³ In later years, when he said "history is what my father told me," he was affirming the importance of these personal and anecdotal connections with the past.⁴

The most decisive experiences of Hanotaux's youth were those that shaped his generation: the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune.

In 1870 when the war broke out he was sixteen years old. He was living in St. Quentin, a town near Beaurevoir to which his family had moved. His father was terminally ill. To take his "baccalaureate exam at Douai he had to cross lines infested with the enemy couriers."⁵ He had learned enough German to serve as an interpreter when the Municipal Council of St. Quentin negotiated the surrender of the town. This brought enemy soldiers into his home with their "dirty boots and gross insolence."⁶ In January 1871, he witnessed a battle from a hill. He saw the well-drilled Prussians destroy an improvised French army of freshly mobilized militia. That night he helped to collect the wounded, many of whom had to be pulled from mud into which their clothes had frozen.⁷ Years later Hanotaux summarized his reaction to the experience of the war: "I have seen some terrible things and the most terrible of all, defeat."⁸

News of the uprising in Paris infuriated provincials, particularly the inhabitants of the occupied frontier districts. The Commune appeared to embody an assault on the unity of France at a time when all Frenchmen should stand together.⁹ When Hanotaux went to Paris in May 1871 to begin his legal education, the city was still smoking, the streets were filled with rubble, and the "Wall of the Federals" at Le Pere La Chaise cemetery was discolored from the blood of executions.¹⁰

Young Hanotaux began his legal studies at the École des Droit, but he was depressed by the atmosphere around him.¹¹ Disturbed and uncertain, he began to grope his way in a direction which would, though he did not fully comprehend it for a long while, set the pattern for his life. In spite of his dutiful attendance at the École des Droit, he began to slide in the direction of history as a vocation.

An important incident in this process occurred after he saw a poster announcing that the Senate Library would be open at certain hours. He went to the practically deserted library where he caught the attention of the librarian, Leconte de Lisle. De Lisle asked the seventeen year old boy what he was looking for and received this reply: "I want to know what I should think of Louis XIV."¹² In the midst of his country's catastrophes, young Hanotaux was groping in the past for the sources of national recovery. He was gravitating into a search for the foundations of French "grandeur." In later years he believed that this moment governed his generation. "An idea, the most simple of all came into our minds: our fathers had made France great: why not do as our fathers had done."¹³

Henri Martin

An American historian, Alf Heggoy, has suggested that Hanotaux was a self-made man.¹⁴ Certainly, as a young man, Hanotaux had the abilities and ambition to make something of himself in spite of obstacles. But if by "self-made" is meant (as Heggoy seems to imply) that he was the disadvantaged provincial boy who pulled himself

up by his own bootstraps in the impersonal atmosphere of the capital city, the point is not well taken. For one thing, Hanotaux was assisted in his rise to prominence by several of the great schools of France: the École des Droit and the École des Chartes, both of which he attended, and by the École des Hautes Études where he taught. For another, he had an extremely powerful and influential friend in his relative Henri Martin (his mother's great-uncle). Martin was one of the leading republican politicians of the day, a senator from the Aisne, and the historian who would be chosen in 1878 to replace Thiers in the French Academy.

Given young Hanotaux's talents and interests, this older relative had exactly the right connections to help him along and used them when and where they were needed. Henri Martin introduced Hanotaux to Jules Quicherat, the director of the École des Chartes, who encouraged him to enter that school, noted for its training in historical method and medieval studies. In 1878 he also used his influence with Waddington, the Foreign Minister, to open the archives at the Foreign Ministry to the aspiring young historian, an opportunity which not only made it possible for him to become the leading Richelieu scholar of his generation but which opened the way to his diplomatic career.

The impact of one person upon another is not always easy to measure, but the striking similarity between Henri Martin's accomplishments and intellectual outlook and so much of what can be seen in Gabriel Hanotaux suggests that the younger man took the older as a model. Henri Martin belonged to that genre of outstanding Frenchmen,

best exemplified by Guizot and Thiers, who combined an impressively productive scholarly career with an active and successful career in public life. Young Hanotaux, as an historian and foreign minister, also became a representative of this type. Hanotaux, like Henri Martin, became a national historian deeply interested in the origins of France. Both were republicans who looked back behind the French Revolution to Old France for the sources of the greatness of their country and were ready to assert the continuity of post-revolutionary France with earlier traditions.

In 1885 two years after Martin's death, Hanotaux expressed his admiration for his then far more famous relative in a book length "hommage": Henri Martin: Sa vie, ses oeuvres, son temps.¹⁵ Years later, Hanotaux recalled with pride in the preface to his own Contemporary France that Henri Martin had written a popular history of France: "I continue his work and follow his example. Perhaps the circumstances will be remarked that in one and the same family two generations will have worked on the same task in succession."¹⁶

Albert Sorel

On the first day in 1878 that young Hanotaux entered the archives at the Quai d'Orsay to begin his research on Richelieu, he met Albert Sorel. Sorel, who was ten years older than Hanotaux, was gathering his notes for his monumental history of Europe and the French Revolution. Friendship developed between the two historians which lasted until Sorel's death in 1906. At that time Hanotaux noted that "the same labor, the same ideal pursued together

fraternally for a long time, created between us those ties which death alone could break."¹⁷ In 1922 he would write, "I spent my life side by side with Albert Sorel . . . we talked to infinity. Our two lives developed in a parallel fashion. I encountered Albert Sorel everywhere"18

Hanotaux recalled that in the seclusion of the archives they had both understood that "the secret of the grandeur of France was hidden there,"¹⁹ and that they had both immediately perceived that

in her different epochs and in the wake of her revolution, France's history is always the same, developing with a perfect logic--traditional and new, obedient to the laws of nature and the laws of reason, not the history of such and such a century, or such and such a regime, or such and such a dynasty, but the History of France . . . France would certainly survive because she had survived everything. . . . These studies were a school of perserverance and optimism.²⁰

Both Hanotaux and Sorel stressed the continuity of history and for both the understanding of nations was fundamental to an understanding of history. Sorel believed that "the nations had been, though for a long time without knowing it, the whole raison d'être, the vital force . . . of history. The French Revolution summoned them to self-consciousness"21

Sorel concluded that during the French Revolution the nations only followed their heredity genius, that is to say the character, emotions, instincts they had evolved in the course of centuries. The peoples, beginning with the French, interpreted the Revolution according to their national traditions, and the governments dealt with it according to their political habits. Therefore we must go back to these traditions and habits to understand the relations of France and Europe during the Revolution: they provide the key to this whole history.²²

Both Hanotaux and Sorel understood that geography was fundamental to understanding the history and national traditions of France.²³

Hanotaux believed that France, by virtue of her geography, had been given the pivotal role in European history:

Standing as she does where the seas of north and south most closely meet, France of the Atlantic and of the Mediterranean, of the plains and of the mountains, of the Latins, of the Germans, is perforce the field of secular conflict as also of truces that are but far too short. Her aspect, and her language, bear trace of all that has lived on the old continent. France is both agent and umpire of the balance; it is she that turns the scales. Her humiliations and her glories form the central interest of the European drama.²⁴

The general line of thinking which the two historians shared led to the conclusion that the art of diplomacy rested on solid intellectual footings. If nations tended to act according to their national characteristics, if governments tended to act according to established habits and in defense of perennial interests which were themselves largely the function of geography, if they tended to act with continuity over time, then it would be the first task of the statesman to understand the national character and interests of each nation, especially his own, its position (geographic, military, cultural, and economic) and its natural role among the powers deriving from its position. Then, if he sought both peace and success, he must ask no more of his own nation or of others than their respective situations, traditions, and interests will allow, while, within this limitation he must make an effective use of the weight and influence of his own country to defend its interests and achieve its goals.

Everything we know of Hanotaux shows that he felt he understood France and the position of France among the powers. He felt that he understood the nations of Europe, their positions, interests, ambiguous tendencies, virtues. This gave him confidence as a Foreign Minister. Later it enabled him to write with authoritative confidence about diplomatic issues from outside the government. He did not feel he needed to know the details of diplomatic interchange to recognize what was essential in events and to perceive their implications for France.

Both Hanotaux and Sorel felt that a tradition of moderate ambitions best expressed the character of France. Sorel stated that "moderation" was the "essential principle" of the 'classic system' of French diplomacy."²⁵ Richelieu, who followed the principle of "la moderation dans la force," had exemplified this system.²⁶ France had gotten herself into trouble whenever she had abandoned moderation to fight "wars of magnificance" as she had under Louis XIV. Both historians admired moderate statesmen with moderate goals. Sorel thought highly of Vergennes, Foreign Minister for Louis XVI. He had staunchly defended French interests against England and Austria. But once he had accomplished his necessary goals he had understood that French interests "lay in the preservation of European peace."²⁷ Hanotaux seconded Sorel's approval of a saying of Vergennes, that France's "disinterestedness will make her grandeur."²⁸ Indeed, Hanotaux's fundamental position could hardly be more succinctly stated. A moderate and disinterested France would find her grandeur

by providing Europe with moral and intellectual leadership and by managing the equilibrium among the powers.

In a series of articles on Napoleon, published in 1925 and 1926 in the Revue des deux mondes,²⁹ and subsequently praised very highly by the great Napoleonic historiographer, Pieter Geyl, Hanotaux criticized the Emperor for a fatal lack of balance. He perceived (in Geyl's words) that Napoleon "betrayed a lack of balance in the limitless nature of his aims"³⁰ and that, consequently, after Tilsit "the foreign task, the war effort, began to dominate to such an extent, to exercise such pressure upon everything, that the fruits of the regime were squandered and the finest projects spoiled and diminished by their initiator himself."³¹

Sorel did not extend the logic of "moderation in force" to Napoleon:

When in the eight volumes of *Eugope*, in the French Revolution he came to the Napoleonic period, his balanced judgment for once gave way to his patriotism. In contradiction to what he himself had written earlier of Louis XIV, he saw Napoleon as pushed into continual wars against his will instead of by his own fantastic schemes and bellicose spirit.³²

Both Hanotaux and Sorel were preoccupied with the balance of power. Sorel believed that the working of equilibrium was at best unstable and spasmodic. In fact, the balance existed only "after great wars, when all the powers were exhausted and near to ruin.

. . . It only needed one state to decline and another to revive for the balance to disappear."³³ Sorel denied that the balance of power was either a "principle" or a "guarantee of law."³⁴

This suggests that Hanotaux conceived of France's role as arbiter of peace not merely as a natural function of geography and national tradition, but a virtual necessity of the European order. The conversion of the equilibrium among the powers from a merely temporary condition, prelude to further misbalance and war (Sorel's view), into a principle of balance steadily applied to the maintenance of peace (Hanotaux's view), implies a "balancer" conscious of its role and prepared and equipped to perform it. It also implies a power settled and moderate in respect to its own ambitions. In Hanotaux's view, France was this power.

Both Sorel and Hanotaux believed that French Civilization had had a tremendous impact on the rest of Europe. To Sorel, "the most brilliant tradition" of French history was "the intellectual conquest of the world."³⁵ He believed that the French had been since the Middle Ages the "disseminators par excellence of modern civilization."³⁶ Eighteenth-century Europe had acquired its universal ideas from France and had even learned its own history in French. The tendency, especially in Germany, to reject French influence after the French Revolution was followed in the name of a nationalism which had itself been learned from the French.

In a paradoxical way, the French Revolution had backfired against France. First, the French themselves had betrayed the general ideas of the Revolution for French conquest. Then, those whom France subjugated, turned against her "the ideas of national independence which she had spread throughout the world."³⁷ Although Sorel was a "European" who distrusted colonial adventures,³⁸ while

Hanotaux was an imperialist, who favored an active policy overseas, there is a highly suggestive similarity between Sorel's analysis of the influence which French Civilization had had on the continent and the national reaction which France stimulated, and Hanotaux's brand of imperialism which was highly dependent on a faith in the power of French Civilization to influence and win over other peoples, while maintaining a remarkably cautious approach to the feelings and traditions of peoples who were being brought under French protection. Hanotaux believed that the relationship between France and these peoples was delicate and fragile, while potentially enormously fruitful for everyone concerned. At a minimum, the close relationship between Hanotaux and Sorel suggests mutual inspiration and the cross-fertilization of ideas.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In 1878 Waddington, the Foreign Minister, had granted Hanotaux access to the Richelieu documents. But it was Gambetta who drew him into an active role in the work of the Foreign Office. When Gambetta formed his long awaited government in 1881, an event which was widely expected to transform the Third Republic in the direction of a stronger parliamentary executive, he gave Hanotaux a minor role on his staff.³⁹ Although the Gambetta political experiment soon failed (in early 1882), Hanotaux stayed on as Chef du Cabinet to Challemel-Lacour and then Jules Ferry. His responsibilities placed him where he could learn the inner workings of French diplomacy and even assert some influence of his own.

Evidently he impressed his superiors, who moved him along quite rapidly. In 1885 he was appointed Counselor to the French Embassy at Constantinople. In 1886 he was promoted to *Chargé d'Affaires*. In the same year he resigned his office and was elected as a Moderate to the Chamber of Deputies from the Aisne. Defeated in the next general election because of his opposition to Boulanger, he was back at the Foreign Office in 1889 where he was put in charge of protectorates. In 1890 he was delegate to the Berlin Conference with dealt with the problem of spheres of influence in Africa. In 1892 he was made Director of Consulates and Commercial Affairs. In 1894 Casimir Perier invited him to become Foreign Minister in the new Charles Dupuy ministry.

At forty-one Hanotaux was a comparatively young man who had risen to the top rather rapidly. Had he not won considerable admiration for his abilities and achievements he would not have been offered the cabinet post. Not only was he young for such an important post, but he did not have a seat in Parliament. In fact, he was to be the last cabinet member in the history of the Third Republic who was not drawn from parliamentary ranks.

In photographs taken of him in the 1890s Hanotaux appears as a dark, curly-haired man. He has a round face and slightly receding hairline. His oval glasses are clamped atop his long, thin nose. There is an intense, intelligent, and mildly anxious expression in and around his eyes. His firmly set mouth is partially obscured by moustache and goatee. The overall impression is of intellect, energy,

and ambition. All that is known about Hanotaux confirms that he was brilliant and extraordinarily hardworking.

Doubtless he was flattered in 1894 at being selected as the new Foreign Minister. But he was not overjoyed at the prospect of submitting himself to the risks, trials and frustrations of an exposed and probably quite transient position. On December 25, 1894 he confided to his Carnets that he had accepted the new assignment "only through the sentiment of duty . . . ," that he might well be ruining his life, "for the satisfaction so precarious of 'having been a minister.'" ⁴⁰ What he professed then, and what he still professed after seven months in office, was a desire to be free of public life and to devote himself entirely to his historical studies. ⁴¹ Though Hanotaux was ambitious his political ambitions and his interest in wielding power were tempered by his fondness for scholarship and meditation. In this, he differed from Richelieu whom he believed had been consumed by an ambition for power and position which had become "identified with the wellbeing of the state" only after he had attained his goal. ⁴² Hanotaux believed that it was his duty to accept Casimir Perier's invitation because he was the only person in the government well enough acquainted with the circumstances and issues pertaining to the Anglo-Congolese Treaty of May 12, 1894 to cope with it effectively and negotiate the removal of what would otherwise remain a serious set-back for France. ⁴³ He stated in his Carnets that "if I am minister only three months, in order to try to handle the affairs of the Congo well, perhaps I will have done a service for my country." ⁴⁴

Jules Ferry

A decade before he became Foreign Minister Hanotaux had served an apprenticeship in "empire building" with Jules Ferry, the statesman who did more to enlarge the modern French Colonial Empire than any other French minister prior to Hanotaux himself. Young Hanotaux had been Ferry's personal assistant and adviser (Chef du Cabinet) during the latter's second ministry (February 1883 to August 1885), in which Ferry had opted to take on the portfolio of foreign affairs as well as the responsibility of Prime Minister.

As an adviser, Hanotaux had proposed to Ferry the "protectorate" as the method for establishing French authority in Tunisia. Hanotaux told Ferry of the advantages "derived from the protectorate system at the time of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis (1559), when the three bishoprics of Toul, Metz, and Verdun were submitted to such a regime. Ferry was so taken with the idea that it served as inspiration in his instructions to the first French resident-general."⁴⁵ Years later, Hanotaux acknowledged that he had been a pupil of Ferry and, in colonial matters, had "received from him the doctrine and the first lessons and collaborated in the first enterprises."⁴⁶

Both Ferry and Hanotaux belonged to the "Opportunist Republic" (1879-1899). Opportunism is a word which encompasses many different men and policies, and is consequently difficult to define. Basically it stands for the approach to politics (Hanotaux in one context defined it as politics), both domestic and foreign, of moderate

Republican politicians who, philosophically, were opposed to inertia and were prepared to get things done, who were ready to take up and exploit whatever opportunities came along for defending and consolidating the position of the Republic in French society and for strengthening France's international position. The method of the Opportunists was, on the whole, to eschew sensational acts and extremes (although there is admittedly a profound difference in style between the flamboyant and colorful Leon Gambetta and Jules Ferry, who was perhaps the most colorless of all French statesmen) and to opt for a pragmatic, flexible, work-a-day approach to political and diplomatic issues. An Opportunist may be looked at as the diametrical opposite of an ideologue, a person who cannot deal with any questions except within a "system."

As an empire builder Jules Ferry epitomizes the statesman who, without a system or a plan, waited for opportunities to appear and then exploited them.⁴⁷ He became an empire builder because he was persuaded by others that empire building was a good thing for France and because he was confronted by a series of empire building situations: in Tunisia, Oceania, West Africa, the Congo, Madagascar, and Indochina. Ferry did not create these situations but acted aggressively to take advantage of them.⁴⁸ His service to the Empire was to collect the then available real estate.

As Foreign Minister Hanotaux did not proceed to implement a detailed plan or try to impose a rigid system of ideas upon reality. He too was opportunistic, although more active in stimulating opportunities than Ferry. But he appears to have started with a much

clearer and more elaborate view than Ferry of where he wanted to go and of what the role and position of France in the world should be. His diplomacy was rooted in his understanding of French and European history, and in historically derived conceptions of the role and destiny of France. Opportunism for him was no more than a method for attaining his ends, another word for the flexible and pragmatic approach which he took in foreign affairs.

Beyond the policy of imperial expansion, the most significant example that Ferry set for Hanotaux was his cooperation with the Germans in limited ways and for specific purposes of national interest. Indeed, Ferry made use of German cooperation to expand the Empire. According to an historian of Ferry, Thomas Power, "Bismarck . . . deliberately encouraged France to build an Empire in order to distract her from her lost provinces,"⁴⁹ by backing her ambitions against England at a time of Anglo-German coolness. Although Ferry did not let Bismarck push him any further than he cared to go, he found German support "most useful in the West Africa, Indo-China, and Madagascar questions, as well as in Egypt."⁵⁰

Richelieu

Before he became Foreign Minister, Hanotaux spent his free hours for many years on Richelieu. He published the first and second volumes of a projected multivolume work.⁵¹ These volumes were his finest achievements as an historian and opened the way to his election to the French Academy in 1896.

A question naturally arises as to the relationship between Hanotaux's Richelieu studies and his approach to foreign policy. In the preface to the first Richelieu volume, published in 1893, Hanotaux indicated what he hoped would be the effect of his book on his readers. In doing so, he revealed something of what he himself had drawn from its preparation:

If this book gives the Frenchmen who will read it a new opportunity to have confidence in the destinies of their country, if it contributes to demonstrating to the statesmen of the Third Republic the efficacy of a tradition, if it sets before their eyes the causes of the grandeur of France in the past and [the causes] which would assure it in the future, if the best among them find in it fresh reasons for founding their existence more and more on that of the nation, the results will have exceeded my hopes.⁵²

If nothing else could be said about the impact of Richelieu upon Hanotaux, this quotation makes it abundantly clear that Hanotaux regarded the history of Richelieu as entirely relevant to the problems confronting contemporary France, that his book on Richelieu had in some sense culminated in an elucidation of the permanent causes of France's "grandeur," and that Richelieu was a source of inspiration for Hanotaux's nationalist faith, his confidence in the future, and his personal commitment to serve France. Surely, the study of Richelieu must be credited in part with the approach Hanotaux took to his duties as Foreign Minister: the confidence which he manifested in himself, in his country, and indeed, in the art of diplomacy itself. The study of Richelieu also prepared Hanotaux for the weight of responsibility, for the frustrations of power. He learned not only

a "tradition" from Richelieu, he learned to persevere for that tradition against obstacles.

Through the detail of resolutions and of acts, of resistances and of intrigues, of negotiations and of battles, one will see that an accumulation of daily efforts make the durable works. One will see that merit and good will are not sufficient; but that what is necessary also, and above all, is an enormous expenditure of will and perseverance. . . . This spectacle . . . teaches men to not let themselves be stopped by obstacles which each day oppose them . . . to hold to the general lines, to the ideas which are the mistresses of time.⁵³

Beyond these rather general suggestions, not much can be said with any degree of certainty about Richelieu's impact on Hanotaux the statesman. He had, after all, such excellent contemporary teachers as Waddington, Gambetta, and Ferry. But it does seem probable that several of the postulates of diplomacy which Hanotaux adhered to were reinforced if not derived from the study of Richelieu.

There can be no doubt that Hanotaux was well acquainted with Richelieu's Political Testament, an aphoristic work which the Cardinal had prepared, ostensibly at least, for the edification of his King, Louis XIII.⁵⁴ In fact, the most dramatic event of Hanotaux's early years in the archives was his discovery in 1880 of documents authenticating this work.⁵⁵ He wrote in the preface to their publication, "When all was revealed, we found ourselves face to face with the builders of France, we applied ourselves to questioning them and to following them."⁵⁶

In his Political Testament, Richelieu stated that

It is absolutely necessary to the well-being of the state to negotiate ceaselessly, either openly or secretly, and in all places. . . . He who negotiates continuously will finally

find the right instant to attain his ends, and even if this does not come about, at least it can be said that he has lost nothing while keeping abreast of events in the world"57

As Foreign Minister Hanotaux was engaged in negotiations and made substantial progress in settling outstanding differences with the other powers. Often forgotten under the retrospective shadow of Fashoda is his persistent effort, in spite of many frustrations and disappointments, to reduce the backlog of colonial conflicts with England, the many agreements signed to that end and achieved with no little pain and difficulty. This series of small triumphs was capped at the very end of his tenure by the Niger settlement, which, with the notable exceptions of Egypt and the Sudan, removed the last points of contention in Africa between England and France. These protracted and fruitful efforts made the Anglo-French entente of 1904 a possibility.⁵⁸ The Niger settlement was the climax of Hanotaux's diplomatic career.⁵⁹

Hanotaux's most masterful tour de force as a negotiator was the series of agreements which he worked out in 1896 and 1897 with the European powers abrogating the Tunisian capitulations treaties. This "mouvement tournant" gradually forced England, which was opposing the Tunisian ambitions of France, into a corner, giving her little choice but to come to terms. For France it secured an unencumbered grip on Tunisia.⁶⁰ In this maneuver, as in others, Hanotaux made use of a Richelieu strategy: "go straight to the goal while turning your back."⁶¹

It was a principle of Richelieu's Political Testament that "diplomacy should aim, not at incidental and opportunist arrangements, but at creating solid and durable relations."⁶² Hanotaux aimed at creating durable relations with all of Europe. He sought to strengthen the tie with Russia. He hacked away at a thicket of accumulated disagreements with England and had cut most of them away before his fall. He did much to improve Franco-Italian relations. He was ready to cooperate with Germany whenever it would be in the interests of France.

Richelieu's approach to distasteful alliances may have made it easier for Hanotaux to violate the spirit of his departed anti-Tsarist mentor, Henri Martin, by working for the Russian Alliance.⁶³

Richelieu believed that

if national interest demanded an alliance with an obnoxious, even with a heretic state, then no feelings of what one liked or disliked should be permitted to blur that necessity. In moments of danger one should choose one's allies, not for their integrity or charm, but for their physical or even geographical value.⁶⁴

If Cardinal Richelieu could serve the interests of France in an age of religious conflict and war by cooperating with the German Protestants then why couldn't Hanotaux serve the interests of France in an age of conflicting national imperialisms by cooperating with the German nationalists? The fact that Hanotaux was publishing outstanding scholarly works on Richelieu, who had cooperated with the German Protestants for the sake of French security vis-à-vis the Empire, constituted a defense for cooperation with the Germans for the sake of the overseas interests of France.

Bismarck

Bismarck made an immense impression on Hanotaux. The young Frenchman was shaped as a scholar and diplomat during the age of Bismarck's ascendancy, when all Europe lived within the great statesman's shadow, moved time and again to his initiatives, and, to a remarkable extent acquiesced to his leadership so much that the Europe of Hanotaux's maturity missed Bismarck's stabilizing presence.

During the anxious years which preceded the First World War, Hanotaux alluded more than once to the unfortunate absence of a statesman of Bismarck's stature. It was Bismarck, not Richelieu, whom he quoted most often in his diplomatic studies, usually in appeals to his authoritative voice. In a statement which is at once sincere and ironic he referred to Bismarck's memoirs as an "incomparable Breviary of the modern statesman": sincere, because Hanotaux derived much from them himself, ironic because of Bismarck's contagious cynicism.⁶⁵

The Bismarck Hanotaux perceived was bigger than life, a complex, amoral, ruthless, and highly disciplined figure. In the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Frankfurt,⁶⁶ he completely outclassed his French adversaries, Jules Favre and Adolphe Thiers. Hanotaux wrote that the

art of diplomacy was eminently his. An attentive observer, patient listener, rude interrupter, his genius delighted with a silent joy in preparing a snare with deliberation, circumventing an adversary, suddenly surprising him and flinging him on his back. A powerful and restless personality in which sentiments often just were limited and crushed by cold reason, and the despotic maestria of his profession. . . . In negotiations he never considered the

man, but the cause; never the appearances, but the realities; never the theory, but the profit; never the universal point of view, but the national interest.⁶⁷

Hanotaux condemned, not the Germans, but Bismarck, for the path Germany had taken:

Prince Bismarck has often been compared with Cardinal Richelieu. The latter, refined, aristocratic, impassioned for all manifestations of human greatness, developed France in the direction of her national genius, while the other, a hard task-master to his own country, turned it aside from its path, and has, for a long time perhaps, put it out of contact with the elevated and sentimental ideal inherent in the ancient and traditional aspirations of the noble Germanic race.⁶⁸

Bismarck, singlehandedly, changed the moral climate of European diplomacy through a "reactionary application of the right of the most strong. . . . Since 1870 the pupils of Bismarck have multiplied; that work of civilization upon itself, in the direction of the refinement of international morals, has been suspended."⁶⁹

In almost every respect, diplomatic Europe of the pre-war years was the legacy of Bismarck. Hanotaux believed that Bismarck had not only played the central role in creating the system of alliances but had encouraged and stimulated the proliferation of ententes. Hanotaux considered this latter influence baneful and a manifestation of the fallen Bismarck, the embittered old man, who "used up his strength destroying what he had built, and . . . reciting too loudly the histories of those counter-agreements and counter-guarantees which were beginning to disturb minds and events."⁷⁰ The result was a policy of "vague aspirations and poorly defined feelings"⁷¹ which muddled the waters of international relations. The

existing systems of treaties, based on clearly understood national interests, was deformed.

A Dream of Ascendancy

In June 1892, two years before becoming Foreign Minister, Hanotaux spent a sleepless night thinking up a complex plan (which has been found among his "papers") for "appeasing many European difficulties by dividing up the spoils of England."⁷² France, Germany, and Russia would "place their quarrels onto the back of England."⁷³ They would make economic war on the British Empire and the coup de grace would be administered by France in a sudden attack across the channel.

If Hanotaux's plan is to be understood and its significance accurately appraised, it must be read against the background of frustration which all French imperialists felt at the time in regard to England. In Africa, in the early 1890s, French aspirations were, in most ways, running counter to those of the English.⁷⁴ After ten years of vociferous complaints, the French could still see no sign that England would withdraw gracefully from Egypt which, in French eyes, she was holding illegally.

On the other hand, if the French were ever to do anything about Egypt, or, more broadly, to reduce the world hegemony of England, it was plausible in 1892 to think that the time to act successfully might soon be at hand. France was not alone in her frustrations. Russia and Germany also found England an obstacle to their imperial ambitions. Moreover, in 1892, the Dual Alliance

between France and Russia was well into its process of formation and was intended by both powers to provide balance and security (vis-à-vis the Triple Alliance) on the continent. It offered an opportunity not, as the French revanchards thought, to recover Alsace-Lorraine by a Franco-Russian war on Germany, but to relax a little on the Eastern frontier and to act elsewhere. Almost everyone would soon see that the Dual Alliance "was directed, not only by the Russians, but by the French as well, against England."⁷⁵

Furthermore, Russia and France together appeared to represent a serious threat to English naval supremacy. For the next three or four years, until a new English naval building program began to make a difference, Russia and France steadily increased naval pressure against England in the Mediterranean. In 1889, when the English Parliament had passed the Naval Defense Act in which the principle of the "two power standard" was adopted, Her Majesty's fleet was publicly perceived as being in a serious state of deterioration. Between 1889 and 1892 "new ships had been built at a feverish rate, but the French and Russians had both followed suit, and the result was that the situation became rapidly more critical for England than ever,"⁷⁶ or so, at least, the British government figures made it appear. These figures showed that in 1894 "the French alone had superiority over the English in the Mediterranean."⁷⁷

Both Peter Grupp,⁷⁸ who published Hanotaux's plan in his Theorie der Kolonialexpansion und Methoden der Imperialistischen Aussenpolitik bei Gabriel Hanotaux, and the book's French reviewer in Revue d'histoire diplomatique, Henry Rollet,⁷⁹ refuse to attach much

importance to the plan. On the one hand, this is correct because the plan cannot be taken as an interpretative guide to Hanotaux's policies as Foreign Minister. In that office he opted for a much more realistic course by playing the diplomatic ground between Germany and England. Even insofar as he acquiesced to the Fashoda expedition with the hope of reopening the Egyptian Question with the backing of the continental powers, there is not a shred of evidence that he thought he could put together an aggressive continental alliance against England of the sort which he had envisioned in 1892. On a diplomatic voyage to Russia in 1897 he explicitly agreed that France and Russia ought to play the middle ground between Germany and England.

Nevertheless, if one looks at his hypothetical plan and imagines the extreme case (which never came close to arising) in which England was so obtusely provocative in her resistance to the imperial ambitions of the continental powers that she drove them together in implacable hostility toward herself, and if, on the other hand, one can imagine these same powers as being capable of enough mutual trust to determine a new order in Europe and a new imperial order outside of Europe, then there is no reason to suppose that Hanotaux in such promising circumstances would not have opted for the war against England. He was not chauvinistic by nature or even by method. He was not Anglophobic, but he did not abjure war as an instrument of policy. A French army in England! French predominance in the Mediterranean basin and in the Moslem World! Egypt recovered!

The wound of Alsace Lorraine honorably healed! Continental quarrels pacified! The world hegemony of England destroyed! World balances re-established! Everything accomplished under the leadership of a French statesman! What an ascension for France! Were success reasonably certain, if the opportunity had been presented, could it be supposed that Hanotaux would have turned it down?

An interesting feature of the plan is that it anticipates views which Hanotaux expressed after he left the Quai d'Orsay. Since these same views were expressed both before he became Foreign Minister and after he left the Foreign Office, it is reasonable to conclude that they were alive in his mind while he was Foreign Minister, if no more than as dormant possibilities, waiting to be awakened by the right opportunities. Understood in this way, the 1892 plan could hardly be more significant for understanding Hanotaux.

The plan makes the Mediterranean orientation of his thinking absolutely clear. The French objective would be to attain pre-dominance in the Mediterranean basin, in Egypt in particular, and domination over the Moslem lands. Germany would gain an opportunity to achieve a Colonial Empire in South Africa and Oceania. In the document he makes no mention of a French Colonial Empire in Central or Western Africa. He is preoccupied with the North, with Morocco, and the other Moslem states along the Mediterranean. The document tends to suggest an idea which was implicit in his activities as Foreign Minister (i.e., the successful attempt to revoke the Anglo-Congolese Treaty and keep open French access to the Nile) and in his

writing after he left office (especially La paix latine, a book published in 1903); that is, that his empire building activities in Western and Central Africa were pursued primarily as a flanking movement, Richelieu's "mouvement tournant," in support of French interests in the Mediterranean (especially Egypt) and in support of what Hanotaux believed was a special French capacity to develop a mutually advantageous relationship with the Islamic peoples.

Hanotaux would always be proud of the French African Empire, extending from the "Mediterranean to Brazzaville," and he was proud of his role in achieving it. He was loyal to his countrymen, mostly soldiers, who had undertaken the physical hardships and risks. But his larger purpose was strategic and Mediterranean. Above all else, while Foreign Minister, it was Hanotaux's objective to control the prominent position in Africa at Lake Chad, which stood at the communications linkup of the three principal river basins of the Congo, the Niger, and the Nile.

Although his plan represents an extreme case, it does show that Hanotaux contemplated continental cooperation (with Russia and Germany) against England. As Foreign Minister he sought to play a role between Germany and England, to play one off against the other, and to try to improve relations with both. That was the only course which was open to him and was consistent with the approach to colonial expansion that he had learned from Jules Ferry.

As late as 1910 and 1911, before the onslaught of the Second Moroccan Crisis, he felt that it might soon be absolutely necessary to choose between cooperating with Germany and Russia against English

interests in the East or going it alone as England's only friend on the continent. Because of the uncertain nature of the English commitment to France, because of her military weakness (no conscript army and a global empire to defend), and because of her internal troubles (social tensions, the Irish question, etc.), Hanotaux left no doubt that the wiser choice would be to cooperate with Germany and Russia. Because the threat posed by Germany had grown immeasurably in the years before 1910 and because the imperial hegemony of England had become less pronounced than it had been in 1892 and was indeed even more precarious, Hanotaux would have chosen Russia and Germany reluctantly in 1910/1911, but that is the choice he would have made. In fact, after the Second Moroccan Crisis, he deplored that France had not participated in the Russian-German conversation at Potsdam in the fall of 1910. If she had, Hanotaux felt, Second Morocco could have been avoided.⁸⁰

The plan shows that Hanotaux perceived Emperor William as a sovereign who was not personally unfriendly to France, and with whom France could conceivably cooperate. He thought that with William such a project might be realized. William would "satisfy certain aspirations of Germany, while at the same time he would seduce the imaginations."⁸¹ But Hanotaux doubted that the project could be undertaken with William's cooperation until two events, which could not be far off, had occurred: "the death of Bismarck and the death of Queen Victoria."⁸² After he left office, Hanotaux believed that Delcassé made a terrible mistake in not taking advantage of William's

cooperative attitudes and, instead, had chosen to antagonize the Germans with his Moroccan policy.⁸³

In the years down to the First World War, Hanotaux was very much aware of William's weaknesses, his inconsistency, impetuosity and grandstanding and he detected in him an exceptionally dangerous ambiguity on the question of peace or war, but he did not hold William personally responsible for Germany's heavy handed diplomacy, and he never gave up hope that William would decide in a crunch to stand by his commitment to be remembered as the "Emperor of Peace."⁸⁴ It was this faith of Hanotaux's in William's peaceful intentions, as shaky as it admittedly became, on which Hanotaux pinned much of his hope that peace could be preserved. When the First World War finally broke out, Hanotaux did not blame it on William, but on the Crown Prince and the war party.⁸⁵

The 1892 plan shows that for the sake of the continental alliance against England Hanotaux was willing to accept an arrangement which would have required both France and Germany to renounce the direct domination of Alsace and Lorraine in exchange for ample compensation wrested from England. As a result of an arrangement these "Lands of the Empire would find themselves in conditions of neutrality and subordination"⁸⁶

Hanotaux was willing, as Foreign Minister, to leave the question of Alsace-Lorraine aside. In September 1896 Jules Hansen, an unofficial agent for Hanotaux, told the Germans that the French Foreign Minister was willing "to leave aside the question of

Alsace-Lorraine to effect an entente against England on the Egyptian question."⁸⁷

Hanotaux seldom referred explicitly to Alsace and Lorraine in his writings, but he alluded obliquely to the issue of their recovery in the context of what he called the "heritage of Burgundy." In 1903 he wrote that

In the fifteenth century there was no country more civilized than the vast domain which was then called 'The Burgundies.' This Empire, whose glory is but little known, and whose history will one day explain that of Europe, formed as it were a powerful buffer state between France and Germany.⁸⁸

Burgundy is the rich region, occupying the valley of the Rhine and the Meuse, and including not only Alsace and Lorraine, but the Low Countries.

Hanotaux thought that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine by the German Empire in 1871 was an error forced on Bismarck by the Prussian headquarters staff. Bismarck perceived the dangers and "must have felt internal regret at having failed in a duty . . . of not allowing irreparable errors to be made." He must have recognized that Burgundy was the real issue. If he had been free to pursue his own course of action he might "have assured peace to Europe and to the new empire . . . by one of those skillful and equitable solutions which are always contained in the facts."⁸⁹

In 1903 Hanotaux believed that "the heritage of Burgundy" was still a serious problem for Europe but there is no indication that he harbored any "revanchard" sentiments.⁹⁰ He wanted the conflict over Alsace and Lorraine resolved in a wider context, in a mutually

satisfactory settlement between France and Germany which would include all the border regions (even the Low Countries).

Hanotaux was not indifferent to the fate of Alsace and Lorraine. But a settlement of the Franco-German quarrel based on concessions short of their recovery would give a meaning to his otherwise cryptic statement that the history of the Burgundian Empire would "one day explain that of Europe" (see above).

Hanotaux's tacit willingness to make concessions on the fate of the provinces rests on the tremendous confidence he had in the past and possible future influence of French Civilization not only in the "Lost Provinces," but in the South German and Rhenish states as well. A real Franco-German peace, with Alsace and Lorraine free of German political control, would reopen the way to French cultural ascendancy. The French cultural magnet would work on the South German states. French culture would unleash civilizing forces in the Prussian dominated German Empire and would begin to transform it in benign directions such as those taken by the Germans under the influence of Richelieu. Beneath Hanotaux's apparent lack of military chauvinism in respect to the provinces was his underlying cultural chauvinism.

Conclusion

By the time that Hanotaux became Foreign Minister in 1894 he had been superbly trained as an historian. He was a Richelieu scholar who believed that the foundations of French grandeur were to be rediscovered in the study of Richelieu. He had been presented by

Henri Martin with the model of a life combining on behalf of the nation both historical scholarship and practical affairs. Through his Richelieu studies he was on the way to establishing himself in an important public role as an interpreter to the French nation of the history, situation, and role of France. As a successful functionary in the Foreign Office, he had mastered its work and brought his legal and historical training to the service of that work. He had been thoroughly indoctrinated in the flexible, opportunistic, approach to advancing French interests of the older generation of statesmen who trained him. Through the examples of Richelieu and Bismarck he had acquired considerable confidence in the power of great statesmen to overcome difficulties and dominate the affairs of Europe. As to Bismarck, Hanotaux was both fascinated and respectful, but perceived Bismarck's domination as a distortion both in the development of German Civilization and the affairs of Europe.

As to France, he believed that she was the natural leader of a civilized Europe. By virtue of her geographical position, her historical experience, her superb civilization, her special talent for negotiated settlements, her moderation and disinterestedness, she was positioned to play the decisive role in European affairs as the manager of the equilibrium among the powers. He believed, further, that the peace and stability of Europe required that France attain this, her natural and ascendant role.

When Hanotaux became Foreign Minister in 1894 "revanche" against Germany appears to have had very little to do with his

aspirations. Alsace-Lorraine, to be sure, presented an item of business in need of settlement between Germany and France, but Hanotaux saw the solution in larger arrangements among the several powers, not in a new Franco-German War. If he sought revanche at all it was against England in Egypt. But here, too, his performance as Foreign Minister would show that he preferred to build toward a peaceful settlement of the Egyptian question through negotiations. He did not abjure war as an instrument of policy, but he was not a militaristic chauvinist.

When he became Foreign Minister, Hanotaux was admirably prepared for his task, but that task was not easy. His nationalist faith, his understanding of his country's natural role among the powers, his aspirations for France, were all confronted and engaged by a great many complexities, tensions, and obstacles. These were presented by France's internal affairs, by the personalities and views of some of his colleagues in the cabinet and foreign service, by relationships with and among the powers, and by events. His years as Foreign Minister were difficult, frustrating, and exhausting. It was remarkable that he did so well as he did in moving France in the direction of his aspirations. But then, again, what he discovered in the pressures of the job was no more than the student of Richelieu would have expected. Richelieu had already taught him that the work of statesmanship required "an enormous expenditure of will and perseverance," that one must not be "stopped by obstacles" but "to hold to the general lines, to the ideas which are the mistresses of time." This Hanotaux sought to do and with a fair measure of success.

CHAPTER II: FOOTNOTES

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⁵Hanotaux, Sur les chemins, 1:IV.

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⁷Ibid., 1:VI.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., I:VII.

¹⁰Ibid., 1:VII-VIII.

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¹²Ibid., 1:IX.

¹³Ibid., 1:XI.

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³¹Ibid., p. 409.

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³⁵Ibid., p. 403.

³⁶Ibid., p. 566.

³⁷Ibid., p. 578.

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⁴¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Avril 1, 1949), p. 389.

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⁴⁷Thomas F. Power, Jules Ferry and the Renaissance of French Imperialism (New York: Octagon Books, 1966 [1944]), p. 195.

⁴⁸Ibid.

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⁵⁶See Gabriel Louis Jaray, "Gabriel Hanotaux et la preparation du redressement de la France," in Louis Madelin, Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: La Presse Française et Étrangère, 1945), p. 69. Quoted from 1880 preface to "Maxims and Fragments."

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CHAPTER III

FOREIGN MINISTER, 1894-1898: STRUGGLING AGAINST OBSTACLES FOR THE ASCENDANCY OF FRANCE

The Imperialist: Opportunity and Achievement

There was a lull in the expansion of the French Colonial Empire between the fall of the last Jules Ferry cabinet in 1885 and Hanotaux's appointment as Foreign Minister in 1894. That Hanotaux could immediately take up colonial expansion where his mentor had left it was due to a combination of circumstances. Most importantly, Hanotaux took office when diplomatic action was required or would shortly be required on several fronts: West Africa, Morocco, and Madagascar. Furthermore, it had recently become less risky for a French Government to act in the colonial sphere, safer both in regard to France's continental position (the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1892) and in regard to public opinion, which tended throughout the life of the Third Republic to be stubbornly unenthusiastic about colonial ventures, especially those which cost a lot of money or the lives of young conscripts, or both. In explaining this more favorable situation, Pierre Renouvin, the most distinguished of French diplomatic historians, pointed out that "the creation in 1893, of a colonial army, recruited by voluntary enlistments, reassured the electoral body that young soldiers of the contingent would no longer be exposed to colonial campaigns."¹

Hanotaux is remembered as one of the principal builders of the French Colonial Empire. He generally encouraged the imperial ventures of the French explorers, soldiers, and sailors and then sought to consolidate the positions they had gained by negotiation. During his stay in office, he vastly expanded and unified his country's holdings in West Africa. He prepared the way for the annexation of Madagascar.² He strengthened the French position vis-à-vis Morocco in such a way as to facilitate an eventual protectorate.³ He negotiated with the several powers a clear title to the Tunisian protectorate.⁴ He extended French influence and negotiated French concessions in Yunnan and other Chinese provinces bordering on French Tonkin. He kept open the path for French expansion through the Bahr-el-Ghazel into the Upper Nile. He negotiated the settlement of a myriad of issues festering between France and England in West Africa and, in so doing, prepared the way for the Anglo-French Entente of April 1904. He failed to re-open the Egyptian question with England, although he did eventually acquiesce in the Marchand mission to Fashoda, a dangerous move vis-à-vis England forced upon him by Delcassé and other chauvinistic colonialists.⁵

The First Test: Abrogation of the Anglo-Congolese Treaty

The first test for Hanotaux was the Anglo-Congolese Treaty, which had been negotiated between England and the Congo Free State, the personal domain of King Leopold II of Belgium, and signed May 12, 1894. By extending the territorial jurisdiction of the Congo Free State into the Bahr-el-Ghazel and, in exchange, leasing to England

a strip of land between Lake Albert-Edward and Lake Tanganyika, the treaty had the effect of blocking French ambitions in the direction of Fashoda and the Upper Nile. It also closed off, at least by that path, any French attempt to force a reopening of the "Egyptian Question."⁶ Determined to overthrow this treaty, the young Foreign Minister had to take a firm stand against England. To do so effectively, he dug up a formidable and very plausible array of legal arguments against the treaty⁷ and presented them in a meticulously prepared speech to the Chamber of Deputies on June 7, 1894. In essence, he said that the Anglo-Congolese Convention was illegal, that it was "nul et non avenue" (null and void) and that France could not and would not accept it.⁸

Although the deputies were stunned by Hanotaux's audacity⁹ they liked the speech well enough to give the Dupuy cabinet a 527 to 0 vote of confidence.¹⁰ Clearly the deputies agreed with Hanotaux that France was in the right and that a vital interest was at stake.

Determined as he was to defend his country's interests, Hanotaux had absolutely no intention of creating a serious rift with England. He knew he had taken a chance in speaking a sharp word to England. He was aware that much was at stake both for himself and for France in a successful settlement of the controversy. So he spent the next few days anxiously awaiting the English response.¹¹ Although England refused to abrogate the Anglo-Congolese treaty, she was as unwilling as France to let a tense situation turn into a crisis, so she saved face by backing down indirectly and freeing Hanotaux to put pressure on the Belgians to annul the second article

of the Treaty,¹² thereby giving up their claims in the Bahr-el-Ghazel. This capitulation was embodied in the Congo-French Treaty of August 14, 1894.

Hanotaux had won an impressive diplomatic victory. He had kept the door open for France in the Upper Nile. He had endured, though not without considerable anxiety,¹³ the pressures of his new responsibilities. By publicly declaring an English treaty null and void he had skirted close to verbal brinkmanship. He had stood firm, proceeded energetically, and he had won. He had won because he had used his training as a lawyer and a chartiste to build a strong legal case around which the French Parliament could rally and which the English found discomforting. And he had won because he had negotiated with patience and persistence, giving very little but being careful not to back the English into a corner from which they could not escape both honorably and peacefully.¹⁴

That Hanotaux did not want to push the English too far is proven by his handling of the Monteil expedition. A precursor to the mission of Captain Marchand which would issue in the Fashoda Crisis between France and England several years later (1898), Monteil had as his ultimate objective the occupation of the Upper Nile at Fashoda. The mission had been initiated in 1893 principally as the result of efforts by Delcassé, then Undersecretary of Colonies.¹⁵ The young Foreign Minister supported the mission as long as it was a useful lever in his effort to put pressure on England and overthrow the Anglo-Congolese Treaty, but on July 18, 1894, much to the disgust of

Delcassé and other chauvinistic colonialists, and as a concession to England he forbade Monteil to proceed into the Nile Valley.¹⁶ Thereafter, Delcassé and his friends were determined to force Hanotaux to accept a mission to the Upper Nile.

In spite of the immediate tensions caused by the Anglo-Congolese Treaty, the French and English statesmen cooperated together from the beginning of Hanotaux's tenure of office to improve relations between the two countries in other parts of Africa. In 1894 France and England cooperated to a limited degree in Morocco.¹⁷ In these Moroccan difficulties, Hanotaux made sure that he was thoroughly informed on all the complex details and then proceeded carefully and cautiously, cooperating with England and the other interested powers (Spain, Italy, and Germany), but making sure that France's option on the future of Morocco was strengthened and kept open.¹⁸ Even at the height of the Anglo-Congolese controversy (June 6-9, 1884), both Hanotaux and the English expressed a willingness to discuss other Anglo-French differences in Central and Western Africa, although Hanotaux himself preferred to wait until the controversy was settled.¹⁹ After it was settled in August 1894, negotiations were undertaken in earnest. A principal negotiator was Sir Constantine Phipps, secretary at the English embassy and personally more compatible with Hanotaux than Lord Dufferin, the English Ambassador to Paris. Moreover, Phipps was an African expert who understood the issues, while Dufferin's past experience had been in India and he knew little about Africa.²⁰

With great difficulty Hanotaux and the English negotiator succeeded in working out a draft treaty to settle African differences. Their agreement, however, was not accepted by their governments. In France, Delcassé, Hanotaux's great rival as Minister of Colonies, persuaded Jean Casimir-Perier, the President of the Republic, to speak out against the treaty.²¹

A Scholarly Expert

Hanotaux was an outstanding negotiator. He drew effectively on his training as a lawyer, his skills as an historian, and his experience as a permanent official at the Quai d'Orsay. In negotiations, he based his arguments on past treaties and diplomatic notes. He presented his opponents with "truths which shifted responsibility for refutation to their shoulders."²² When he was called upon to defend his policies before the Chamber of Deputies, he did so by presenting tightly argued scholarly discourses which he would read word for word.²³ His delivery was dull. But he "put down" the deputy who challenged his style ("You're reading! You're reading!") by retorting that his presence at the podium was not an "exercise in improvisation."²⁴

Given the importance that the nuances of language can have in negotiations and in the reactions of the press, Hanotaux's preference for writing out his speeches was no doubt wise. Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner have interpreted his "problem" with public speaking as evidence of a nervous timidity, as a piece of the proof for their larger case that Hanotaux was unstable, that he was

unfit to be Foreign Minister.²⁵ This interpretation of Hanotaux as unstable and unfit is at best a reduction of the Frenchman to a caricature. It underestimates his talents. It misunderstands his methods. It fails to perceive or lightly dismisses the exceedingly complex realities and pressures with which Hanotaux had to cope. It underestimates his achievements.

Andrew and Kanya-Forstner are correct in surmising that Hanotaux did not consider himself a public speaker,²⁶ that he was anxious about important speeches,²⁷ and that he recognized that by temperament he would be happier as a scholar than a statesman.²⁸ But none of this makes him either unstable or unfit. Anxiety over an important speech is not abnormal. Almost everyone has that problem. But more importantly Hanotaux had perfectly obvious objective reasons for being anxious and for his cautious style: fears, for example, of inadvertently causing a breakdown in negotiations or an international crisis or, for that matter, a domestic crisis and the fall of the cabinet. Hanotaux, who had been Jules Ferry's assistant, knew how sensitive the Chamber could be on international issues, how uncertain and ephemeral its support. In Hanotaux's experience the Chamber had thrown away opportunity after opportunity abroad, often for trivial reasons (Egypt, for instance, at the end of Jules Ferry's second ministry).²⁹ Beyond this, there were some personal reasons for Hanotaux's timidity which Andrew and Kanya-Forstner do not adduce, but these too are understandable without any reference to nervous disorders. Hanotaux's difficult struggle against his Picard accent³⁰ made him reluctant to speak extemporaneously. The peculiar ambiguity

of his position as a non-parliamentary minister made it wiser for him to approach the Chamber as the government "expert" (which he was) with an exceedingly competent technical report than, say, armed with the rhetorical flamboyance of a member of the parliamentary club.

An Uneasy Imperialist

Although Gabriel Hanotaux's "whole career stands as a symbol of colonial expansion," he does not fit the stereotype of the late nineteenth century European imperialist.³¹ Most theoreticians of colonial expansion emphasized economic arguments. But Hanotaux's originality rested "in his refusal to take the economic aspect into consideration." In this, he seems to have been "absolutely sincere and free of all hypocrisy."³²

For him a fundamental motivation for building the colonial empire was the civilizing mission. Like Albert Sorel, he believed that the most brilliant tradition of France's history was "the intellectual conquest of the world."³³ Colonialization should not be a question of territorial conquests or of increases in wealth, but "of extending overseas to regions yesterday barbarian the principle of a civilization of which one of the oldest nations of the world has a right to be proud."³⁴ Ultimately, success in the imperialist venture was to be founded on the appeal of French Civilization and its qualitative superiority. If Latin Civilization had, mainly by way of France, proved to be the foundation for a wider European Civilization, if this civilization had, after all, in past centuries assimilated the barbarian, why should it not prove exportable to the world?

Beyond all this, imperial success would mean an increase in the influence and leverage of France among the powers, a more promising position from which to manage the equilibrium and move a few more rungs up the ladder of ascendancy.

Hanotaux believed that the most critical test of the civilizing mission was in North Africa among the Moslem peoples. No prospect, aside from a general war among the European powers, disturbed him more than an uprising of Islam.³⁵ But he believed that Moslem peoples could be won over by France if they were handled with firmness and with care. In spite of all the differences, they shared a common racial and historical background rooted in the Mediterranean past and the commercial and cultural intercourse of many generations. Hanotaux implicitly believed that France had long range historical and cultural advantages over the English and Germans in dealing with Moslem peoples.³⁶ Recent historians of French imperialism interpret the French movement overseas as a quest for prestige, by which they mean that it was undertaken mainly for psychological reasons, as a search for ego-boosting compensations for the national inferiority complex precipitated by the defeat of 1870.³⁷

The debacle stimulated Hanotaux's nationalist faith and otherwise set the direction of his life. Psychologically, his determination to resurrect the grandeur of France grew out of the national trauma. As Foreign Minister, empire building was integral to his efforts to reassert his country's greatness. But his imperialism was a quest for prestige only if prestige is understood to include an extension overseas of French Civilization, a long range enlargement

of the foundations of national power, and a more immediate strengthening of the levers of influence and diplomacy.

Hanotaux was aware of how empty and even dangerous a policy of mere "prestige" could be. Referring to the Second Empire he wrote, "The big word of the reign--and it was only a big word--was prestige."³⁸ On May 24, 1894, in the midst of the ministerial crisis which would place him in the cabinet, he wrote in his Carnets: "The prestige of our name--the only weapon and how fragile with which we can serve ourselves in negotiations--is damaged each day by the disruptions of our internal policy."³⁹ But this concern with prestige as a weapon was a concern with a real need for leverage at the negotiating table.

Although Hanotaux was a "moving spirit" of late nineteenth century imperialism,⁴⁰ and although he remained a vocal advocate and theoretician of the French Colonial Empire for the rest of his life, there are indications in his writings before the First World War that he was uneasy about the imperialist venture. He always believed that imperialism was, in principle, important and right. He was almost always optimistic about its future. But here and there a statement comes to the surface which reveals an undercurrent of fear regarding the implications and future of imperialism.

In 1904 he was aware that the European powers were spreading a powerful and potentially dangerous nationalist dynamic throughout the world, that the seeds of emulation and of trouble were being widely sown:

Nations constitute themselves slowly, subduing the secular obstacle of private dissensions. Today, these nationalities, scarcely formed in Europe, burst forth in the world; they encounter in front of them or they see born around them other nationalities asking, in their turn, their place in the sun; and behind those, they are already glimpsing others who are bestirring in their swaddling clothes. . . .

Does one think that they will put to sleep with words or enchain with formulas these beings who aspire to be, that one will repress that future that wants to arise, that one will stem that past that does not want to die.

The people ask for peace, but they trouble it ceaselessly.⁴¹

By 1912 Hanotaux understood that imperialism had led to a "prodigious enlargement of international debates," to a simultaneous posing of questions on the Near East and the Far East, the Mediterranean and Pacific, Morocco, Turkey, and China, the Panama Canal, and that in this dangerous situation of appalling complexity Europe was trapped. "The planet has been shaken in some way," he said, "by the policy of colonial expansion, and Europe, after having taken it up, can no longer renounce it. She must go, whatever it costs, right to the end."⁴²

Theoreticians of French colonialism can be divided into those who favored association with the natives, a close, and mutually beneficial relationship, but one preserving the institutions and integrity of the native culture, and those who favored assimilation, that is, who advocated policies designed to turn natives into Frenchmen, and the colonies into "Departments" of France. These same theoreticians can again be divided into those who preferred a protectorate relationship with the natives, which meant juridically that sovereignty was divided between France and the native government,

thereby preserving a measure of autonomy for the latter, and those who preferred annexation, the placing of the colony completely within French sovereignty and the natives under direct French rule.

Logically, associationists tended to favor the protectorate, native autonomy being a natural support for the preservation of the native culture, and assimilationists tended to favor annexation, complete control opening the policy options which could be applied to achieving assimilation.

Hanotaux called himself an associationist, but ultimately favored assimilation.⁴³ Assimilation was the logical outcome of his faith in the attractiveness and superiority of French Civilization. Further, he was a father of the protectorate idea, having proposed it to Jules Ferry, and was exceptionally pleased with the way it worked in Tunisia.⁴⁴ But he did not accept the juridical division of the theoreticians of the protectorate, the division of sovereignty between France and the native authority. Sovereignty belonged to France and the degree of autonomy given to the natives was in no way a matter of right. It was a policy decision of the French government.⁴⁵

Peter Grupp, a German scholar, and the foremost analyst of Hanotaux's theories of colonial expansion, has found in the Frenchman's writings a disconcerting tendency to contradict himself on basic points, sometimes on different pages within the same book. Hanotaux not only called himself an associationist while he dispensed assimilationist ideas, but he contradicted himself as to whether or not native peoples are inferior, incapable of civilization, or were merely delayed in their development. Further, his convictions of

French cultural superiority remained in conflict with ideas of equality rooted in Christianity and in the French Revolution.⁴⁶

These contradictions are best understood as evidence of the uncertainties that lay between Hanotaux's hopes and his fears. For him imperialism was a risky venture, but a venture which could serve as a vehicle for implanting French Civilization outside of France. He understood that to succeed it was necessary to proceed cautiously and slowly,⁴⁷ with freedom and flexibility as to the methods (as long as there were no juridical obstacles to French authority), and with a long view as to goals (association for now, assimilation if and when it should become possible).⁴⁸ He realized that assimilation would at best be difficult to attain, would take a long time, and would be expensive.⁴⁹ He believed that if colonial expansion were mishandled, among the Islamic peoples it could backfire in a general and bloody uprising.

The Great Powers

As Foreign Minister Hanotaux did as much as he was realistically able to do to assert the role of France as manager of the equilibrium among the Great Powers and to try to attain diplomatic ascendancy for his country. In less than four years, working against many obstacles, he made considerable progress toward these objectives. His greatest success, however, may be formulated negatively. He struggled successfully to prevent the subordination of French policy to that of Russia, while at the same time preventing the diplomatic isolation of France.

Hanotaux displayed a gift for playing constructively with the balance among European forces.⁵⁰ He contributed to the flexibility, and consequently, to the adaptability and health of the alliance system (as it was then constituted). Only later would Delcassé "rigidify France's rather amorphous foreign policy into a pattern"⁵¹ and, it should be added, give to the alliance system itself a character at once more complex, more uncertain, and more threatening.

Hanotaux insisted repeatedly that he was "the declared partisan of the policy of 'equilibrium,'" and that France must apply herself to keeping the 'equal balance' among the Great Powers." He further insisted that this was the policy conforming to "our interests and our traditions," that after the Franco-Prussian War, this policy "had been imposed on our governments as a necessity through which they managed our means of action and profited from the quarrels of others to ameliorate our badly diminished situation."⁵²

Hanotaux asserted that the idea of equilibrium, the managing of the balances, the playing off of the powers against one another, had built the French Colonial Empire. This idea,

which was prolonged through the acts of 1898 permitted us to obtain, without striking a blow and without according 'compensations' to anyone, the liberation of Tunisia, the extension of Indochina up to the Mekong, the seizure of Madagascar, the considerable enlargement of our establishments on the West Coast [of Africa] and on the coast of Guinea, and finally the junction of all our African colonies above the immense expanses which bring together the three basins of the Niger, Congo, and Nile.⁵³

Hanotaux's fundamental Great Power "policy" was to maintain and contain the Russian Alliance and, otherwise, to do as Jules

Ferry had done, to advance the purposes of France by working the ground between Germany and England, seeking good relations with each, but making use of their mutual suspicions and colliding interests.

Hanotaux placed France in the strongest diplomatic position which she had been in since the Franco-Prussian War. Thomas M. Iiams, Jr., who has written the only book-length study of Hanotaux as Foreign Minister that places as much emphasis on his European as his colonial policies, has concluded that Hanotaux

more than any other Frenchman, was responsible for the locus of power on the continent shifting from Berlin to Paris. As a result of the alliance with Russia, a rapprochement with Italy and England's increasing irritation with Germany, France was emerging in 1898 as the pivotal state in the two great peacetime coalitions. For helping to bring about this diplomatic revolution, which in strengthening France also served the cause of peace by restraining Russia in the Balkans, Gabriel Hanotaux must⁵⁴ be ranked as the III Republic's ablest Foreign Minister.

Not until the end of Hanotaux's tenure was there even the slightest possibility that a continental alliance could be achieved under the direction of France which would combine the full diplomatic weight that France, Germany, and Russia could marshal against England. When, as a result of earlier Russo-German rapprochements it appeared remotely possible to put together a continental league, it was under conditions in which France would be a subordinate power and would gain little from the standpoint of her interests--conditions Hanotaux rejected. Neither the Germans nor the Russians provided Hanotaux with much reason to be confident that an arrangement could be worked out with them which France could trust.

It became obvious early in his tenure that he had to be careful with Germany because Germany was prepared to use France for her own ends, perhaps even to maneuver England into a position where a permanent settlement would be possible with her, or to draw France in as the junior partner in a Russo-German combination. What Hanotaux did was to handle Germany with great care, to keep any serious antagonism from developing (an even more tricky business at the height of the Dreyfus Affair) and to cooperate with her wherever it was clearly in the French interest.

Russia was cavalier about the uses of the new alliance. She not only tried to drag France into her Eastern quarrels, but into particular relationships with Germany that Hanotaux preferred to avoid because French interests were not really involved and because of possible embarrassment for the Government. Russia was frequently indifferent to her obligations to keep France properly informed.

While in office Hanotaux was, on the whole, successful in the central task of maintaining French freedom of action, while avoiding diplomatic isolation, of maintaining the Russian Alliance, while avoiding subordination to Russian policy. On this latter point, he fought and eventually won a protracted struggle with the Russian allies to keep the alliance within its terms (as a purely defensive agreement) and to keep France from being dragged into supporting Russian ambitions in the East. At the same time, he was firm in insisting that Russia must understand that the alliance implied that each party must be the "friend of its friend," that mutual consideration was to be expected on such matters as providing information to

prevent embarrassment, and prior consultation on politically dangerous démarches.

Cooperation with Germany

Hanotaux's success in the very difficult area of Franco-German relations is attested to in quite different ways by two contradictory comments elicited by his fall from power in 1898. Baron Münster, the German ambassador in Paris, stated in a dispatch to Berlin: "My relations with Hanotaux were of the best. Though he was bound to follow the course of Russian policy he desired to maintain good relations with us and improve them."⁵⁵ Hanotaux had won Münster's confidence and this in spite of the Frenchman's efforts to nurture the Dual Alliance and in spite of the tensions which had arisen during the Dreyfus Affair. On receipt of Münster's dispatch, William II wrote a marginal comment contradicting the ambassador's opinion of Hanotaux: "I don't agree. He was for us the most dangerous man in France because he had the confidence of both Russia and England."⁵⁶

Contradictory or not, Hanotaux needed to create among the Germans a mixture of precisely these two assessments if he were to have the best chance of negotiating successfully with them over the long run. It was important for him that they have a large measure of confidence in him and in his desire to maintain good relations with Germany. It was also important that he have the leverage which would be his if the Germans were afraid that if they did not come to terms with him he might work out some deal with Russia and England

detrimental to German interests. Briefly, these quotations are evidence that at the time of his fall he was well on his way toward establishing himself in an optimum bargaining position with the Germans. If he had not left office when he did, he might have been able to capitalize on this position to enlist German cooperation in resolving or mitigating the conflict with England which a few months later climaxed in the Fashoda Crisis.

An undated memorandum deposited in his Carnets shows that Hanotaux conceived of three alternative possibilities for Franco-German cooperation:

1. The actual system, i.e., a minimum of communication, no confidence but no objection to cooperating on a specific issue where the interests of both countries were identical;
2. Limited but unmistakable rapprochements. Advantage: Possibly of obtaining an European intervention in the Mediterranean Question, and more especially in Egypt. Could we not hope at the same time to disrupt the harmony which had existed for so long between Germany and England? Disadvantage: Danger of a dispute with England with the risk of seeing the entente with Germany dissolve in the midst of the crisis.
3. General rapprochement entailing a revision of the Treaty of Frankfort.⁵⁷

During his years as Foreign Minister, Hanotaux followed "1," "the actual system," on occasion, but with generally meager results, and prepared the way for "2," "limited but unmistakable rapprochement," but left office at the time that his efforts may have been about to bear fruit. If he intended "3," "general rapprochement entailing a revision of the Treaty of Frankfort," it remained hidden below the horizon.

In the spring and summer of 1895 Hanotaux was drawn into cooperation with Germany on two occasions, both reluctantly, and

both because of the need to cooperate with Russia and to preserve and confirm the Franco-Russian Alliance. On both occasions Hanotaux was disturbed that French policy was subordinate to that of Russia, and by the implication that if this subordination were not accepted by France that something worse might ensue, namely isolation, combined possibly with a tightening of the Russo-German relationship on a more permanent basis. Such was not the road to the role of managing the equilibrium among the powers and to the diplomatic ascendancy of France. That it was not cooperation with Germany, per se, that bothered Hanotaux is proven by the fact that he was cooperating with Germany on other matters less sensitive to French public opinion.

The first occasion was the Far Eastern Triplice into which Russia, Germany, and France joined in order to force Japan, after she had defeated China in a Sino-Japanese War, to back off from her demands for the Liaotung Peninsula.⁵⁸ Russia appreciated French collaboration, but France had little interest in opposing the Japanese demands. The Germans, on the other hand, wanted to re-establish "close relations with Russia and to divert Russia to the Far East, thus emasculating the Franco-Russian Alliance."⁵⁹ All France could do was follow reluctantly in what was essentially a Russo-German rapprochement.

The other occasion was the opening of the Kiel Canal. In February 1895 Germany invited the other powers to send naval squadrons to a celebration planned for mid-June. Hanotaux was extremely reluctant to send French ships, and did so only to protect the Franco-Russian Alliance.⁶⁰ In cooperating at Kiel, as in the Far Eastern

Triplice, there was no specific French interest which could be pointed to and defended, except that of presenting a united front with Russia (which was delighted to accept Germany's invitation and requested that France do likewise). For Hanotaux the trouble with sending a squadron to Kiel was not that it expressed a friendly and cooperative attitude toward Germany, that in itself was no problem to him, but that it was negatively symbolic, that it would be interpreted in France, Germany and elsewhere as an indication of the French Government's satisfaction with the continental status quo (i.e., permanent acceptance of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine). Not only would that be misleading, but such an impression could be politically dangerous for the Government. In the event, some Germans did interpret the French presence at Kiel "as evidence of a new orientation in French policy."⁶¹

On the eve of the Kiel festivities, Hanotaux replied testily to an interpellation in the Chamber of Deputies by Alexandre Millerand, who accused him of "trampling over the memories of 1870" that the naval squadron was being sent to Kiel "out of courtesy, not weakness." "He then concluded with a salute to 'that entente which binds France and Russia . . . to this alliance which constitutes our strength.' The chamber on hearing the word alliance (for the first time) voted its confidence in the Government."⁶²

A side effect of the Kiel episode was Hanotaux's disgust with the prevarications and delay of the Russians in giving permission to a rendezvous of the French and Russian squadrons outside of Kiel Harbor. This rendezvous was intended to counteract misleading and

dangerous interpretations of the French presence with a symbolic statement of Franco-Russian solidarity.⁶³ Montebello, the French Ambassador to St. Petersburg, who did not trust or understand Hanotaux, assured his chief in a telegram dated May 30, two weeks before the proposed celebration, that "the Russians would not let them down." Even if they did not agree to the rendezvous, Tsar "Nicholas was reportedly considering having the Grand Duke visit France after the ceremonies and awarding the highest decoration at his disposal to French President Faure."⁶⁴ One can imagine how Hanotaux received this crumb passed on to France by his unperceptive ambassador. Fortunately, a few days later on June 5, Nicholas finally approved the rendezvous at Kiel.

During Hanotaux's years as Foreign Minister, Germany's intentions in respect to Franco-German cooperation, appear both tentative and cynical. In the fall of 1895 Hanotaux learned from Prince Lobanoff, the Russian Foreign Minister with whom he had developed a close personal relationship, that Emperor William had been insinuating the revival of the Dreikaiserbund, and that he had suggested (to Lobanoff) that the "best policy for the European monarchies would be to isolate France." Hanotaux trusted Lobanoff and remained concerned, at times for good reason, that this particular realignment among the European Powers might take place. In 1896, for instance, the German Chancellor, Hohenlohe, was trying to use France to promote an Anglo-German rapprochement. He wrote the German Ambassador in Paris that "the goal of the offer which we made to France is to lead Great Britain to see the dangers of isolation."⁶⁶ In any case, Hanotaux

was in a relatively strong personal position with the Germans when he left office. Whether he would have succeeded in establishing a closer and for France a more beneficial working relationship with Germany simply cannot be answered.

The Russian Alliance

In December 1895 Prince Lobanoff had been afraid "that England might use the Armenian insurrection as a cloak to promote the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In such an eventuality he thought that France and Russia should fix the price of their consent to the violent overthrow of the Sultan."⁶⁷ But Hanotaux cautioned him that French public opinion would not permit the government to involve itself in adventures in the East without significant compensation: the English evacuation of Egypt and/or the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine.⁶⁸

After Lobanoff's sudden death in August 1896, Hanotaux had to deal with Russian statesmen in whom he had less confidence. On December 30, 1896, alarmed by rumors of Russian military preparation in the Black Sea, Hanotaux told Mohrenheim, the Russian ambassador, "make no mistake about it, France will never consider herself committed to fight with Russia if war should break out in the Black Sea or the Straits!"⁶⁹ In January 1897, when meeting the new Russian Foreign Minister Muraviev,⁷⁰ Hanotaux refused to discuss a continental entente with Russia and Germany "unless the larger issues of world peace or of vital French interests make it unavoidable. Only if Strasbourg were unmistakably linked to Constantinople could there

be a real community of interest."⁷¹ In effect, Hanotaux was proposing Franco-German neutrality and dissuading Russia from contemplating a war at the Straits. But he was also saying that the continental entente would be of interest to France only if it meant a peaceful resolution of the issue of Alsace-Lorraine.

On April 10, 1897, on the eve of war between Greece and Turkey, Hanotaux wrote Montebello:

You know our intentions: to do everything to avoid a conflict. If it breaks out in Greece or in the Balkans, to localize it. If the Great Powers take part, to hold ourselves in reserve. If Russia precipitates it or allows herself to be drawn in, to help her with every effort of our diplomacy and with all our moral cooperation. But to do nothing more.⁷²

Hanotaux would not allow France to be drawn into Russia's war for any other reasons than those stipulated in the Treaty of Alliance. If war broke out in the East, France would hold back, consult her interests, see what the other powers would do, before she made her own decision. This was a position Hanotaux would consistently reiterate down to the First World War.

Meanwhile, while he dissuaded Russia from military involvement in the Greco-Turkish War, Hanotaux sought to maintain and reform the Ottoman Empire through the Concert of the European Powers. He did so because he feared the unleashing of Islamic fanaticism which could spread in the Islamic world and which, if containable at all, would require bloody suppression by the several powers, and because he feared that without concerted approaches the powers would end up fighting each other. In early April 1897 he wrote to Montebello:

If new massacres are produced and if the European colonies were threatened, it would be necessary to foresee an intervention so to speak of all the powers on the different points where their colonies were threatened. Would it not be wise to put ourselves immediately, at least as an hypothesis, in the presence of that eventuality and to try to determine the conditions of a concerted action, in place of foreseeing some only isolated and contradictory initiatives, bringing on, almost fatally, hostilities among the European powers.⁷³

During this period of crisis, Hanotaux was concerned that some dangerous shift in the relationships among the Great Powers might occur. Austria and Russia reached an agreement on the Balkans in May 1897, which tended to put pressure on France to follow the other continental powers.⁷⁴ And, for a moment, in the spring of 1897, there appeared to be a danger that the Dreikaiserbund might be revived, as Lobanoff had warned in 1895.

Colonel Helmuth von Moltke had been sent by the German government to sound out the Austrians and Russians toward a tighter relationship. The nature and progress of the mission was obscure. Although, in the end, nothing came of it, Hanotaux was both concerned with the implication of the mission and the failure of Montebello to inform him about it. He asked his ambassador:

What is this Moltke Mission? You have told me not a word. The restoration of the Alliance of the Three Emperors is rumored in the world. I know from a very good source that Moltke was to ask the Three Emperors for some words on April 25 at St. Petersburg. They refused, it appears, but to be exposed even to the demand is all the same a little strong and I do not see how our relations of frank friendship would have stood up to such a manifestation.⁷⁵

Montebello dismissed Hanotaux's scolding, indicating that von Moltke had come and gone without attaining anything, and quoted Muraviev as saying that "they would have sent to plead such a cause

another person than the one chosen who represents nothing."⁷⁶

Montebello's acceptance of Muraviev's interpretation was at best naive. As the nephew of the victor of the Austro- and Franco-Prussian Wars, von Moltke was in an excellent symbolic position to represent one of the great conservative military monarchies in speaking to the others.

In August 1897 Hanotaux and Félix Faure visited Russia. The French Foreign Minister had long conversations with both Tsar Nicholas and with his Foreign Minister, Muraviev. After many months of frustration over an almost continuous crisis in the East (Armenian Massacres, Crete, the Greek-Turkish War), of tensions and misunderstandings between France and Russia, this working holiday in Russia proved especially satisfying. Hanotaux was personally well received. On a visit in France in the fall of 1896 the Tsar had been impressed with Hanotaux. In fact, of all the persons he had seen in Paris at the time Hanotaux had pleased him most.⁷⁷ And the latter's stubborn determination over recent months to limit French support of Russian ambitions had not dampened the Tsar's cordiality. The visit in Russia strengthened and confirmed the general direction of Hanotaux's policy, that is, to maintain the Russian Alliance, to cooperate where reasonable, to insist on French interests and diplomatic independence, and where feasible, to promote those interests by playing with the balances among the powers, especially between Germany and England. Finally, the visit concluded with a personal triumph when the alliance was reaffirmed in toasts aboard

the French warship "Pothuau" in language which Hanotaux formulated. The Tsar and the French President proclaimed, "the contractual union of two friendly and allied nations!"

When Hanotaux returned to France he confided an account of the Russian visit to paper. Tsar Nicholas had expressed the opinion that the trouble between the Germans and the English was more than a German ploy to force a favorable commercial treaty out of England. In his view, "the reasons for rivalry and hostility were more profound and . . . a prompt accommodation was unthinkable."⁷⁸ He punctuated his remarks by reporting that when Emperor William "speaks of England he froths at the mouth." But Nicholas also confirmed repeatedly that his imperial cousin "appeared . . . entirely and resolutely peaceful," and "praised much, his good sense, his earnestness, his intelligence." Then the Tsar added with a touch of irony what amounted to a question mark written across the future: "He is impulsive."⁷⁹

If the Russians were trying to suggest indirectly to Hanotaux that a continental alliance against England might be a real possibility, then he did not buy the idea. In fact, he was rather blunt with the Russians and by being so achieved his purposes. When he first met with Tsar Nicholas he told him immediately that it was miraculous that the alliance had survived the winter. He made it clear that France did not want a formal tie with Russia "against a power other than Germany; England or Austria, for example."⁸⁰

When Muraviev suggested to Hanotaux that "William was trying to precipitate Europe against England," Hanotaux replied that "the

policy of Germany in that sense was much more violent in word than in fact." Muraviev could only agree and admitted that "it would always be necessary to expect some lack of faith on the part of Germany on that side."⁸¹

In the end, Hanotaux persuaded Muraviev that in spite of his "strong discontent against England" the best policy for France and Russia was to go forward together, working for the "European Concert at equal distance from Germany and England," that both countries should adhere to the "principle of intermediary action . . . between Germany and England."⁸²

Hanotaux was both relieved and pleased by this result. Before he had departed for Russia, it had seemed that the only possibility for pleasing the Russians was to join with them and with the Germans in a continental alliance against England. He felt that he had drawn Russia into the policy which was correct for France, that of the bascule of alternating between the sides. This result "was one of the happiest of the trip."⁸³

The historian Georges Dethan believes that Hanotaux avoided a general conflict "by firmly refusing to Muraviev the military support of France,"⁸⁴ and, further, that more than anyone else, he "contributed to that peaceful disposition" that seemed to be developing on the continent and which encouraged Tsar Nicholas to propose in 1898, "the opening of a general conference for the powers for disarmament."⁸⁵

The visit to Russia in the late summer of 1897 marked a successful denouement to a period of Franco-Russian relations which

had been very trying to Hanotaux. We have already seen that Russia had drawn France into both the Far Eastern Triplice and the celebration of the opening of the Kiel Canal. These successful attempts to subordinate the policy of France to the policy of Russia in the name of the new alliance had continued throughout the Eastern Crisis, and had become as a result more dangerous, because they threatened to draw France into a war which would mainly serve the interests of Russia at Constantinople and in the Mediterranean.

What this meant for Hanotaux was that he had to protect the diplomatic independence of France and French interests by limiting the alliance to its terms, that is, a defensive pact against possible German aggression, while at the same time maintaining a relationship with the ambitious Russians which would be sufficiently satisfactory to keep the alliance from collapsing and to dissuade a Russian gravitation into some form of Dreikaiserbund with Austria and Germany.

Hanotaux's success in maintaining the alliance was not only essential to the diplomatic position of France, but to the survival of the cabinet. The alliance had become so vividly implanted in the consciousness of patriotic Frenchmen that it had acquired a mystical inviolability. Its collapse would have destroyed the cabinet and perhaps the political careers of its several members.

Obstacles

Hanotaux's achievement as Foreign Minister seems more remarkable if the many obstacles placed in his path over and beyond the ambitions and duplicities of the Great Powers are taken into account.

On several occasions the cabinet voted down policies which Hanotaux was promoting. With no personal political base in the Parliament, he was particularly vulnerable to being ignored when it suited the political purposes of a majority of his colleagues. At one point, weeks of hard negotiations with the English were overthrown because of Delcassé's opposition and the opposition of President Casimir-Perior. On several other occasions, the cabinet voted Hanotaux down when he wanted to take a firmer or more aggressive attitude vis-à-vis the Russians than did the majority. The cabinet, for example, backed off on insisting that the French and Russian squadrons rendezvous outside Kiel harbor.⁸⁶ During the Cretan crisis they did not want Hanotaux to push for a French Governor-General on Crete. The politicians, who were seldom preoccupied with the substance of foreign policy, knew full well that the French public had acquired an almost mystical devotion to the Russian alliance, and that if the Government were to do anything which might have even the appearance of harming it, it could mean political suicide. To limit the Russian Alliance, maintain peace, and further French interests, Hanotaux felt that he must be firmer with the Russians than his colleagues wanted him to be.

In formulating and carrying through certain aspects of foreign policy Hanotaux had to face the competition of the Colonial Ministry. Although he would have preferred to have kept Madagascar under the jurisdiction of the Quai d'Orsay as a protectorate, the Colonial Ministry under Delcassé's leadership succeeded in annexing

the colony to France, which placed it under the Colonial Ministry's own jurisdiction. It was Delcassé who as Undersecretary for Colonies had first promoted the Upper Nile expedition. It was the colonial pressure group which forced Hanotaux to acquiesce to the Marchand mission to Fashoda.

In the fall of 1894 Hanotaux was the only member of the Government who opposed the prosecution of Alfred Dreyfus.⁸⁷ He thought that the evidence was flimsy and he wished to avoid international complications. He succeeded briefly in persuading General Mercier, the War Minister, to desist until better evidence could be obtained. But the army soon decided to go ahead, which it did, with the concurrence of the cabinet. Hanotaux could do nothing but back off.⁸⁸ When the question of revision emerged later, Hanotaux, along with most other members of the Government, was opposed to reopening the case. In November 1897 he met with M. Scheurer-Kestner, the revisionist Senator, and "argued that a man of responsibility should not compromise 'the national interest' by a public campaign on behalf of Dreyfus. There would certainly be complications in the diplomatic quarter if the Dreyfus Affair were pushed to the forefront of public opinion."⁸⁹ After Zola's "J'accuse" in L'Aurore on January 13, 1898, Hanotaux had to deal with the "rising tide of world opinion in favor of revision."⁹⁰ The affair worried the foreign delegations who saw the possibility of a "convulsion," "followed by a foreign war."⁹¹ Hanotaux's principal concern was that the other powers not see France as weakened by the affair and hence take advantage of her.⁹²

Of all Hanotaux's critics the most bitter was President Félix Faure who was jealous of Hanotaux and failed to understand him.

Faure was a self-made man with a monumental ego. Even the sympathetic Charles Braibant recognizes that "by his taste for pomp, his love of the parade, he made the appearance of playing the monarch."⁹³ Christopher Andrew mentions his "flamboyant manner, his notorious vanity."⁹⁴ Braibant points out that he did not have "the classic formation of French political leaders."⁹⁵ In his arrogance, he appears to have been trying to make up for this deficiency. He was jealous of those who did have the benefit of this "classic formation." He expressed a strong distaste for Hanotaux because the latter "was all caught up in juridical reasonings and classical demonstrations of the sort that appealed to his parliamentary colleagues [sic] and his friends in the academy."⁹⁶

Hanotaux found that Faure, in his deportment in cabinet meetings at the time he was serving as Naval Minister, was "well prepared and informed, but longwinded, incoherent, and obstinate"-- a worker, but a lightweight.⁹⁷

Faure could not penetrate Hanotaux's mind and that frightened him. He did not understand the volatile, imaginative, and generally articulate Hanotaux who believed that the cabinet meeting was the place to expose the possibilities in complex and uncertain situations. This was all too indefinite for Faure. His mind must have whirled when Hanotaux, in his characteristic way, presented all the danger and options.⁹⁸

Under his man of the world pose, President Faure appears to have been frequently depressed and frightened. He was especially afraid that by pressing the Russians, Hanotaux would destroy the Franco-Russian Alliance. Although cabinet members were generally timid in standing up to the Russians, Faure's fear may have been magnified because, as President of the Republic, he was personally responsible for the envelope containing the treaty which President Sadi-Carnot had signed with Alexander III in 1892. He probably saw himself as caretaker of the Alliance.⁹⁹ So when Hanotaux expressed his anger with Muraviev for betraying him or even with Paul Cambon for resisting his authority and trying to determine French policy from Constantinople, Faure interpreted this to mean that Hanotaux himself was dangerous. Méline, the Prime Minister, tried to soothe Faure by telling him that Hanotaux should be "watched," but he refused to take Hanotaux's resignation. That Faure, who thought himself an expert on foreign affairs, was nervous about potentially "dangerous" foreign ministers is confirmed by his reaction to the appointment of Hanotaux's successor, Delcassé. Faure "asked himself, not without anxiety, if the Deputy . . . lover of bluff and of certain exaggerations . . . would know how to conserve in the conduct of foreign affairs, all the prudence and necessary tact."¹⁰⁰

Before the First World War the governments of the Third Republic usually had to make do with inexperienced, weak and short-term foreign ministers. As a result, the career diplomats, usually men of aristocratic background, enjoyed a measure of autonomy and considerable influence over policy. Among the several Foreign

Ministers, Hanotaux and Poincaré were the exceptions: able men, confident in their knowledge and experience, who did not hesitate to assert their authority over the diplomatic corps. Both insisted on directing foreign policy from Paris. Both met resistance from career ambassadors. Both, for example, had problems with Paul Cambon. Of the two, Poincaré, whose personal authority at home was far greater than Hanotaux's had been, was more successful in managing his ambassadors.

In 1894 Cambon had been offered the Quai d'Orsay ahead of Hanotaux but had refused to jeopardize his diplomatic career by accepting the responsibility.¹⁰¹ He soon discovered that Hanotaux was successful at impressing the foreign statesmen with whom he had to deal and that he had what Cambon clearly felt was an excessively independent mind. The Austrian ambassador at Constantinople told Cambon in October 1896 that Hanotaux is "a little young and new to politics and perhaps even without all the necessary authority but he will have it soon and we will let him have it because he is the most intelligent statesman in Europe."¹⁰²

Indeed, Cambon himself conceded that Hanotaux was one of the two greatest French foreign ministers since 1870.¹⁰³ But he found himself in bitter opposition to Hanotaux's policies. The leanings of the future advocate of the Entente Cordiale were toward England and against Russia. He did not like the Anglophobe, Prince Lobanoff, in whom Hanotaux had considerable confidence, and was not sorry when he died suddenly, precisely because of his "spell over Hanotaux."¹⁰⁴

While Hanotaux proceeded with considerable caution and patience in the crisis of the Armenian Massacres, believing it wisest to uphold the Sultan Abdul Hamid and the status quo in the Ottoman Empire, Cambon and the French colony at Constantinople felt that Hanotaux should adopt a more menacing attitude.¹⁰⁵ Later Cambon was upset when Hanotaux agreed against his advice to an Austrian formula to blockade the Cretan coast against Greek volunteers. This was "a decision which stung Cambon and contributed to a deepening rift between the two French diplomats."¹⁰⁶

In his Carnet entry of January 28, 1908, Hanotaux referred to Cambon's jealousy and his complicity with Albert Bourée and Camille Barrère, other members of the diplomatic corps, in working against him for the profit of Delcassé, his "designated successor."¹⁰² But he did not think that this had come to anything, because "other circumstances had led to the fall of the Méline cabinet."¹⁰⁸

An ambassador who failed to understand Hanotaux's methods and concerns and who deeply resented pressure from his chief was the Comte de Montebello, the ambassador at St. Petersburg. Montebello felt that the Franco-Russian Alliance was, in large part, his personal achievement and was afraid that Hanotaux would destroy it by pressing the Russians.

During the tense period in Franco-Russian relations preceding the opening of the Kiel Canal, Hanotaux responded to Montebello's unsatisfactory telegram of May 30, 1896 with a blistering reply which accused Russia of flirting with Germany behind France's

back and of showing no concern for French interests. Montebello interpreted this outburst from Hanotaux as an indication that he was about to commit horrible mistakes and destroy the alliance, that he was playing into the hands of Germany, which was trying to separate France from Russia, that he detested Russia on principle, etc. Montebello exposed these concerns to General de Boisdeffre, another architect of the alliance, in a letter dated June 1, 1896.¹⁰⁹ On June 4, 1896 Boisdeffre responded with a letter obviously intended to allay Montebello's fears and assuring him that no one would allow the destruction of the alliance, and reminding him that he had to work for a government preoccupied with public opinion.¹¹⁰ In return Montebello admitted that he had been "a little nervous," but insisted that "a minister who could let himself go to write such insanities to one of his ambassadors is capable of every folly and is horribly dangerous" ¹¹¹ Boisdeffre responded by sending a copy of Hanotaux's most recent speech, which Montebello admitted was "very clear"--"He has been firm and clear, and for those who do not know what goes on behind the scenes, the policy of our Government will appear guided by coherent thinking."¹¹²

Fashoda

As to the Fashoda Crisis, why should a man be considered responsible for it who neither began it or ended it?¹¹³

Gabriel Hanotaux,
"Carnets," February 1907

The policy of sending a French expedition through the Bahr-el-Ghazel into the Upper Nile in order to claim territories also

coveted by England was the work of the Colonial Ministry. In 1894, even before Hanotaux became Foreign Minister, Delcassé persuaded President Sadi Carnot to send an expedition to Fashoda. Until the Fashoda Crisis in 1898, the permanent officials in the Colonial Ministry continued to push for this policy and once it was approved vigorously supported it.

Hanotaux's responsibility for the Fashoda Crisis was no more than marginal. Following the rejection of the agreement he had negotiated with the English diplomat Phipps, which would have put the Upper Nile question on ice, he acquiesced in the Marchand expedition to the Upper Nile because he was forced to do so under the pressure of the colonialists.¹¹⁴ Once he was stuck with the mission, which involved greater risks vis-à-vis England than he would have taken on his own, he tried to remain optimistic and to do the best he could to prepare the way for a peaceful resolution by settling as many other disputes with England as he could.¹¹⁵

The British warnings could hardly have been more explicit. On June 29, 1894, Dufferin, the English ambassador, said that the Monteil mission to the Upper Nile could mean "a very grave conflict between the two countries."¹¹⁶ On July 12, Hanotaux responded by ordering Monteil to stay out of the Nile Basin. On August 14, after Monteil's usefulness in putting pressure on the Belgians to persuade them to abrogate the Anglo-Congolese Treaty had served its purpose, Hanotaux recalled Monteil altogether. The following spring, when Hanotaux no longer had a choice in the matter, Sir Edward Grey, then

Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, speaking in the House of Commons, declared that a French advance "into a territory over which our claims have been known for so long, would be not merely an inconsistent and unexpected act but it must be perfectly well known to the French Government that it would be an unfriendly act."¹¹⁷ This "Grey Declaration" of March 28, 1895 "implied the eventuality of a grave crisis if France persisted with her plan."¹¹⁸ The actual decision to send Marchand to Fashoda was made that fall by the Government of Léon Bourgeois at a time when Hanotaux was temporarily out of office. This decision was made a few days before the British decision to send an expeditionary force up the Nile against the Mahdists,¹¹⁹ the first step, from the British side, in the chain of decisions and events which would eventually place Lord Kitchener face to face with Marchand at Fashoda.

It was never absolutely clear that there would be a direct military confrontation until Kitchener had defeated the main force of the Mahdists at the Battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898, seventeen days before he reached Marchand at Fashoda. An Anglo-Egyptian defeat was not unthinkable. Two years earlier, on March 1, 1896, an Italian army had been routed by the Abyssinians at Adowa. From early 1896 on, the French knew that a confrontation with Kitchener at Fashoda was a distinct possibility. But, then again, they also knew that before the English general would be able to achieve the meeting he would have to move a large army hundreds of miles through forbidding territory and defeat the fanatical Mahdists on their own ground.¹²⁰

None of the French leaders who were in any way involved in the Fashoda debacle come out of it looking good. All, including Hanotaux, did their best to cover themselves. But Hanotaux was probably sincere when he claimed that he did not dare rescind the orders for the Marchand expedition after his return to office. The permanent officials in the Colonial Ministry did not inform Hanotaux on the progress of the mission and, at the same time, in complicity with Marchand himself, transformed its character from the peaceful exploration which Hanotaux intended to a military mission.¹²¹

Should Hanotaux have recalled Marchand before he reached Fashoda? Not only was Hanotaux's position in the cabinet not strong enough for such a move, but to have done so would have appeared as an act of timidity, difficult to explain. Recall could not have been defended as an act of prudence, not in terms the public would understand, at least not until Kitchener won the Battle of Omdurman. By then, Hanotaux was out of office.

On a personal level, recalling the young officer would have been a bitter pill for Hanotaux. In the summer of 1892 he had met Lieutenant Marchand at the home of friends, the Ménards. Marchand had been wounded in Africa and carried his arm in a sling. He had come to Ménards in the company of the Lieutenant Mangin, the Ménards' son-in-law, who would himself become an important figure in French history. He would accompany Marchand to Fashoda, lead the 1911 march on Fez, and become one of the most respected of the French Army's higher commanders in the First World War. He would be for years a good personal friend of Hanotaux's. The meeting at the Ménards' was

a sad one. Ménards' son, a captain, had recently been killed in Africa in the struggle against Samory. Marchand had tried unsuccessfully to save him. Many years later Hanotaux remembered learning from him "the heroic drama in which Captain Ménard had perished."

But Hanotaux's barely-concealed scepticism in regard to the mission was expressed in an ironic comment he made several years later to Marchand: "Go to Fashoda. France is going to fire her pistol!"¹²³ Hanotaux had a talent for selecting the appropriate figure of speech. Firing a pistol off in the African bush was not exactly a symbol of grandeur or a show of intimidating military force. It was merely a slightly absurd attempt to call attention to oneself. And, if challenged by real military force, a pistol was a meager means of defense.

During his last days in office, Hanotaux's attitude toward a possible showdown between France and England on the Upper Nile was a mixture of fatalism and hope. He was fatalistic in the sense that he knew that he could do nothing to stop the dangerous trend of events from reaching a denouement. But he was hopeful in that he trusted his own abilities as a negotiator and that he was enjoying striking success in negotiating with England on the Niger question. "The Anglo-French Convention of June 14, 1898, was a masterful diplomatic accomplishment,"¹²⁴ the culmination of his long efforts to improve relations with England. It was proof, too, to the English, of his peaceful intentions and that they could rely on working with him toward negotiated solutions. Furthermore, just before he left office, he had received the note from Münster, the German ambassador,

indicating that the Germans were willing to cooperate with France vis-à-vis England on African questions. Although in defending his own actions and in criticizing Delcassé he may have exaggerated the significance of this note, it represented an opportunity which he might have been able to put to good use. As we have seen, the Germans respected and feared him and he had a good working relationship with Münster.

Hanotaux has been criticized for not sufficiently preparing the ground diplomatically for Fashoda, but this criticism misses several points. First, the crisis itself was still months away when Hanotaux left office. It made sense to wait for the settlement of the Niger negotiations with England before trying to open up the question of the Upper Nile, and Hanotaux was literally packing his bags to leave office when the Niger agreement was signed.

Moreover, several things were coming together which suggested that England, even if she succeeded in taking Khartoum, might accept negotiations on Egypt. In a letter of encouragement of June 21, 1898¹²⁵ to the French representative in Cairo, Hanotaux pointed out that the Sultan had just made peace with the Greeks and was now free to give his attention to Egypt, that promising negotiations between Abyssinia and France regarding the Upper Nile had opened, that Marchand and "certain emissaries" of Menelik, the Abyssinian Emperor, were moving into the Upper Nile, that England and Russia were at odds in China, and, in a veiled reference to Franco-German cooperation, that England was now threatened with complications in South Africa and in regard to the Portuguese possessions.¹²⁶ All in all, he foresaw a discussion

"probably soon and pacific of the great international interests which Europe in general and France in particular have not ceased to defend in Egypt."¹²⁷

Given the history of the Franco-Russian relationship over the last several years, the Russian tendency to try to subordinate France to a Russo-German dominated continental alliance, and Hanotaux's solution to this undesirable situation worked out with Muraviev in St. Petersburg in August 1897, that is, for the two powers to play the middle ground between Germany and England, given Hanotaux's desire to manage the equilibrium among the powers and to seek the ascendancy of France, it is logical that he would see what he could work out with England first; then, perhaps, with Germany vis-à-vis England; and then, possibly, only after the other initiatives were clearly established, try to draw Russia in to help on Franco-German terms. This is probably the reason why, as long as he was in office, Hanotaux "never requested Russian support for the Upper Nile project."¹²⁸ The time had not yet come to draw Russia into a settlement which Hanotaux would himself direct.

If anyone should be faulted for failing to make appropriate diplomatic preparations it is Delcassé, who had three months between taking office and the crisis. He ignored the German initiative represented by the Münster note, was absorbed by the escalating Dreyfus Affair, and took up the mediation of the Spanish-American War. "Consequently he devoted little time to the approaching confrontation with Great Britain."¹²⁹ In spite of the rapid deterioration of France's diplomatic position caused by the Dreyfus Affair, Delcassé

was optimistic enough and had enough confidence in his abilities as a diplomat to believe down to the last minute that he would wrest a diplomatic victory out of the Fashoda Crisis.¹³⁰ The most generous estimate is that both Hanotaux and Delcassé over-estimated what diplomacy could achieve and underestimated the determination of the English.

Whatever his responsibility, it was Fashoda that defeated Hanotaux's open "system." His careful playing of the balances between the powers, especially between England and Germany, would be abandoned eventually by Delcassé for the greater security of the Entente Cordiale. Whether any French statesman, including Hanotaux, would have had the necessary combination of gifts and the good fortune to make such a system work is not clear.

Delcassé

Theophile Delcassé, Hanotaux's successor, and Foreign Minister from June 1898 to June 1905, was an able statesman with a cast of mind very different from that of Gabriel Hanotaux's. Jacques Chastenet has caught this difference precisely. Of Delcassé he writes:

Less knowledgeable, less subtle than his predecessor, he is as hardworking and more decisive. He doesn't know how, like Hanotaux, to consider all sides of a problem, he does not have the same largeness of mind, but the simplicity of his views give to his acts an incomparable vigor.¹³¹

Hanotaux was a much more open and flexible personality and this was reflected in his approach to diplomacy. He preferred a more fluid situation in which it was possible to work the ground among

the powers. He was prepared to maneuver and wait for an opportunity, while Delcassé wanted to bring matters to a conclusion, to define a situation once and for all. Hanotaux's approach can seem confused and leads to charges of indecisiveness, for example, of wavering between Germany and England,¹³² while Delcassé's appears more direct, more decisive, ultimately more understandable. He was not as inclined as Hanotaux to see the possibility of "turning movements," of achieving an end with an indirect approach.

Although Hanotaux knew how to remain silent, he was not by nature a secretive personality. He really preferred to expose and discuss alternatives. Delcassé, on the other hand, was notorious for his secretiveness. With a touch of humor, Hanotaux describes his behavior at Cabinet meetings in 1894: "Delcassé, absolutely silent and always listening, profited from the fact that he was the last [to speak according to Cabinet protocol] in order to avoid making known his business under the pretext of the lateness of the hour!"¹³³

Hanotaux and Delcassé were not as different as has sometimes been imagined. Christopher Andrew, biographer of Delcassé, writes of Delcassé that "the imperial vision which was to dominate the development of his foreign policy was a greater France built around the shores of the Mediterranean, with an African hinterland stretching southward to the Congo."¹³⁴ The exact same statement would apply with equal accuracy to Hanotaux. While he was Foreign Minister, Hanotaux had been a more moderate imperialist than Delcassé, the Minister of Colonies. When he left office and its responsibilities behind him, he became a more ardent imperialist. On the other hand,

Delcassé became more moderate in his imperialism after he assumed the responsibilities of Foreign Minister.¹³⁵ Neither Hanotaux nor Delcassé were able as Foreign Ministers to maintain good relations with Eugene Etienne,¹³⁶ deputy from Algeria, and a representative of the more extreme colonialists.¹³⁷ A Foreign Minister could not afford to ignore the general relations among the Great Powers in order to devote himself entirely to considerations of empire building.

As late as 1900 Delcassé hoped for German cooperation in a new initiative on the Egyptian Question.¹³⁸ He was not passionately anti-German¹³⁹ and, like Hanotaux, he admired Bismarck.¹⁴⁰ But he soon shifted to a pro-English and, because of the provocative way in which he handled the Germans, to what amounted to an anti-German policy. By 1904 he was prepared, by means of the Entente Cordiale, to give up French claims in Egypt for English support of an eventual French takeover in Morocco.

Delcassé's change of position came in part because of the influence of Paul Cambon, who was the French ambassador in London from 1898 to 1920. Cambon was "a staunch supporter of French aspirations in Morocco and a believer in the colonial groups barter of Egypt for Morocco."¹⁴¹ "He was determined to make a deal with Britain long before Delcassé approved the idea."¹⁴² It was Cambon who "initiated moves and prompted Delcassé on the best procedure in dealing with England."¹⁴³ The Entente Cordiale was negotiated in London by Lord Landsdowne, the English Foreign Minister, and Cambon, "who acted not merely as a mouthpiece for Delcassé but as pleni-potentiary, who kept a tight rein on discussions and at times

prevented his chief from giving up too much in order to conclude the accords."¹⁴⁴ The Entente Cordiale was a triumph of the policy of Paul Cambon.

If Delcassé and Cambon were trying to strengthen the French position vis-à-vis Germany by negotiating the Entente Cordiale then they were, in one sense, following a counterproductive course of action. What they were really doing was permitting England to assume the same kind of position between Germany and France that Hanotaux's France had tried to occupy between Germany and England. In his memoirs Sir Edward Grey recalled his personal satisfaction with the signing of the Entente Cordiale. The nature of his satisfaction is instructive. What he recalled was not the crowning of a vastly improved relationship between France and England, but a freer hand in negotiating with Germany:

I saw all that had been most disagreeable in my experience at the Foreign Office, 1892-1895, swept away. We should no longer be dependent on German support in Egypt with all the discomfort this dependence entailed We should now be able to negotiate with Germany without the handicap of an Egyptian noose around our necks.¹⁴⁵

The Entente Cordiale freed England to bargain with Germany without Germany having the threat available of a Franco-German deal over Egypt to use as a bargaining counter.

Delcassé and First Morocco: The Millet/Hanotaux Critique

Delcassé ignored Germany in the Moroccan negotiations and neglected diplomatic protocol by failing to inform her officially of the Anglo-French Entente. The Germans, who were naturally miffed by

this cavalier treatment and uncertain about the meaning of the Anglo-French rapprochement, decided to use Morocco to test the relationship. In March 1905, under the prodding of Bülow, the German Chancellor, and Holstein, an influential official in the Foreign Office, Emperor William paid a reluctant visit to Tangier, where he proclaimed German support for the independence of Morocco.

As the implications of this "act of Tangier" dawned on the French, they became frightened. They feared that the outcome might be a war with Germany for which France herself was not prepared and in which the Russian alliance would be worthless because of the Russo-Japanese War and because of a Russo-German rapprochement. An avalanche of criticism descended on Delcassé, who resigned in June 1905, after the cabinet unanimously rejected his plea to take advantage of what he regarded to be the readiness of England to support a strong stand against Germany.

Exactly why Delcassé treated Germany as he did is not altogether clear. According to Eugene N. Anderson in the First Moroccan Crisis, 1904-1906, he hoped that by not notifying the German government and not seeking its opinion he would put the Germans in the position of either granting him his diplomatic victory free and clear or of seeking a Franco-German understanding.¹⁴⁶ In any case, it appears in retrospect that Delcassé grossly misunderstood the psychology of the Germans. According to Anderson, Delcassé was confident of France's position. He believed he had the friendship of England, Italy, and Spain, and that Russia would defeat Japan in the Far East. Moreover, he had received some misleading information to

the effect that the German Emperor had recently denied having any territorial interest in Morocco.¹⁴⁷

In September 1905 Hanotaux completed a "Lettre-Préface" to a book by René Millet, former Resident-General of Algeria: Nôtre politique extérieure de 1898 à 1905. Together, the "Lettre-Preface" and the book constitute a thorough indictment of the foreign policy of Delcassé. Hanotaux may have inspired Millet to write the articles of which the book is composed. Malcolm Carroll suggests this possibility in a footnote in which he points out that an anonymous article, "reputed to have been inspired by Hanotaux," was published in the Revue politique et parlimentaire under the title "Quatre ans de la politique exterieure" and appeared "with few changes . . . as the first chapter" of Millet's book.¹⁴⁸ In any case, it is appropriate to treat the "Lettre-Préface" and the book as interconnected documents in which the two writers endorse and support one another.¹⁴⁹

What Hanotaux has to say is made up of general statements and is rather sparse in regard to specific facts. The Millet book is needed to clarify the meaning of the "Lettre-Préface." This is a perfectly sensible strategy on Hanotaux's part if one supposes that his purposes were to interest the reader in reading the book, to give strong approval to the views expressed in it, to lend his name and prestige to increase its sales and its influence, and to maintain a slightly aloof and disinterested image (free of too strong an impression of sour grapes) by speaking briefly and generally and leaving the more detailed attack to Millet.

Hanotaux's generalities add up to a serious indictment: recent years had marked a decline in France's international position which had gone almost unnoticed in France. An unwarranted complacency and an illusory feeling of success had been imparted to the government and the people. Delcassé was responsible, although Hanotaux did not mention his name. He was the master "illusioniste." He had lulled the French people to sleep. They no longer recognized the real opportunities or the grave risks in foreign affairs.¹⁵⁰

Delcassé had led France away from her real objectives, her traditional goals. In fact, he had contrived a sudden, radical and disastrous departure from traditional French policy:

For thirty years . . . Republican France labored without interruption to implement the program of Thiers, Gambetta, and Jules Ferry, with each of the successive cabinets collaborating in the work, with each of the successive Foreign Ministers taking up the thread and passing it along. Suddenly, it was cut.¹⁵¹

The secret goal of Delcassé's policy had been to isolate and humiliate Germany. This wrongheaded policy had been pursued in a confused and contradictory manner. All that had come of it had been the Tangier crisis, a close brush with a potentially catastrophic war, and the deepening of German hostility, not her isolation or humiliation.¹⁵²

To Hanotaux this was all doubly unfortunate because comparatively good relations with Germany were possible and because Germany and France should work (to their mutual advantage) in partnership on particular issues.¹⁵³ Millet stated the attitudes and conclusions

regarding Germany which were behind this view. Contemporary Germany might prove easier to deal with than the Germany of Bismarck:

Emperor William is infinitely more correct than Bismarck. Since the day when he took the reins of the government, the frontier incidents have ceased as by enchantment. He has attested on every occasion his desire for a rapprochement with France.¹⁵⁴

Even if he had wanted to return Alsace-Lorraine to France he could not have done so because his people could not have let him, "but on everything else, he showed himself ready to talk."¹⁵⁵ Millet also stated that the French government had been guilty of a "flagrant contradiction in dreaming of colonial aggrandizements when it meditated an anti-German policy on the continent."¹⁵⁶

Millet placed responsibility for creating the conditions for the First Moroccan Crisis squarely on the French government, not the German. He stated that

By an incontestable blindness, this government, so loving of its repose, has taken its precautions with everyone except with the one of its neighbors who is seriously to be feared: it has, as much as possible, ignored Germany. There is the capital mistake.¹⁵⁷

Hanotaux believed that Delcassé had established friendly relations with most of the other powers by making unwarranted concessions, which, needless to say, had left them well disposed toward France, but at an unacceptable price: "On the Nile, in China, Siam, Muscat, at Constantinople and throughout the East; in Egypt, Newfoundland, and Tripoli, nothing but abandonments and retreats!"¹⁵⁸ In the ententes with England, Italy, and Spain, France had distributed "some realities to harvest some promises."¹⁵⁹

Hanotaux indicated that Delcassé's Moroccan policy had, in reality, for all that it had cost France, marked a weakening of France's position in Morocco. When Delcassé had inherited the responsibility for defending the Moroccan interest of France, "there was, on the surface of the globe, one single point where it appeared that our policy ought to hold firm and preponderate; that was Morocco. No one . . . ignored or denied our rights, our interests or our hopes."¹⁶⁰ After all the negotiations, all the ententes, after risking war with Germany at the worst moment and thoroughly antagonizing her, all that had been gained was the right of "peaceful penetration" and this might turn out to be worthless.¹⁶¹

Finally, Delcassé had missed important opportunities to benefit France. Although Hanotaux did not bring up the Fashoda Crisis, Millet did, with the clear implication that Delcassé should have acted on Münster's note and reached an understanding on the Portuguese colonies with Germany before the arrival of Marchand at Fashoda, and then taken up with England the delimitation of the French zone east of Lake Chad. If he had done these things with skill and dispatch, then the meeting at Fashoda would have been "no more than a secondary incident."¹⁶²

Conclusion

As Foreign Minister, Hanotaux did not try to follow his 1892 plan and attempt to engineer the destruction of England. On the contrary, he tried to settle differences with her and improve relations. The reality of his position was a difficult struggle

against misunderstandings and obstacles in the vicious arena of French politics. He sought to protect his own position in the Government, to protect France from both subordination (to her new ally, Russia) and isolation (should Russia attach herself tightly to Germany and Austria) to keep options open by improving relations with each of the powers, especially with England, and to try to scratch his way up the steep slope toward French ascendancy. Priding himself on the long view of history, he does not appear to have sought the sudden spectacular success, but to have moved diligently forward with small gains.

Rather than seeking dangerous solutions to large issues, Egypt, for instance, or Alsace-Lorraine, he tried to prepare the ground for wider settlements, possibly years away, and not necessarily directed against England or Germany, or, for that matter, against anyone.

He tried to cultivate the personal respect of foreign leaders and to establish himself as the most influential statesman in Europe. Perhaps it is not entirely unfair to suggest that he sought the position of a latter day "Richelieu." But to say that this was a personal "ego-trip" misses the point that Hanotaux's system made the search for "Richelieu" a generic not merely a personal objective for French statesmen. He believed that the equilibrium among the powers called for a manager, that the managing power ought to be France and, consequently, that the responsibility of manager should belong to a French statesman, that is, under the existing circumstances, to himself. In point of fact, Hanotaux was put off by Richelieu's cold

personal ambition. He recognized his own temperamental preference to be for scholarship, not statesmanship. Insofar as he sought the role of Richelieu, Hanotaux was pursuing his duty as he perceived it.

After he had left the Quai d'Orsay, Hanotaux felt that he had been sufficiently successful in applying the tradition of French statesmanship that he continued down to the First World War to advocate policies consistent with his experience as Foreign Minister. Although many of his views would evolve in response to changing circumstances, fundamentals remained the same. Hanotaux continued down to the war vigorously to insist on the diplomatic independence of France, to resist subordination and to fear isolation, and to dream from time to time of vast settlements which would elevate France and bring peace to Europe. His consistency of outlook was no doubt encouraged by his underlying need to defend his record as Foreign Minister. But it was derived as well from the formative experiences of his youth and from the progress he believed he had made as a statesman toward the realization of what he understood to be the national objectives.

CHAPTER III: FOOTNOTES

¹Pierre Renouvin, Histoire des relations internationales, 8 Vols. (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1953-1957), 6:165.

²Madagascar was annexed against his wishes during the brief period when he was out of office. He would have preferred a Madagascan protectorate. This would have placed Madagascar under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry, while annexation placed it under the jurisdiction of the rival Colonial Ministry.

³Alf A. Heggoy, The African Policies of Gabriel Hanotaux, 1894-1898 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 124.

⁴Jules Ferry had acquired Tunisia for France, but Tunisia had remained encumbered with a string of capitulations treaties giving the other powers tariff advantages. Hanotaux cleared these away.

⁵See pp. 120-127.

⁶Heggoy, p. 21; pp. 36-37.

⁷Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Ayril 1, 1949), p. 395.

¹⁰Heggoy, p. 36.

¹¹Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, p. 395.

¹²Heggoy, pp. 38, 64.

¹³Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895.

¹⁴It is understandable that Lord Dufferin, the English ambassador, who had to bear the brunt of Hanotaux's diplomatic offensive, never much liked him after these early encounters. It is somewhat less understandable that Dufferin has remained an uncritically accepted source for the long standing tendency of English historiography to underrate Hanotaux's abilities and achievements. Dufferin, at least, respected Hanotaux. He wrote Salisbury on March 3, 1896, that Hanotaux was "undoubtedly a strong and most intelligent man," but has become on African questions "more of a mouthpiece than a free agent." PRO, FO 27/3274, No. 41: Dufferin to Salisbury.

¹⁵Heggoy, pp. 32-33, 59, 61-62.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 24, 57.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 15-28.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 36; 60-61.

²⁰Ibid., p. 33.

²¹Casimir-Perier was enduring a brief and frustrating sojourn as President of the Republic, and was bitter toward Hanotaux for not keeping him better informed. See "Carnet," Mars 10, 1895, ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Avril 1, 1949), pp. 398-403.

²²Heggoy, pp. 5-6.

²³Ibid., p. 41.

²⁴Thomas M. Iiams, Jr. Dreyfus, Diplomats and the Dual Alliance: Gabriel Hanotaux at the Quai d'Orsay (1894-1898) (Paris: Librairie Minard, 1962), p. 76. See André Siegfried, "Discours de M. André Siegfried," le 21 Juin, 1945 (Paris: Éditions de "Monde," n.d.), p. 6.

²⁵C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "Gabriel Hanotaux, The Colonial Party and the Fashoda Strategy," ed. E. F. Penrose, European Imperialism and the Partition of Africa (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass and Company, 1975), pp. 55-104.

Professors Andrew and Kanya-Forstner have presented a view of Hanotaux as unstable and unfit. Although they have done so in a

well-written and tightly constructed essay, their attempt at psychohistory overreaches itself and reduces Hanotaux to a caricature. They have taken certain truths about Hanotaux and drawn conclusions which severely distort his performance as Foreign Minister. As they suggest, Hanotaux was nervous and excitable. He was given to moments of optimism and despair. At cabinet meetings he expressed his views openly; not only his hopes, but his fears and his anger. While in office he was sometimes overburdened with fatigue. He was occasionally ill. But the Andrew/Kanya-Forstner case that he was anything other than a comparatively open and emotional personality and an overburdened and harassed minister is unconvincing.

Their interpretation tends to divert analytical attention from the universe of ideas, personal and cultural, in which an historical figure operated and from the events to which that figure responded. Murky psychological forces appear to take the lead over the interplay of idea and fact in the historical figure's actions. Psychopathology pre-empts and narrows the field of historical vision. All human beings are, of course, psychological beings. Psychological concepts and interpretations have a useful and legitimate role in historical analysis. But theory, critical reasoning, and the assimilation of a culture enable human beings to transcend to varying degrees (if never completely) the purely personal elements in their psyches.

The psychohistorian may distort his subject and fail if this rational and cultural transcendence of the psyche is not taken into account. It seems to me that Andrew and Kanya-Forstner fail at precisely this point. They simply do not understand Hanotaux's intellectual makeup, the universe of ideas through which he was operating. They do not take into account the ways in which his ideas and aspirations explain his conduct or the degree to which his anxieties and anger can be explained not by a sick psyche, not by a monumental egotism, but by the confrontation of the theory, critical powers, assimilated culture, and imagination of an able French nationalist intellectual with myriad obstacles and tangled events.

Here and there, moreover, Andrew and Kanya-Forstner's presentation of their case is both questionable in important judgments and perplexing in its details. They write, for instance, of Hanotaux's "abler contemporaries," implying that his gifts were decidedly inferior to those around him. Who was more able? Raymond Poincaré perhaps--his best friend in the cabinet? But Felix Faure? Paul Cambon? Comte de Montebello? I know of nothing that would support the contention that he was even marginally less able than the other French leaders of the time. Andrew and Kanya-Forstner refer to Hanotaux's "psychosomatic illnesses." This, to them, is stateable fact. It is supported with a statement which curiously melds a nervous and a physical disease: "he suffered a nervous collapse, followed by a severe attack of influenza. For a few days his life seemed in danger." A nervous collapse, or, say, fatigue and strain combined with the early symptoms of the flu?

Andrew and Kanya-Forstner make concessions to Hanotaux which certainly show their intention to present a fair and balanced view, but which also significantly weaken their case that he was unstable and unfit. They tell us, for instance, that as late as October 1895, after Hanotaux, who was temporarily out of office, had occupied his exposed position as Foreign Minister for about a year and a half, that the "ex-Foreign Minister retained not only the support of the public but also the loyalty of the ambassadors and the officials at the Quai d'Orsay"--quite an accomplishment if he were truly unfit.

To summarize, I believe that Christopher Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner are fine historians who know very well how to construct a case, but who have, in respect to Hanotaux, fallen into some errors. They have written of Hanotaux without fully understanding his theoretical/historical views and the nature of his aspirations for France and have consequently neglected these views in interpreting him. What they see, for example, as erratic behavior explained by a disturbed psyche, may be better understood as manifestations of Hanotaux's application of theoretical/historical views to dangerous and shifting circumstances. They have relied too much on contemporaries who had axes to grind vis-à-vis Hanotaux. Falling in line with these hostile sources they have mistaken Hanotaux's commitment to do his best to fulfill intellectual conceptions of the generic role of the French statesman (the search for Richelieu) with what they see as his "monumental ego." They have tended to confuse cabinet meeting discussions in which feelings and ideas were fully and bluntly expressed with policy itself. They have placed too much weight on stormy meetings and placed not enough on the vicious combative nature of French politics and the emotionally overwrought nature of the times (i.e., the Dreyfus Affair). The result is a caricature of Hanotaux which is neither consistent with what is known of his rise in the world nor with his long and immensely productive life after 1898.

²⁶Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, p. 394.

²⁷Ibid. But he made many important speeches throughout his long life.

²⁸Ibid., p. 389.

²⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, Mon temps (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938), II:427-428.

³⁰Ibid., I:207-210.

³¹Peter Grupp, Theorie des Kolonialexpansion und Methoden der Imperialistischen Aussenpolitik bei Gabriel Hanotaux (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1972), pp. 146-147.

³²Peter Grupp, "Gabriel Hanotaux, le personnage et ses idées sur l'expansion colonial," Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer, Tome LVIII, No. 213, 1971, p. 399.

³³Albert Sorel, Europe and the French Revolution: The Political Traditions of the Old Regime, trans. and ed. Alfred Cobban and J. W. Hunt (Collins: St. James Place, London 1969 [1885]), p. 463.

³⁴Raymond F. Betts, Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 29.

³⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Introduction," La paix latine (Paris: Combet, 1903), pp. XXVII-XXXVII. Also Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 506.

³⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, La paix latine, pp. XIII-XXXVII, 13-16.

³⁷Henri Brunschwig, French Colonialism: 1871-1914; Myths and Realities (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965, c. 1960), pp. 182-185.

³⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, Henri Martin: Sa vie, ses oeuvres, son temps 1810-1883 (Paris: L. Cerf, 1887), p. 187.

³⁹Hanotaux, "Carnet," Mai 24, 1894, p. XXX [probably Gabriel-Louis Jaray], "Gabriel Hanotaux: À propos de son 90^e anniversaire," Revue des deux mondes (Décembre 1942), p. 302.

⁴⁰William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 125.

⁴¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Préface" to Gabriel-Louis Jaray, La politique franco-anglaise et l'arbitrage internationale (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1904), pp. IX-X.

⁴²Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, p. 62.

⁴³Grupp, "Gabriel Hanotaux, le personnage et ses idées sur l'expansion colonial," p. 400; Gabriel Hanotaux, L'affaire de Madagascar (Paris: C. Levy, 1896), p. 294.

⁴⁴Grupp, *ibid.*, p. 403.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 401-402. Hanotaux, L'affaire de Madagascar, pp. 265, et suiv.

⁴⁶Grupp, *ibid.*, p. 400. Grupp's work is excellent and has been very helpful to me, but he sometimes misses a point. I believe he is misleading, if not mistaken, at least for the pre-1914 Hanotaux when he suggests that he was "the prototype of the colonialist who has the tranquil conscience, who never doubts" (see p. 404). Although I do not think Hanotaux felt "guilty," Grupp nevertheless seems to imply a complacency in Hanotaux's imperialism which was not present to 1914.

⁴⁷There is proof of this in Hanotaux's patient approach to achieving the Moroccan protectorate. History had taught him the long view. In a 1912 article he stated that "it took several centuries for the Roman Empire to obtain throughout its territory the voluntary and proud adherence of the gradually conquered peoples." See Hanotaux, "L'Islam français," Études diplomatiques: La guerre les Balkans et l'Europe, Août 10, 1912, pp. 66-67.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 76. "But precisely because an understanding is possible [between France and Islam] it would appear to be preferable to renounce, for the moment at least, according to the advice of M. R. Aynard, the dream of assimilation, that is to say, "the creation of a common soul. . . . If certain evolutions should be accomplished they will produce themselves."

⁴⁹Grupp, "Gabriel Hanotaux, le personnage et ses idées sur l'expansion colonial," p. 400.

⁵⁰Pierre Renouvin, Histoire des relations internationales, 6:170-171. See Heggoy, p. 12.

⁵¹Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times: 1760 to Present (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), p. 387.

⁵²Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 400-401.

⁵³Ibid., p. 402.

⁵⁴Iiams, p. 152.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 90. See Grosse Politik, XIV, No. 3814.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 85-86. See Hanotiaux, "Carnet," n.d.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 71.

⁵⁹William L. Langer, ed., An Encyclopedia of World History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), p. 744.

⁶⁰Raymond Poincaré, The Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, trans. Sir George Arthur (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1926), p. 139.

⁶¹Iiams, p. 81.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁶³Documents diplomatiques française (1871-1914, First Series (1871-1900), Vol. XI (January 1897-May 7, 1895) (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1947), nos. 382, 384, 385; DDF, First Series, Vol. XII (May 8, 1895-October 14, 1896) (1951), no. 398.

⁶⁴Iiams, p. 82.

⁶⁵"Entrevue du Prince Lobanoff avec Guillaume II" in "Carnets," ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Avril 15, 1949), pp. 586-587.

⁶⁶Jacques Chastenet, La république triomphante, 1893, Vol. III of Historie de la Troisième République (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1955), p. 144.

⁶⁷Iiams, p. 128. See DDF, First Series, XII, no. 225.

⁶⁸Moulin Bauffin de St. Morel (Adjudant Boisdeffre, St. Petersburg), October 19, 1896, Archives Boisdeffre, Alençon. See Grupp, Theorie de Kolonialexpansion . . . bei Gabriel Hanotiaux, p. 155.

⁶⁹Iiams, p. 139. See DDF, First Series, XIII (1952), no. 55.

⁷⁰Hanotiaux found Muraviev upsetting. In April 1897 he complained to Montebello that Muraviev "issues circular after circular without consulting us" and that he was "deferent" to the Germans. See "Lettre" personnelle de M. Gabriel Hanotiaux à M. de Montebello,"

ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, "Carnets: L'alliance franco-russe et la questions d'orient," Revue des deux mondes (Octobre 15, 1950), p. 586.

⁷¹Iiams, p. 140. See DDF First Series, XIII, no. 87.

⁷²"Letter personnel de Gabriel Hanotau au marquis de Montebello" (Avril 10, 1897),, ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, "Carnets: L'alliance franco-russe et la questions d'orient," p. 593.

⁷³Hanotau, "Le ministre des affaires étrangères à l'ambassadeur de France à Petersbourg," ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, "Carnets: L'alliance franco-russe et la questions d'orient," pp. 584-585.

⁷⁴Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, pp. 373-357.

⁷⁵"Lettre personelle de M. Gabriel Hanotau a M. de Montebello," ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, "Carnets: L'alliance franco-russe et la questions d'orient," p. 586.

⁷⁶Marquis de Montebello, "Lettres personnelles du marquis de Montebello a Gabriel Hanotau," ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, "Carnets: L'alliance franco-russe et la questions d'orient," p. 589.

⁷⁷Moulin au Bauffin de St. Morel, Octobre 19, 1895, Archives de Boisdeffre. See Grupp, p. 155.

⁷⁸Gabriel Hanotau, "Les papiers de Gabriel Hanotau et la proclamation de l'entente franco-russe (1895-1897)," ed. Georges Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Juillet-Septembre, 1966), p. 218.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 217.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 215.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 218.

⁸²Ibid., p. 220.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Georges Dethan, ed., "Les papiers de Gabriel Hanotau et la proclamation de l'entente franco-russe (1895-1897)," Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Juillet-Septembre, 1966), p. 209.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Iiams, p. 81.

⁸⁷Herman E. Slotnick, "The French Academy and the Third Republic, 1897-1914" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1958), p. 74.

⁸⁸Roger Glenn Brown, Fashoda Reconsidered: The Impact of Domestic Politics on French Policy in Africa, 1893-1898 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), pp. 30-32.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 55. See Affaires Étrangères-Papiers Hanotaux II, "Ma conversations avec M. Scheurer-Kestner," Novembre 6, 1897.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 61-65.

⁹¹Monson to Salisbury, February 26, 1898, PRO, FO, 27/3393, No. 109.

⁹²Brown, p. 70.

⁹³Charles Braibant, ed., Félix Faure à l'Élysée: Souvenirs de Louis le Gall (Directeur du cabinet du président de la république) (Paris: Hachette, 1903), p. 24.

⁹⁴Christopher Andrew, Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale: A Reappraisal of French Foreign Policy, 1898-1905 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 63.

⁹⁵Braibant, p. 17.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 78.

⁹⁷Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, ed. Gabriel-Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Avril 1, 1949), p. 394.

⁹⁸Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, p. 84.

⁹⁹Braibant, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁰¹Iiams, p. 24.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁰³Paul Cambon, Correspondance 1870-1914, ed. Henry Cambon, 3 vols. (Paris: Grasset, 1940-1946), 1:402.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., Paul Cambon to Mme. Paul Cambon, Septembre 1896, 1:411.

¹⁰⁵Iiams, p. 130.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁰⁷"Carnet," Janvier 26, 1908, "Les Carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux" (1907-1914)," ed. Georges Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (1977), pp. 60-62.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁰⁹Montebello au Boisdeffre, Juin 1, 1895 (Private Archives of Montebello). See Grupp, Theorie de Kolonialexpansion . . ., pp. 152-153.

¹¹⁰General de Boisdeffre au comte de Montebello, Juin 4, 1895 (Archives de Boisdeffre, Aleçon). See Grupp, pp. 152-153.

¹¹¹Montebello au Boisdeffre, Juin 10, 1895 (Private Archives of Montebello). See Grupp, p. 154.

¹¹²Montebello au Boisdeffre, Juin 14, 1895 (Private Archives of Montebello). See Grupp, p. 154.

¹¹³Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 1907, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (1977), p. 45.

¹¹⁴Both France and Great Britain would "reciprocally desist on a provisional" basis from claiming the Upper Nile to leave negotiations open for the future. See Pierre Renouvin, "Les origines de l'expédition de Fachoda," Revue historique (Octobre-Décembre 1948), pp. 184-185.

¹¹⁵Heggoy, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁶Renouvin, "Les origines de l'expédition de Fashoda," pp. 182-183.

¹¹⁷British Parliamentary Debates, vol. 32, p. 405.

¹¹⁸Renouvin, p. 189.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 193.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 194-196.

¹²¹Brown, pp. 52-54.

¹²²Gabriel Hanotaux, Le général Mangin (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1925), pp. 1-3.

¹²³General Charles Mangin, ed., "Lettres de la mission Marchand," Revue des deux mondes (Septembre 15, 1931), p. 277.

¹²⁴Heggoy, p. 123.

¹²⁵Dated several days after the fall of the Méline cabinet.

¹²⁶Affaires Étrangères-Papiers Hanotaux XI, f. 177-178. See Grupp, pp. 150-151.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 151.

¹²⁸Brown, p. 75.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 78-79.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 92.

¹³¹Chastenet, La République triomphante, 1893, p. 156.

¹³²Heggoy, p. 41. See Raymond J. Sontag, Germany and England's Background of Conflict, 1848-1894 (New York and London: 1938).

¹³³Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 13, 1895, ed. Gabriel Louis Jaray, Revue des deux mondes (Avril 1, 1949), p. 394.

¹³⁴Andrew, p. 87.

¹³⁵Heggoy, p. 126.

¹³⁶The Hanotiaux-Etienne relationship improved after Hanotiaux left office. In 1912 the two were clearly excellent friends of long standing. See Etienne's letters to Hanotiaux in January 1912, in "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotiaux," Revue d'histoire diplomatique (1977).

¹³⁷James J. Cooke, New French Imperialism, 1880-1910: The Third Republic and Colonial Expansion (New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 3.

¹³⁸Andrew, p. 19.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴¹Dwight E. Lee, Europe's Crucial Years: The Diplomatic Background of World War I, 1902-1914 (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1974), p. 50.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁴⁵Viscount (Sir Edward) Grey of Fallodon, Twenty-five Years 2 Vols. (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1928), I:51.

¹⁴⁶Eugene N. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904-1906 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 126-127.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁸E. Malcolm Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs 1870-1914 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1964, c. 1931), p. 171, n. 44.

¹⁴⁹G. P. Gooch, "Contractual Agreements, 1902-1907," The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1923), III:340.

¹⁵⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "Lettre-Préface," September 7, 1905, pp. VII-XV. See René Millet, Nôtre politique.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. VIII.

¹⁵²Ibid., pp. IX-XII.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. IX.

¹⁵⁴Millet, p. 227.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁵⁸Hanotaux, "Lettre-Préface," p. IX.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. XI.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. X.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. XII.

¹⁶²Millet, p. 6.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER THE FOREIGN OFFICE: HANOTAUX AS A NATIONALIST WRITER

Career as Publicist

After the fall of the Méline cabinet in 1898 Hanotaux devoted his considerable energies to writing. A conservative Republican, an "Academician" of impeccable respectability, he served as an eloquent advocate of the nationalist faith. Optimistic in principle, he wrote in a confident and positive way about his country. But he also worried about immediate or anticipated dangers. Much of what he wrote responded to dangers which he saw: the divisive conflict between the Catholic Church and the French State, revolutionary syndicalism, structural weaknesses in Republican institutions, growing pressure from the Germans, an uncertain drift in England's destiny, the subordination of French foreign policy to that of others, particularly to England's, the "armed peace," threats of international anarchy, of France isolated, of a great European war.

As a defender of France and the Republic, Hanotaux was active and aggressive. He refused to retreat into passive, purely "defensive" positions. In a world of danger and of opportunity, he sought to lift the sights and strengthen the confidence of the French, to remind them of great traditions and past accomplishments, to prepare them for whatever challenges they might have to face, to suggest solutions for

internal problems, and to point out paths along which France might expect to come into her own, to achieve her natural and ascendant role as the manager of the equilibrium among the powers and as arbiter of peace.

As a seeker of balance, harmony, and rational solutions, Hanotaux sought to remove danger by mitigating conflict: between Catholic and secular France; between property and labor; among the Great Powers. He sought to reconcile conflicting factions in France in the interest of national unity and to resolve disputes among the Great Powers in the interests of peace.

As a writer Hanotaux refused to climb down into the gutter of partisan politics. He preferred rational discourse. He criticized the policies of Delcassé, but he did not attack Delcassé personally. More often than not, he felt that it was sufficient to state his own views, that there was no need to call attention to contrary positions. Hanotaux's stance was that of the elder statesman and eminent scholar whose commitment to the Nation and to constructive principles of reconciliation transcended the worst features of partisan politics.

As a writer, Hanotaux's productivity was immense and his range of interests remarkable. This is demonstrated by a glance at the titles published in the first few years after he left office. In 1902 and 1903 he published three volumes of collected articles which he had written since he left office: L'energie française (1902), Du choix d'une carrière (1902), and La paix latine (1903). Between 1903 and 1909 he published his multi-volume Histoire de la France contemporaine. Although he continued his search for Richelieu

documents, no new volumes were published of this major work. But he cooperated with the Comte d'Haussonville, a royalist companion in the French Academy, in editing Souvenirs sur Madame de Maintenon (1902-1903), and he continued his editorial work, begun in the 1880's, on a Récueil des instructions donnés aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France à Rome depuis les traités de Westphalia jusqu'à à la révolution française. In 1908 he published two long articles in Revue des deux mondes on the Congress of Berlin. After his unsuccessful campaign for the Senate in 1904, and the 1905 "Lettre-préface" to René Millet's Nôtre politique étrangère de 1898 à 1905, he became more and more absorbed in the debate over foreign affairs, expressing his views in his diplomatic studies.

Meanwhile, he gave speeches to the learned societies at Nantes (1899) and Rouen (1902), at the public meeting of the French Academy (1898), at the annual public meeting of the Institute of France (the five academies) (1901), at the Parthenon for the Victor Hugo Centennial (1902). He presided over "conferences" in what today we would call local or regional history, "Le Havre dans l'histoire de France" (1900), and "La Normandie dans l'unité français" (1900).

He wrote innumerable prefaces to books. To mention the more significant: to General Galliéni's Neuf ans à Madagascar (1908), to the French translation of William R. Anson's formidable Loi et pratique constitutionnelles de l'Angleterre (1903), to Gabriel Louis Jaray's La politique franco-anglaise et l'arbitrage internationale (1904).

He showed considerable interest in literature during these years. In 1903 he published (with George S. Vicaire), La jeunesse de Balzac. He provided the preface for Leo Claratie's Nos grand écrivains recontés, à nos petits français (1904). He wrote on Hérédia, bibliophile et poète (Hérédia was a fellow academician and a colleague on Journal) (1906). As has been mentioned he spoke in 1902 at the Victor Hugo centennial celebration. In 1906 he published a preface to an edition of Erasmus's Éloge de la folie. A devoted bibliophile, Hanotiaux published a short book in 1901, La Seine et les quais, promenades d'un bibliophile. Interested in art, he wrote the preface for Versailles et Paris en 1871, d'après les dessins originaux de Gustave Doré.

During the early years of the new century, Hanotiaux's principal outlets for articles were Revue des deux mondes and Journal, to which he was named "political director" in 1899.¹ In 1902 he was drawn into the founding of the review, La renaissance latine, for which he wrote an "exposition of the ideas which presided at its creation,"² and other articles which were collected into his book, La paix latine.

French Academy

Although Hanotiaux held no official position in the French government after he left office in 1898, his membership in the prestigious French Academy gave him an excellent platform upon which to build his full time career as an historian and writer. To be accepted to membership in the Academy was "generally conceived to be the highest honor" which could "fall to the lot of a Frenchman."³

When Hanotaux was received into the Academy on March 24, 1898, Republicans were in the minority, Monarchists the majority. France was still caught in the vortex of the Dreyfus Affair. The formal welcome was given by Vicomte de Vögué who attacked the Republic. Hanotaux responded with a prepared speech on Challemel-Lacour, who had been his superior at the Quai d'Orsay, and whose seat he had succeeded to. This speech, in substance, was a defense of the Republic.⁴

Membership in the Academy brought Hanotaux into regular and sustained contact with many of the most eminent men in France. He developed cordial relations with monarchists like Vicomte de Vögué and with the liberal Catholic, Albert de Mun. Several personal friends were among the members: Albert Sorel, until his death in 1906; Raymond Poincaré after 1909. As he grew older his friends were to be found more and more among the members of the "compagnie."

Hanotaux's membership in the French Academy and his understanding of its mission throws light on the cultural foundations of his imperialism. The Academy had been founded by Richelieu in 1635. As the leading Richelieu scholar of his generation, Hanotaux was in a peculiarly appropriate position to interpret the origins and mission of the Academy to the Academy itself. As the "doyen" Hanotaux presided over the three hundredth anniversary celebration in 1935, attended by the representatives of learned societies, academies, and universities of over twenty nations.⁵

For the occasion the old gentleman (now in his 80's) prepared an essay on the "Spirit of the Academy." Richelieu had confided "the

mission of watching over the imponderables which determine that a people keep its place and its figure among the other peoples."⁶ He had "aimed from the beginning by the reform of language, and by the study of the laws of thought, at the international role; he counted on assuring, among the foreign peoples, the penetration of the intellectual and moral authority of France."⁷

A writer depends on outlets for his work. On this crucial matter, membership in the Academy strengthened Hanotaux's position. It placed the stamp of acceptability on his work. The custom was (and is) among academicians (or at least among their publishers) to place the designation, "de l'Academie française" after the name of the author on the title page of his work, the "imprimatur" of the intellectual establishment. Membership in the academy consolidated Hanotaux's ties with the prestigious Revue des deux mondes. His membership could only have helped him find publication in other reviews and newspapers, and the publishing houses.

Decadence

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a widespread malaise among French intellectuals who believed that France was a "decadent" society. In large measure pessimistic perceptions reached back to the defeat of 1870,⁸ to a tacit psychological concession that Germany had proven its superiority at that time. But the malaise was also fed by a more immediate recognition that German military, economic, and demographic power was incomparably greater than in 1870, and by the crises of recent years: the Panama scandal,

the Dreyfus Affair, and the Fashoda humiliation, and the bitter and unproductive struggle between traditional religion and the positivist state.

Hanotaux campaigned assiduously against this malaise in numerous articles and books. He deplored it as a fashionable "pessimism quite contrary to the natural leaning of the French soul."⁹ He denied that "France was mortally wounded and the race was in decadence,"¹⁰ that she was "now only a nation of the second rank and must incline herself before her destiny."¹¹ Instead he sought to "appeal to the hesitant nation," to present it "with a program which was clear, precise, proportionate to its forces which were great, its resources which were immense."¹²

In 1902 Hanotaux published, under the title, L'energie français, a collection of articles from Revue des deux mondes and the text of a long address which he had delivered in October 1901 at the annual meeting of the five academies which compose the Institute of France: "France, est-elle en decadence?" Most of the articles should be classified, not as historical discussions, but as impressionistic travelogues. In preparing his defense of French vitality, Hanotaux had traveled throughout France and experienced the country and its people first hand. From this experience he concluded:

Decadence! They say. Singular decadence! This people remains valiant, hardworking, and generous, and is still bringing the freshness of great experiences to the rest of humanity

The difficulty of my subject is its grandeur. To speak of France, what an enterprise!¹³

Darwinism

In his provocative lecture, cited earlier in this dissertation, James Joll emphasized the impact of Darwinism on the "unspoken assumptions" of the men of 1914.

It is a commonplace that Darwinian ideas had a great influence on the ideology of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, but it is important to realize how literally the doctrine of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest . . . was taken by many European leaders just before the First World War.¹⁴

The issue of energy versus decadence raises the question of the relationship of Hanotaux's thought to the Darwinian ideas which were so pervasive at this time.

On the surface, this relationship appears to be minimal. Whatever the influence of Darwinian ideas, whichever of these Hanotaux may have absorbed from the milieu by osmosis, he did not appropriate a Darwinian "system" and live within it intellectually. Moreover, he did not need the social Darwinists to tell him that the life of the nation was a struggle for existence. The history of France taught him that:

Installed at the crossings of the great highways of Europe, having submitted to at least one great invasion per century, always trampled and bruised by the gallop of foreign calvary, she has acquired her sense of life by struggling for life. It is suffering that has taught her the lesson of patriotism. Among the powers of modern Europe, France has been the first, perhaps, which has had a full consciousness of its own personality.¹⁵

For Hanotaux France had become the nation which she was, not through evolutionary development or some other dialectic of progress, but because of the richly endowed physical nature of the country, because of the particular mixture of peoples which made up her

population, because of her cultural roots in classical civilization, and because, located at the crossroads of Europe, always open to invasion, she had acquired an identity through suffering.

If there was a primordial concept underlying the nationalism of Gabriel Hanotaux, it was not the idea of a struggle for existence which yielded the survival of the fittest, but of a struggle for existence which had shaped the identity of a French nation which had become conscious of itself through suffering. This was not a Darwinist, but a Christian or "quasi-Christian" conception. In Hanotaux's thought there was a displacement of Christian values into the historical theory of the etiology of the nation. Joan of Arc's role as the central myth in the iconography of French nationalism; her devotion to France, her willingness to sacrifice herself, her martyrdom, her sainthood, were sufficiently illustrative of this. Whatever the influence of Darwinian ideas it is hidden because these ideas have been absorbed into the "quasi-Christian" and "classical" element in Hanotaux's thought.

His historical views were classical (and even partially cyclical). In "France, est-elle en decadence?" he dismissed the charge of decadence and at the same time argued against a purely evolutionary view of historical development by taking a very long view and asserting that France, in her essence, hadn't changed much in two thousand years. She had had her moments of disaster and of grandeur (the "cycles"), but the qualities which had made her French had remained much the same.

Hanotaux looked back at classical writers, at Caesar and Strabo. Strabo had said that "a country so judiciously disposed was proof of the existence of God and would one day flourish as a great nation."¹⁶ In classical antiquity the Gauls had already showed "impetuosity in enterprises and in battles" and, like modern Frenchmen after the Franco-Prussian War, "discouragement in reverses"¹⁷ Machiavelli, too, had noted that the French were "quickly discouraged in defeat."¹⁸ In the fifteenth century, Nicholas Pasquier, "according to the custom of our compatriots, despaired and deplored the irremedial decadence of a country which . . . was then in all the vigor of adolescence."¹⁹ In short, while the discouragement with defeat and the cult of decadence were peculiarly French, they were recurrent and minor manifestations, not to be taken seriously.

Ascendancy Through a Latin Peace

La paix latine expresses the Mediterranean orientation of Hanotaux's geopolitical thought. Published in 1903, it consisted mainly of articles growing out of his travels in the Mediterranean. Hanotaux himself considered the book a companion piece to L'energie française, expressing similar ideas but within a field of vision enlarged to include the Mediterranean world.²⁰ It too was a defense against charges of decadence, in this case charges which were being leveled at the Latin races generally.²¹ It too was an expression of faith, this time in a wider Mediterranean civilization, regarded by Hanotaux as the origin of all the great achievements of man.

While L'energie française attempted to reveal the internal dynamism of the French nation, La paix latine was intended to point the way towards a brilliant future which was already opening for the peoples of the Mediterranean. The breezes of a renaissance were stirring.²² If these peoples could succeed in establishing peace and harmony among themselves, they would set an example to others and through their stabilizing influence bring peace to the world. "When calm reigns here the world is tranquil, so much does the Mediterranean still influence the world."²³

Hanotaux presented the book as a natural outgrowth of his experience as a diplomat and foreign minister:

Returned to private life, I have not lost from sight the questions which, at the foreign office, had occupied me for so long. Everywhere I had encountered the Mediterranean problem: long ago at Constantinople; then, at Tunis, Morocco, Italy, Greece, Crete, Syria, Egypt.²⁴

He believed that Europe was engaged in a "march to the East which would decide the destiny of Asia."²⁵ If Russia were to find her destiny in the Far East and Germany hers in the Near East, then the route of march of the Latin peoples lay along the Mediterranean littoral. France, the pre-eminent Latin power, would lead the march. But first the Latin sisters must better understand each other and stop quarrelling among themselves.²⁶ "The Mediterranean peace . . . depends on the privileged races which are the true heirs of antiquity, the daughters of Rome; those who, in spite of all, guard the traditions of original civilization: world peace will be made through the 'Latin Peace.'"²⁷

The "Latin peace" would not be easily achieved. The Mediterranean was a place where races, interests, and ideas were all in conflict.²⁸ It was a place where Latin Christian civilization confronted Islam. The people of the Mediterranean were idealists, dreamers; so it was a place where the conflict of ideas "complicated infinitely a *melée* already so obscure."²⁹ Nevertheless, Hanotaux felt that the prospects for understanding among the Latin peoples were good: "none of them has anything to fear from the others."³⁰ And they, in turn, were the necessary instruments of a peaceful policy vis-à-vis Islam:

A long history has taught them the vanity of dominations too vast [Rome and Napoleon], the importance of ambitions without restraint, and, on the contrary, the authority of equilibrium and the force of moderation

Secular neighbors of the Eastern peoples, heirs of the same traditions, speaking often the same language, they are able, by their schools to educate, by their councils³¹ to direct, by their intervention to save and ameliorate.

The Latin peoples would have to make peace among themselves if they were to realize their destiny and become the arbiters of peace. They would have to make peace with Islam if they were to pacify the Mediterranean. In this crucial matter of pacification France had already set the example:

in the Mediterranean question she has introduced a new conception, that of union, of collaboration in mutual respect. It is the intention of this regime, which is called a "protectorate," to substitute peace for war; consent for domination; persuasion for violence.³²

Hanotaux deplored what he believed was a contemporary effort to stir up a new "crusade" against Islam. For Europe this could be a disastrous folly.³³ "One does not exterminate 100,000,000 men with

a flourish of the pen or even with gunfire."³⁴ "Do you not see that they will fall on your frontiers, since the world has become too small for you?"³⁵

In La paix latine Hanotaux implied that a pathway to the ascendancy of France lay in the Mediterranean. France should exert her example and her leadership among her weaker Latin sisters to pacify the Mediterranean. From the Mediterranean would radiate, by example and by influence, world peace. France, as initiator and lynchpin of this desirable eventuality, would establish a benign ascendancy among the nations of the world.

The "Social Question"

Hanotaux was concerned with the "social question." In 1899 he had joined Raymond Poincaré, Paul Deschanel, Alexandre Millerand, and Jean Jaures in presenting a petition to the Chamber of Deputies to "spend at least one session a week discussing the social question."³⁶

Feeling that the series of violent strikes which had occurred in France between 1907 and 1909 had tested the country's institutions,³⁷ he published in 1910, La démocratie et le travail, a collection of articles which had appeared during the labor strife in Journal. In a long preface he attacked the revolutionary movement, especially the Syndicalism of Georges Sorel. He deplored those who sought "to divide humanity into two camps, when it passionately seeks the ways of unity and harmony,"³⁸ those Moloch worshipers "who resign themselves to human sacrifices, imposed and exacted by an implacable

Destiny."³⁹ And he deplored what he believed to be the effect they were having on the morale of the workers, who were being taught to look upon work as a "diminution" of their individual worth and a violation of their dignity.⁴⁰

Although Hanotaux was committed to the principle of private property, which he considered fundamental to civilization itself, he did believe that certain things ought to be done for the French worker. He felt, for example, that the system of inheritances should be changed to give most to those who had helped produce wealth (i.e., to the workers in the typical small family-owned factory rather than exclusively to family members)--a fairly radical proposal.⁴¹ He also felt that more state intervention to ameliorate the plight of the worker was justified.⁴²

Although he deplored Syndicalism, Hanotaux was fascinated by Georges Sorel's conception of the revolutionary "myth," which he thought lacked neither "elegance" nor "nobility."⁴³ In fact, he credited Sorel with a touch of genius.⁴⁴

He had substituted, for the word revolution, a new formula or, at least, he had given to that formula, an amplitude, a splendor without precedents; he had raised it to the state of a "myth." For it, the world, the whole world of course, ought to be led along and exalted towards the serene regions where its power of action would realize itself in an heroic moral perfection and by which society would be rid of all its faults, and its impurities.⁴⁵

Deploing Revolutionary Syndicalism because he believed it threatened to split the country, Hanotaux insisted that "the ideal is not there, the 'myth' is not there! The future is not there!"

Joan of Arc

In 1911, one year after the publication of La démocratie et le travail, Hanotaux offered the French public his Jeanne d'Arc, his own version as to where the "ideal," the "myth," and the "future" lay. This was not so much a history as a myth created out of historical materials, a myth to which the loyalty of all Frenchmen was enlisted whatever their social class or their religious or philosophical commitments. In Hanotaux's hands Joan of Arc became the counter-Sorelian and the counter-Revolutionary myth. Joan became the embodiment of everything French, the symbol of France herself; she belonged to all Frenchmen and compelled the loyalty of all who wished to know who they were and where they had come from.

There was, it should be stressed, little originality in Hanotaux's delineation of Joan. Historians of an earlier time, Michelet, and Hanotaux's relative Henri Martin, had helped to popularize and beatify her.⁴⁷ In publishing Jeanne d'Arc, Hanotaux emulated Henri Martin, as he had in so many things. Henri Martin had written that "no doctrine, no form, no sect will absorb her, who, unlike the other heroes of our country, has not been merely the expression of a particular phase in our history, but the Messiah of nationality and even the soul of France."⁴⁸ So there was nothing new in Hanotaux's view of Joan as the central figure in the development of the French nation, nor in his interpretation of her enduring significance and the obligation owed by all Frenchmen to her memory. In 1893 his close friend Raymond Poincaré had also said in a public

speech that Joan "is not the prisoner of any sect, any group, any school . . . each of us has the same right and the same duty to admire her."⁴⁹ On June 8, 1894 a majority of the French senators approved a national holiday commemorating the "Maid," but the deputies rejected the project.⁵⁰

Hanotaux's Jeanne d'Arc was a vigorous and comprehensive statement of standard views from the pen of one of France's most prominent contemporary historians. Librairie Plon published his work in both a deluxe edition, beautifully illustrated in 15th century woodcuts, and a somewhat abbreviated and considerably more compact pocket edition. But the French historical profession was not overly impressed. Charles Petit-Dutaillis, a fine medievalist, wrote in the Revue historique, that he could "not partake of his exaltation which carries him away to some excesses quite bizarre."⁵¹

Whatever its faults from the standpoint of scientific historiography, the book contributed to that patriotic state of mind which was developing among Frenchmen in the last few years before the First World War. It aimed at the reconciliation of all Frenchmen to the nationalist cause. In May 1912, Poincare told the Chamber of Deputies that the government planned "to institute a holiday dedicated to Joan of Arc," an announcement which marked an alliance between patriotic Republicans and the traditional right.⁵²

Henri Bergson would claim a little later that Joan of Arc won the First Battle of the Marne.⁵³ Although the Sorelian myth of Revolution has probably attracted more attention from historians, there can be no doubt as to which myth the immediate future of France belonged in 1911.⁵⁴

The Historian

To Louis Gillet, the art historian who wrote the only volume length biographical study of Hanotaux, his friend was an embodiment of the soul of France, an edifying figure who, in his mind and features, reflected the history and even the physical contours of the country. To present tastes, such an estimate of individual personality seems exaggerated and overblown, if not altogether silly. However, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that Hanotaux directed his life with just such a conscious purpose in mind, that he did, in fact, year in and year out, strive in every way he could to absorb and recreate France within himself. He struggled to comprehend France much as other men struggle to comprehend God. And he was always ready to teach what he saw and felt to others. Gillet suggests "that the art of framing himself, of composing his life" was "not the least talent of M. Hanotaux."⁵⁵

To put this somewhat differently, Hanotaux was an historian who was not merely trying to write history, but to live in history.⁵⁶ He was trying to live in history in the sense that he aspired to dwell intellectually, morally, and imaginatively in a context of historical facts, principles and associations. To him history was more than a vocation. It was an environment. His mental world was regulated by such historically derived principles as the predominance of the Mediterranean tradition in the achievements of civilization, the balance of power as a fundamental principle of European diplomacy, and the necessary relationship of a centralized and powerful state to the unity of France.

His mind was filled with historical details, his writings with historical illusions. He was a man of documents and rare books. He was a noted bibliophile who collected one of the finest private libraries in France (about a third of a million books).⁵⁷ He had a passion both for old monuments and contemporary works of art. Louis Gillet, Auguste Rodin, the sculptor, and Henri Matisse, the painter, were among his friends. Gillet tells of the long summer days just before the war spent with Rodin and Hanotaux at the latter's stone house on a hill overlooking the Aisne River and of afternoons in the cathedral towns helping Rodin with his notes on medieval churches.⁵⁸

It appears that Hanotaux designed his own life in such a way that the fundamental regional differences of France would be expressed and resolved. For many years he divided his life between Paris, the Aisne, and the Midi. The balancing of domiciles represented the balances of France between north and south, between Paris and the provinces.⁵⁹

The power of the imagination to enter into the past seemed greater to Hanotaux than it has for many historians for whom the past no longer lives behind the documents. He experienced a living past which could be entered and explored. "I was born in 1585," he said, the date of Richelieu's birth:⁶⁰

From that date, in effect, I find myself in a retrospective life where everything is familiar to me. Names, families, cities, provinces, adventures, public and private passions, tendencies, sentiments, aspirations, grandeurs, defeats, all this past becomes the present for me; there is nothing in me that is not attached somehow to that epoch.⁶¹

Hanotaux took an exalted view of writing history and of the social role of the historian. He believed that to write history is to

judge and to act, that it is an intellectual and moral activity, profoundly relevant to the health and progress of society.

He believed that

. . . when a man decides to write history, he becomes, as weak as he may be, and as small as may be his subject, the instrument of Destiny; responsible for his recitation and his judgment; he is also responsible for results. For the way in which he explains the past, the future will go well or badly, will be hastened or precipitated.⁶²

He believed that

. . . history is a morality. It is that which founds the social pact on sacrifice. It is the mistress of Princes and Peoples, it works ceaselessly to distinguish good from evil. It passes the acts of men through a sieve which separates the good from the bad grain. It judges. It is the tribunal where sits the conscience of the generations.⁶³

He believed that history is "the feeling of continuity in the social body,"⁶⁴ and he sought to strengthen this sense of continuity by reconciling the past and the present, the old regime with post-revolutionary France, the Third Republic with the traditions of the monarchy.

As proud as he was of his training as a chartiste, he denied that history can be written from documents alone.

The criticism of documents is the base of all history and that is why it has happened that this research, so necessary and so laborious, has been confounded with history itself. Since history does not come out of the document alone, it has been concluded that the study of the document is all there is to history⁶⁵

But all those who have participated in public life, all those who have reflected on private life know that that which is important in both is not written The statesman knows that, if he succeeds, success will speak for him; if he fails he does not want to appear to have been mistaken. Consequently, one can hardly count on the chance encounter of a revealing paper to pierce this ultimate secret; it is necessary to divine it: it is a matter of reasoning, intuition, imagination, experience⁶⁶

He believed that an active participation in affairs was essential for the historian:

The historian does not enclose himself in his office: he walks about the Agora. He will have a grip on men only if he offers them not his science alone but his experience. For this manly role it will be necessary henceforth that he has been involved in action.⁶⁷

In the winter of 1912-1913 Hanotaux launched an ambitious and massive project, a many-volumned history of France. He gathered together in his Parisian apartment a distinguished group of younger historians, men of about forty, who had already established themselves in particular specialties but had hitherto been hesitant to attempt general works within their fields. Among these handpicked scholars were Jean Brunhes in "human geography;" George Goyau, in the history of religion; Louis Gillet, in the history of art; Colonel Jean Colins, in military history; René Pinon, who, in 1912, published pro-Hanotaux articles and a book on Franco-German relations; and Louis Madelin, historian of the French Revolution and biographer of Fouché. Many years later, Madelin wrote an account of the meeting.⁶⁸

Hanotaux presented what he had in mind informally to the circle. He wished to see a "great fresco" created, a panorama of compositions highlighting the history of the French nation in her different fields of activity. Each writer would trace his subject throughout the course of French history.⁶⁹

At the heart of the work would be the French nation. A faith in the nation would be conveyed which Hanotaux expressed in mystical terms. Madelin has summarized his message:

France is not a people, a troupe that is led. France is a nation. Even under powerful masters and gifted leaders she has led herself much more than is commonly believed. By the constant coordination of her activities of every order, she has served the great designs which had made her, which have augmented, fortified, and enriched her, which have ceaselessly carried her higher. Long before she appeared to have any voice in her destiny, she quite often led her leaders more than she was led by them. When her leaders, after having erred, appeared to abandon her, Charles VII or Henri III, the last of the Valois, then it was the Nation which seized the foundering state, armed it, and saved it. A daughter of the country people, Joan of Arc, incarnated the whole indignant mass. A group of petty bourgeoisie, keen of mind, led the Third Estate to the Bearnais [Henri IV]. Even under Bonaparte, how can one not see the work of the mass of citizens, wearied of disorder and discord, who did their best to sustain the restorer, push him and carry him. And even in this century how can one deny that France "reele" has, many times, repaired by her intervention the mistakes of official France.⁷⁰

France is a nation which believes quite wrongly that she reached her majority in 1789. She has always been a great person. Her history has been recounted too much as that of a minor, by speaking only of her tutors: princes, ministers, military leaders, statesmen. The history of the nation in every domain must be told.⁷¹

According to Madelin, Hanotaux challenged the younger men to be daring, to reach beyond the more comfortable limits of their present scholarship and to learn much. He knew what "he wanted and wanted it fully" and "was less persuasive than imperious." When the participants in the meeting presented "scruples, objections, 'buts' and 'ifs', he dismissed these."⁷²

Undertaken as it was in the midst of the national revival for which Hanotaux had been working for many years, the Histoire de la nation française must be looked on as an effort to achieve an historical "summa" of French nationalism on a massive scale, one far exceeding the individual capacities of a single historian. The spirit

and message of the Jeanne d'Arc would be extended to encompass in sweeping strokes the history and achievements of the nation. The Histoire de la nation française was written, edited, and published after the First World War.

The Diplomatic Studies

The main sources for much of the rest of this dissertation are the many articles Hanotiaux wrote between 1907 and 1915 on international events and relations. Each of these articles appeared initially in Revue hebdomadaire or Figaro. Most were then collected and published in successive volumes, the first two under the general title, Études diplomatiques (1912, 1914), the third under the title, Études diplomatiques et historiques (1916). The "historiques" were added to cover material included in the volume, but with little or no connection to questions of diplomacy.

The first of the Études diplomatiques was entitled La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris, Librairie Plon, 1912). It included twenty-six articles from Revue hebdomadaire, a preface, and a conclusion. Each article was a study of a single problem or of closely related problems. Each was a carefully balanced, logically constructed essay of good rhetorical quality.

When Hanotiaux began to write his diplomatic studies in 1907 he was optimistic about Europe, which, he felt, had just returned to herself after devoting the previous twenty-five years to conquering the world. This inward turn had occurred rather suddenly as the result of "the limits prescribed by nature, a respect for the laws of

equilibrium, and a kind of universal satiety." This meant a "general 'stop'" (curiously he used the English word) in world politics.⁷³

To Hanotaux it appeared that the Great Powers were accepting the principle of status quo in world politics and, by implication, in European politics as well:

Thus we see world politics, so active and tormented quite recently make the effort to stabilize and consolidate itself in a series of agreements which can be summarized in the most simple formula: maintenance of the status quo. . . . With sincere satisfaction each of the contracting powers takes pride in its own status quo; this gives the others confidence.⁷⁴

This optimism was not maintained for long. The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary (1908) proved to be the first of a long series of disruptions to the status quo after 1907 which continued down to the First World War. Much of the time Hanotaux would be disturbed by events which were unfolding and by what he believed to be mistaken directions in the policies of his government. In early 1912 when he looked over the articles which he had assembled for the first volume of the diplomatic studies, he wrote that he had been "inspired by the single thought to bring France back to her traditional policy, the policy of equilibrium among the several powers."⁷⁵ He wanted to strip away the illusions of the last few years, especially those which placed too much faith in the Entente Cordiale, and to persuade France to return to her natural position of leadership among the Great Powers. Throughout the volume he tried to elucidate the meaning and application of the policy of equilibrium within the unfolding context of international events and to criticize

the failure of French diplomacy to reassert this policy and adhere to it in an imaginative and active way.

In La politique de l'équilibre Hanotaux was much preoccupied with Morocco. This was most apparent during the protracted crisis of 1911, when he devoted one article after another to the strategic and diplomatic ramifications of the Moroccan negotiations. But he also paid attention to the Balkans, the Mediterranean, Turkey, and the Near East; and, throughout one year (February 1910-February 1911) he relentlessly pursued the domestic and international difficulties of England.

Some of the underlying motifs which reappeared in many of the articles were the burgeoning power of Germany, both economic and military; the pressure of the Triple Alliance on the Balkans, Turkey, and the Mediterranean; the uncertainty, ambiguity, weakness and failure of the Triple Entente; the Anglo-German conflict and the recurring possibility of an Anglo-German rapprochement; the current weakness of England and her failure to create the army of conscripts which she needed to protect herself and to assume her full share of responsibility in the balance of power vis-à-vis Germany; and the failure of France to return to her true role as the manager of the equilibrium.

The Études diplomatiques: la guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, 1912-1913 (Paris: Plon, 1914), was a collection of forty-three articles from Revue hebdomadaire and Figaro, plus a preface and a conclusion. As the title indicated, the Balkan Wars were the unifying subject. Although Hanotaux continued to be preoccupied by many of

the concerns of the earlier volume, his concentration on the ongoing crisis in the East meant that less attention was given to the Anglo-German struggle and more to the conflict between Austria and Russia. Another related, and more subtle shift of emphasis occurred in his approach to the equilibrium among the powers and to France's responsibility to manage it. In the first volume he tended more to discuss the equilibrium in terms of bilateral relationships. That is, he was predominantly concerned with the Anglo-German struggle and with France's role (distorted by the Entente Cordiale) in that struggle. But, he was also concerned with France's role as the conciliator of remaining and still dangerous differences between France's allies, Russia and England, and even further, as a participant in a settlement between Germany and Russia.

In the second volume, France remained the potential arbiter of the destinies of Europe, but the focus of this responsibility shifted from "bilateral relationships" to the Concert of Europe, to the need for a general settlement in the East which could only be achieved through the cooperation of all the Great Powers. In an Eastern Crisis involving the Great Powers, France should literally have the last word. Resting his case, as he so often did, on the authority of Bismarck, Hanotaux argued that France was sufficiently disinterested in the Balkans and Turkey that she could afford to wait until last (after Russia, Austria, Italy, England and Germany) to take her stand, and, hence, could largely determine the outcome of an Eastern Crisis.⁷⁶

Although Hanotaux searched diligently for a silver lining in the clouds, and even periodically reaffirmed his confidence in a peaceful outcome of Europe's problems, his frustration with the international situation deepened in these articles. He was more and more distressed with the armaments race which he deplored not only because it was dangerous but because it was imposing crushing economic burdens on the European countries. Paradoxically, he was never more eloquent in his indictments of the senseless futility of the armaments competition than during this period when he felt constrained to give his full support to the enlargement of the French Army through the Three Year Law. To him there was something ludicrous and incomprehensible about the armaments race, that

surprising contrast which tortures the souls of peoples, obliged to be always ready so as never to fight. Suffocating under the crushing weight of vain armaments, they would kill themselves in order to live. The barracks are full of men who work themselves up for war for fear of war. This reasoned folly will be for the future an indecipherable enigma.⁷⁷

Throughout these articles Hanotaux was disturbed that events seemed to be moving beyond the control of the present generation of policy makers. He suggested that European diplomacy was failing, that it was drifting into bankruptcy. Indeed, Hanotaux was passionately convinced that the diplomats of Europe had failed in the Balkan Crisis, that they had frittered away an opportunity for a general settlement among themselves, and that such an opportunity might not come again for a long time:

Our generation had carefully kept the vast eastern domain to serve as compensations when the horn would sound for the general liquidation which we foresaw. We transmitted this heritage and these visions of the future to our successors. How could they let the opportunity pass?⁷⁸

The third and final volume was Pendant la grande guerre (Août-Decembre, 1914) (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1916). This was a collection of articles "published in Figaro and Revue hebdomadaire in the course of the first months of the war, from August 1914 up to the end of December of the same year."⁷⁹

This volume provides an ongoing view of Hanotaux's emotional and intellectual adjustment to the sudden and cataclysmic transformation of the international situation brought on by the war. And, insofar as he may have been correct in regarding his personal feelings as an accurate reflection of French public opinion during those hours,⁸⁰ it provides as good a case study of the emotional and intellectual adjustment of the French spirit and the French mind to the fact of war as one is likely to find. Viewed from the perspective of Hanotaux's prewar studies, these articles help one understand a little better the intellectual and emotional roots of the French conviction that Germany was responsible for the war and guilty of criminal behavior in waging it. It considerably mitigates the conventional charge that the "propagandist" function of the French historian was an intellectual "sell-out."

In the diplomatic studies Hanotaux presented views which were consistent with his earlier thought and with his experience as Foreign Minister. Down to the beginning of the First World War, he continued to insist on the importance of an independent diplomatic position for

France, to resist her subordination to others, and to fear her isolation. He continued to look for opportunities to attain the diplomatic ascendancy of France. He deplored the absence of a statesman who could consolidate the peace of Europe. After the Second Moroccan Crisis he hoped that Raymond Poincaré would answer the need for a Richelieu. But he was to be disappointed with Poincaré's failure to reach such a lofty goal.

In the diplomatic studies Hanotaux did not ordinarily tell his readers exactly what he himself would do if he were in the position of responsibility, if he himself were still the Foreign Minister. For a private citizen he was well-informed, but did not pretend to have inside information. For this reason and because he felt that comprehensive understanding of principles, basic positions, and the lessons of history was more important than the present details, he usually did not argue in detail with present authorities and he virtually never attacked them in person (or even mentioned their names) in print. It appears that he chose quite consciously to occupy the high ground, to be the authoritative statesman. His pose was that of the knowledgeable historian and experienced statesman who believed that he understood the interests of the powers and the relations among them. He presented himself as theoretician/realist whose theoretical understanding was rooted in history and practical experience, making it possible for him to comment meaningfully on events without the benefit of inside information, without offering highly specific alternative approaches--the precise details, for instance, of an Eastern Settlement.

What Hanotaux did for his readers was to present them with a relatively consistent and coherent perspective on events, a point of view which embodied the contention that were this self-same point of view adopted and applied to events that correct instrumental solutions could be achieved, that the cumulative effect of French statesmen approaching the world from this point of view would be an independent and ascendant France, in a peaceful Europe. Furthermore, Hanotaux equated this point of view with traditional policy, with policy rooted in a correct understanding of the history and natural position of France.

Outlets for Publication

In the last years before the First World War Hanotaux made use of three publishing outlets for his articles, the two reviews, Revue des deux mondes and Revue hebdomadaire, and the daily newspaper, Figaro.

Writing for the Revue des deux mondes or the Revue hebdomadaire before 1914 did not mean that one had to subscribe to a rigid platform or party line, but it did mean that one had to be acceptable to the conservative, predominantly republican, intellectual class and that one produced material that was appropriate to the tone of the periodical. Fernand Baldensperger, in his L'avant guerre dans la littérature française indicated that he did not believe that the prewar periodicals could be as strictly classified as at an earlier time and wrote that "a certain mixture of doctrines has replaced the

strict classifications. A general tone rather than a defined program relates the authors whose names appear together in the same review."⁸¹

Of all the "revues" and "journals" which published Hanotaux articles during his long career, none was more prestigious or influential or maintained a more lasting relationship with the author than the Revue des deux mondes. This Parisian "revue" was "one of the poles of the French intellectual world."⁸² It was conservative, academic, republican, and bourgeois, if "bourgeois" is used advisedly to include those aristocratic intellectuals who supported the Republic and associated closely with successful intellectuals of bourgeois origin. A large portion of its writers were either members of the Institute of France (many of the French Academy) or were well on their way to becoming so. For a number of years around the turn of the century, Fernand Brunetiere, the Managing Director of the Revue, was virtually master of new appointments to the French Academy. The Revue des deux mondes emphasized history and classical truths over what might be merely current or faddish. Its tendency was to wait until a moral or social change or a new literary or art form had become at least partially accepted within French society before admitting it to the Revue.⁸³

Had it not been for Francis Charmes, Brunetiere's successor as the Managing Director at the Revue des deux mondes, who ably covered developments in domestic and foreign affairs himself in a regular column, Hanotaux might conceivably have found an outlet for his diplomatic studies in this most prestigious of French revues. In any event, there can be no question but that the Revue des deux

mondes respected Hanotaux and coveted his writings. For over sixty years, in a more or less continuous relationship, it published a truly vast quantity of Hanotaux's work. This was mainly in the form of historical articles. The review published Richelieu articles and the articles on Napoleon. In 1908 it published Hanotaux's study of the Congress of Berlin. It also published the historical studies of René Pinon, who was decidedly pro-Hanotaux in his interpretation of recent French history.

In any case, Revue hebdomadaire and Figaro were better suited to Hanotaux's diplomatic studies because they were both aimed at a wider audience. It was in the Revue hebdomadaire that Hanotaux began to publish the articles which came to make up the first volume of the diplomatic studies. This weekly had behind it and writing for it the same intellectuals whose names were to be found among the members of the Institute of France and whose articles appeared in the Revue des deux mondes. The lengthy guest lists for the annual banquets show that it enjoyed impressive support from the respectable French intellectual world.

Its purpose was to reach the general public, to bring the best that was being thought and said to the common man. As the president of the administrative board, Georges Gavoty, said at the annual dinner on June 7, 1909, its purpose was "to spread the taste for serious studies and good literary form among the vast public inaccessible to the great reviews."⁸⁴

Speaking at the same dinner, Maurice Barres congratulated the Revue hebdomadaire on its rapid acceptance by the public and implied

that its size and format may have been having something to do with its success: "this little book which one finds everywhere and which slides easily into one's pocket."⁸⁵ He also suggested that the Revue was filling the gap which it was intended to fill, that is, that it had successfully occupied the empty ground between the daily papers and the great reviews:

Life today is such that the dailies are obliged to reduce more and more the length and number of articles. Information has invaded everything. On the other hand the more solemn reviews tend to look for the large studies which they ask from the specialists.⁸⁶

The Revue hebdomadaire was needed in the middle ground.

From the beginning Hanotaux himself was enthusiastic about the Revue hebdomadaire. He spoke at one of the first banquets about the infinite possibilities open to it. Fernand Laudet, the editor, recalled that speech at the June 1, 1911 dinner.

"The sea is immense" M. Hanotaux said to us here several years ago while indicating to us the possible reach of our navigations. How right he was to thus stimulate our efforts, for it is certainly not a sadness for man but a consolation to feel that his life is shorter than his task and to be always assured of having an avenue for his activities.⁸⁷

Hanotaux, characteristically, proposed quite a program!

Hanotaux began to publish in Figaro in the spring of 1912.⁸⁸ From that time on about half the diplomatic studies appeared in the Parisian daily which belonged with Temps and Journal des debats to the politics of the center. He must have appreciated the prospect of another outlet for his views and the increase in readership which this implied. And the fact that he was given the opportunity to publish in Figaro is an indication that his articles in the Revue

hebdomadaire were making an impression. It may be too that Hanotaux was not completely satisfied with the limitations of Revue hebdomadaire. He could react more quickly to events through the medium of a daily paper than had been possible in the weekly review. Though the articles would be shorter he could reach his public more often. It also gave him an opportunity to compete on the same terrain with the influential commentators of the other middle of the road Parisian dailies, André Tardieu of Temps and August Gouvain of Journal des débats, both of whom were energetic advocates of the entente policy which Hanotaux questioned.

Hanotaux was consistently given the leading space in Revue hebdomadaire and Figaro. His studies regularly appeared as the first article in Revue hebdomadaire and in the first column on the front page of Figaro. In Figaro they were listed at the top of the short table of contents located in the upper left hand corner of the first page. In the absence of data on Hanotaux's readership, this is indirect evidence of the prestige which he enjoyed among contemporary readers.⁸⁹ It also clearly shows the high estimation of his appeal made by the editors, Fernand Laudet of Revue hebdomadaire and Gaston Calmette of Figaro. It also means that in each instance of publication Hanotaux was given the opportunity to have a maximum impact on the public. Further, the collecting and publishing of his articles implies that they must have been of widespread interest, that they were not thought to have lost their value simply because events were receding, and that there was a potential market for them.

Hanotaux's principal sources of information were the newspapers, both domestic and foreign. His circle of well-informed friends provided him with useful information and offered sympathetic and critical reactions to his views, but he was not generally a party to the secrets of the government. At one point, he mentioned that it had been many years since he had been let in on the "secrets of the Gods."⁹⁰ And, when he protested his ignorance of France's secret diplomacy he did so with an intensity of frustration which is altogether believable.

Public Opinion

Hanotaux defended the right of public opinion to know the truth. It should not be misled by false promises or left in the dark by a policy of secret diplomacy. To him, secret diplomacy was incompatible with a democratic republic. He believed that

The system of secrecy is, if absolutely necessary, admissible under a monarchical regime, when a dynasty or a prince are the depositories of the confidence of the nation. But under a government of opinion, with removable ministers and presidents, who has the right to impose on the country a hidden policy. To whom does the 'secret of the king' belong?⁹¹

In a democracy public opinion should be accurately informed not only because this is right, but also because it is necessary. Hanotaux believed that in the long run public opinion largely determines events, that this is true not only in the democracies but in the nondemocratic societies as well. Hence, public opinion should be guided into the right paths and this is best done by presenting it with the truth. Furthermore, in a democracy, that which is withheld

from the public is inert and without force. "When one works with the public it is necessary to tell it all. In our day that which is hidden is without force; authority like truth is in the light."⁹²

Hanotaux was convinced that the movement of public opinion and the prospects for peace were intimately connected. He firmly believed that public opinion in France and in the rest of Europe was naturally peaceful and he believed that an informed public opinion at home and abroad was the best guarantee of peace. He was sceptical of the contemporary peace movement, of schemes for disarmament and of a widespread tendency to place too much confidence in the efficacy of arbitration for settling major international disputes. But he regarded the Second Hague Conference as an immensely promising development. It marked what could be the beginnings of an "Estates-General of the World," of a forum of a world opinion which was essentially peaceful. It could nurture what Hanotaux believed to be the solitary and essential mechanism of world peace, the "reflex of conciliation among peoples."⁹³

Hanotaux was also aware that there were men at work throughout contemporary Europe who wished to move public opinion in the contrary directions of violence and war. He distrusted and deplored the appeals to violence of contemporary revolutionaries and chauvinists.

The intellectual temerity of our age is to be seen in similar calls for those who have the power to be heard and understood. Never before has the apology for brutality been extolled so vigorously for I know not what heroic millenarianism. Alone, up to now, some victorious marshals have so audaciously vaunted war.⁹⁴

By June 1, 1912, he would complain that "panchauvinism reigns"⁹⁵ and that "by press campaigns and other artificial means, the peoples of the world were being precipitated toward events being rendered unavoidable."⁹⁶ By March 28, 1913 he wrote in Figaro that public opinion in France and in Europe was being tested by events, that it would "need all its 'sang-froid'" if it were to pull through the current time of troubles in international relations without disaster.⁹⁷

CHAPTER IV: FOOTNOTES

¹Claude Bellanger, et al., Histoire généralé de la presse française, 3 vols. (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1972), 3:315.

²Gabriel Hanotaux, "Introduction," La paix latine (Paris: Combet, 1903), p. III.

³Julian Park, "Education" in The Culture of France in Our Time, ed. Julian Park (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), p. 220.

⁴Herman E. Slotnick, "The French Academy and the Third Republic, 1897-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1958), p. 59. Also see Henry Bordeaux, in Louis Madelin, et al., Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: La Presse Française et Étrangere, 1945), p. 13

⁵Henry Bordeaux, *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'ésprit de l'academie," in Trois siècles de l'academie française, 1635-1935 (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1936), p. 35.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸Koenraad W. Swart in a brilliant study, The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth Century France, identified Taine as the key figure in the cult of decadence, citing Hanotaux's opinion that Taine's steady mind lost its balance as a result of the disaster of 1871 and quotes Hanotaux as saying that "If the future wants to know the French state of mind following the war, it will open . . . [Taine's Origens de la France contemporaine] which prolongs and renews in its pages of despair, the wail of the defeated." See Koenraad W. Swart, The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth Century France (The Hague: Martinus Nizhoff, 1964), p. 131. Swart's citation of Hanotaux is his Histoire de la France contemporaine (1871-1900), 4 vols (Paris: Combet, 1903-1906), 2:549-555.

⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La France: Est-elle en decadence?" L'energie française (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1902), p. 341.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 364.

¹²Ibid. In weighing the significance of this pessimism, Koenraad Swart (see note 8 above) sides with Hanotaux, whom, Swart believes, represented the feelings of the majority of Frenchmen (see Swart, 187-188). Swart also contends that present day historians have lined up on the same side:

"From our present-day vantage point the views of many French intellectuals of the end of the nineteenth century about the state of their country appear unduly pessimistic. The Third Republic, present day historians feel, displayed its weakness not before but after the First World War. Especially its first thirty years now strike us as a pre-eminently constructive period.

"It was the period of relative stability in the democratic regime, of imperial expansion, of a considerable role in international finance, of the agreements with Russia and England, and of 'great prestige as the center of almost all new artistic and literary movements'" (Swart, p. 187).

¹³Hanotaux, L'energie française, p. 6.

¹⁴James Joll, 1914: The Unspoken Assumptions (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), pp. 17-18.

¹⁵Hanotaux, "La France: Est-elle en decadence?" p. 337.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 333.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 336.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 337-338.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 338-339.

²⁰Hanotaux, La paix latine, p. II.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 7.

²³Ibid., p. XXVI.

²⁴Ibid., p. VI.

²⁵Ibid., p. XIX.

²⁶Ibid., p. III.

²⁷Ibid., p. XXVII.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. XIX.

³⁰Ibid., p. XXXIV.

³¹Ibid., p. XXXII.

³²Ibid., p. XXX.

³³Ibid., pp. XXVII-XXVIII.

³⁴Ibid., pp. XXVIII-XXIX.

³⁵Ibid., p. XXIX.

³⁶Slotnick, p. 129.

³⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, La démocratie et le travail (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1910), p. IV.

³⁸Ibid., p. LXVI.

³⁹Ibid., p. II.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. XXIX.

⁴¹Ibid. Hanotaux felt that the bourgeoisie had to make some concessions if revolution were to be prevented. On October 24, 1907 he had written in his "Carnets": "It appears certain to me, that if the bourgeoisie doesn't take the initiative, it will fall before the next revolutionary shove. It seems to me that it senses this itself and is beginning to put a little water in its wine." See "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," ed. George Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (1977), p. 56.

⁴²Slotnick, The French Academy, p. 200.

⁴³Hanotaux, La démocratie et le travail, p. XXIV.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁷Rosemonde Sanson, "La 'fête de Jeanne d'Arc' in 1894 controverse et celebration," Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (Juillet-Septembre 1973), pp. 444-445.

⁴⁸Sanson, p. 444; Henri Martin, Jeanne d'Arc (Paris: Fiore et Cie, 1887), p. 356.

⁴⁹Pierre Miquel, Poincaré (Paris: Libraire Artheme, 1961), p. 132.

⁵⁰Sanson, pp. 444-445.

⁵¹Charles Petit-Dutaillis, Revue historique, 110 (Mai-Août 1912), p. 83.

⁵²Eugene Weber, The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905-1914 (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1959), p. 103.

⁵³Barbara W. Tuchman, The Guns of August (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 436.

⁵⁴If Joan of Arc provided the myth which inspired the heroism of 1914, Bergson himself provided the philosophical principle. The élan vital, the life spirit, was consciously synthesized into the French Army's pre-1914 doctrine of the offensive by a lecturer at the

École Supérieure de la Guerre, Colonel Grandmaison. Hanotaux was acquainted with Bergson before the war. See Maurice Paleologue's journal for July 8, 1913 in his Journal, 1913-1914 (Janvier 1, 1913-Juin 28, 1914) (Paris: Plon, 1947), p. 161. Paleologue mentions:

"Lunch with the Countess Joachim Murat, with Count and Countess d'Haussonville, Étienne Lamay, permanent secretary of the French Academy, Hanotaux, and our Descartes of today, the general author of Creative Evolution, Henri Bergson."

Were it not for the fact that Bergson's phenomenal impact on French thought did not begin until the publication of Creative Evolution in 1906, after which his lectures at the Collège de France were public events, one might wonder if there were a connection between Hanotaux's "energie" and Bergson's "elan." If there were, the influence would actually run from Hanotaux to Bergson. But it should probably not be considered as particularly significant even if such an influence could be shown. Their purposes were so different. Bergson's purpose was philosophical, to devise a systematic assault on positivism and to rescue intuition. Hanotaux sought to defend France against the charge of decadence by defending the vitality of her people and her civilization.

That the French public and the politicians both identified Hanotaux as a highly significant figure in the cult of Joan of Arc is shown by the fact that:

"at the canonization ceremony of this saint of the fatherland (May 16, 1920) by Benedict XI, 80 members of Parliament from the Right and Center attended in a body behind Gabriel Hanotaux."

See René Rémond, The Right Wing in France: From 1815 to DeGaulle, trans. James M. Laux (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), p. 260.

⁵⁵Louis Gillett, Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1933), p. 119.

⁵⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, De l'histoire et des historiens (Paris: Louis Conard, 1919), p. 13. He wrote "Man lives in a state of history."

⁵⁷Vesta S. Vetter, "Gabriel Hanotaux," in Some Historians of Modern Europe, ed. B. E. Schmitt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 190.

⁵⁸Gillet, p. 12.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 112-113.

⁶⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, Mon temps, Vol. I, De l'empire à la république (Paris: Plon, 1935), p. 319.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Hanotaux, De l'histoire et des historiens, p. 42.

⁶³Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 67.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 214. Vesta Vetter criticized Hanotaux, and not unfairly, for his subjective and personal style of writing history (see Vetter, p. 173), but it appears that his approach offered some compensation. Pieter Geyl in his monumental review of Napoleonic historiography, Napoleon: For and Against, singles out Hanotaux's portrait of Napoleon as "one of the most striking in the whole gallery." See Pieter Geyl, trans. Olive Renier, "Gabriel Hanotaux," Napoleon: For and Against (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968 [1949]), p. 403. Hanotaux had "reached Napoleon only when he was past seventy." Ibid. Geyl sensed that it "was especially the man with experience of high matters of state and the man who spent many years with Richelieu whom we find in this work," Ibid.

⁶⁸Louis Madelin, "L'histoire de la nation française," in Louis Madelin, et al., Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: La Presse Française et Étrangère, 1945). pp. 29-32.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 29. This approach was quite different from that of the other similar undertaking of that period, Ernest Lavissés' great series, in which the work was divided chronologically among the contributors.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 31.

⁷²Ibid., p. 30.

⁷³Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon, 1912), pp. 26-27.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. I.

⁷⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, 1912-1913 (Paris: Plon, 1914), pp. 54-55.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. III.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. IV.

⁷⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques et historiques: Pendant la grande guerre (Paris: Plon, 1916), p. I.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Fernand Baldensperger, L'avant guerre dans la littérature française (Paris: Payot et Cie, 1919), p. 34.

⁸²Ibid., p. 35.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁸⁴Revue hebdomadaire, VI, 3 (1909), p. 284.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 288.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Revue hebdomadaire, VI, 2 (1911), p. 153.

⁸⁸Gaston Calmette, the editor of Figaro, was an ardent supporter of Raymond Poincaré, who had become Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in early 1912. So it was natural, with Poincaré in power, that Calmette would publish the articles of Poincaré's close friend and former cabinet colleague, Gabriel Hanotaux. It was also natural that he would publish the articles of Delcassé's rival and critic. According to Joseph Caillaux, whose wife murdered Calmette, the later hated Delcassé, who years earlier, judging Figaro "suspect," had persuaded André Tardieu to leave the paper and

go with Temps. See Joseph Caillaux, Més memoires, 3 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1942-1947), 3:147.

⁸⁹Not much is known about the reaction of Hanotaux's readership to his diplomatic studies. We do know that they aroused interest where it mattered. His articles gave the French ambassador to England, Paul Cambon, fits. As will be shown later, by 1914 Cambon was crediting Hanotaux with a virtually decisive influence in international affairs.

⁹⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Angleterre, l'Allemagne et la France," Février 24, 1912, in Études diplomatiques: La politique d'équilibre, 1907-1911, p. 432.

⁹¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," Février 25, 1911," Études diplomatiques: La politique d'équilibre, 1907-1911, p. 314.

⁹²Gabriel Hanotaux, "Le Maroc et les puissances," Octobre 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique d'équilibre, 1907-1911, p. 314.

⁹³Gabriel Hanotaux, "La conference de la Hague: L'organisation de la paix," Juin et Juillet, 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique d'équilibre, 1907-1911, p. 29.

⁹⁴Hanotaux, La démocratie et le travail, p. LXIII.

⁹⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," June 1, 1912, La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, p. 29. See Eugen Weber, The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905-1914 (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1959), p. 184.

⁹⁶See Weber, p. 103.

⁹⁷Hanotaux, "De l'opinion," Mars 28, 1913, Figaro. Some of Hanotaux's articles were not included in the collected diplomatic studies. I have drawn from these wherever I have found them useful.

CHAPTER V

ENTERING THE YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

(1908-1914)

Alliances and Ententes

Hanotaux perceived an important difference between the alliances and the ententes. The former had the virtue of being precisely and unambiguously defined. The latter, while constructive instruments of friendship and cooperation, tended to confuse relationships and muddy the waters. Writing in June 1908, he looked back rather nostalgically to 1894, before the emergence of the ententes, when everyone knew the exact meaning of "Triple Alliance, Dual Alliance."¹

In June 1908, Hanotaux thought that the alliances were contributing to the health and stability of Europe. He wrote that "the two great European alliances have filled up to now their purpose, since they have assured the equilibrium and safeguarded the peace."²

Hanotaux was positive about the "entente" as an instrument of openness, flexibility, and friendship. He hoped that ententes would provide an effective counterweight to the potential deficiencies of the alliances, that they would tend to "modify the severity and rigidity of the alliances."³ He saw the entente in the abstract as an innocuous means of interpenetrating the alliances, as an instrument of peace. But he stated repeatedly and with emphasis that "an

entente is not an alliance. . . . A pact of alliance contains some precise engagements, while a promise of entente is an agreement of uncertain duration and debatable execution."⁴ "One does not know either where they begin or where they end."⁵

The distinction between "alliance" and "entente" is helpful in understanding Hanotaux's view of the Triple Entente. There was an implicit though discernible distinction in Hanotaux's thinking between the Triple Entente and the Franco-Russian Alliance. The Triple Entente merely represented the friendly inter-relationships of the three powers, à trois, unbound to one another, but loosely committed to cooperate. It had little to do with the explicit agreement of France and Russia to come to one another's aid in event of attack. Rather, it was Franco-Russian friendship (rooted to be sure in the Dual Alliance), plus the Entente Cordiale, plus the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907.

While Hanotaux was a critic of the Triple Entente he was not its opponent. After 1908 and the Bosnian Crisis he was much too conscious of the formidable power and what he believed to be the expansionist tendencies of the Triple Alliance to have set himself against the Triple Entente. He supported it for what he believed it to be, a loosely knit understanding among the three Great Powers to work with one another to preserve the peace of Europe and to oppose expansionist moves on the part of the Triple Alliance.

But he was disturbed by the concept of "encirclement" whether it was spoken of loosely in France or implied in misinterpretations of the nature of the Triple Entente or manifested in German fears.

Encirclement was self-deluding and dangerous: "very unfortunate and very maladroit . . . presented thus encirclement appeared as a word of offense and attack. . . . But it was not. It is a defensive precaution, the fragility of which would appear at the first encounter."⁶ That encounter was the Bosnian Crisis of 1908. At that time, "the combination, à trois, tested itself in European affairs and failed, and that is all one can say."⁷

The Triple Entente was "defined by timid, modest formulas which commit no one: friendly entente, cordial entente, and the rest."⁸ But it had two sources of great strength: "the general aspiration of the people toward peace and that powerful push for independence which arouses the European nations each time one among them tries to seize the hegemony."⁹ Furthermore, "there exists at London, at Paris, at St. Petersburg . . . a common need, among the peoples and governments not to be found without aid and without backing in the face of the progressive expansion of the Germanic peoples"¹⁰ Within its "limits the Triple Entente is prudent, reasonable, useful; but it is necessary not to ask of it more than it can give. It is transformed according to the comings and goings of events. . . . It is above all a matter of current and opinion."¹¹

Hanotaux believed that the Triple Entente's greatest force was its capacity to lead public opinion. But, he also believed that the management of opinion alone, an art at which he believed that the English were particularly adept, was not sufficient. A show of military strength, however subtle, was occasionally called for, and

he implied that, in this respect, the Triple Entente had not done all that it could or should in the Bosnian Crisis.

Who says "opinion" means "prestige" The greatest force of the Triple Entente--real force, don't forget . . . is this skill in leading minds and inspiring confidence. But for opinion to follow, for prestige to suffer no attainment, all the art in the world does not suffice; it is necessary that there appear, from time to time at least, the image of an authority more real, "the great Herculean shadow."¹²

England was the key to the viable functioning of the Triple Entente. It was England which had what was purely an "entente" relationship with both other parties. France and Russia had their alliance. And it was England which had the special capacity to manage opinion so essential to the strength of the Entente. Everything depended on the clarity of the English commitment supported by her prestige, her capacity in managing opinion, and her physical strength. But if, as appeared to be the case in 1910 and 1911, during what Hanotaux perceived to be a severe crisis in England, "the principal wheel of the Triple Entente is functioning poorly, if its prestige, once again, is weakened, the combination will tend to break up in turn."¹³

There was, on the face of it, considerable tension between Hanotaux's rejection of "encirclement" and his support of the Triple Entente. Even though he nicely rationalized this problem by viewing "encirclement" as an aggressive posture toward the Germans and the Triple Entente itself as "prudent, reasonable, useful," as merely representative of aspirations of people toward "peace" and "independence," considerable tension remained between the logic of

the two positions and was further accentuated by his insistence on the necessity of founding the credibility of the Triple Entente (as in his commentary on the Bosnian Crisis) on a display of military strength.

Europe and the World

Hanotaux was remarkably sensitive to some of the directions, more or less obscure, in which the world was moving in the years before the First World War. He realized that Europe's dominant position in the world was at best tenuous. Recognizing that Richelieu was a statesman "who had all the futures in mind,"¹⁴ he tried to emulate that quality. He sought to look into the future, to understand trends and to see alternatives and opportunities. He perceived several developments, by no means obvious, which were threatening Europe's position in the world.

He believed that the European position in Asia, especially China, was unrealistic and shaky. He regarded the effort of the European powers to divide up China as foolish. To try to penetrate China was "expansionist temerity." It was too immense, too overpopulated, too unprepared.¹⁵ He regarded the outcome of the battle of Mukden, not as exclusively a Russian, but as an European defeat, with the implication that Europe was being turned back in Asia.¹⁶ Asia would be a strong competitor in the future. The Panama Canal would bring Europe and Asia closer together. "Then Europe will be quite small beside her very great neighbor, and will have her work cut out for her, if she wants to struggle successfully against that peaceful and armed competition" which she will face.¹⁷

He thought that things were happening elsewhere in the colonial world which portended great difficulties for the future. His comment on the Boer War could be transferred with the utmost accuracy to the Vietnam War: "indigenous resistance had shown what it was able to do, aided by distance: the Boer War had tested British energy, had embarrassed the most ample finances in the world, had revealed, once and for all, the disproportion of cost to result."¹⁸

Europe was "in the process of learning that the danger awakened by her far away rises up against her, and that by forcing the colonization and instruction of new countries she has made of them mother countries."¹⁹ Here Hanotaux put his finger on the difficulty which would ultimately be the nemesis of European colonialism. French hegemony had had, as Hanotaux well knew, a similar effect on the states of Europe during the era of the Revolution and Napoleon. He believed himself that only a "protectorate," wisely and persuasively managed, could avoid the alienation of native peoples and eventuate in a strong and lasting relationship with an European power. This belief that a protectorate would work in such potentially unpromising circumstances required an act of faith. The factual basis for Hanotaux's act of faith was what he perceived to be the relative success of the protectorate arrangement in Tunisia.

Europe had overburdened herself. She was trying all at once to accomplish "three equally difficult things: to perfect the European nationalities, to develop the extra-European lands, to accomplish social reforms"²⁰ Prudence was required "if one

does not wish, one day or another, . . . to run the carriage off the precipice But prudence is not the fact of this childish age."²¹ "Everywhere they invoke the intervention of the powers and aid from the homelands. It is a world on the march, it is a new seeding of perils, a cause continual of sacrifices. The planet is a rude burden to carry for the energy of our little Europe."²² Hanotaux looked upon the vast world beyond France and Europe, at the immense forces at work, at the disorganized state of Europe's response and was afraid. "The peoples are at the mercy of an incident which would throw them on one another. . . . In the current disorganized state, there is always, somewhere, a Fashoda which is being prepared, a Bosnia which heats up, a Casablanca incubating."²³ "History is so clumsy that one is never able to foresee what mistake it is going to make."²⁴

Given these world conditions Hanotaux felt that an European Concert was a necessity. If the European powers were really serious about looking after their interests, they would have to do so together. He wrote of the "main lines of European duty, which consist, incontestably, in discovering those things which bring us together, not those things which divide us. . . . For the events which are in prospect, it is proper that the 'European Concert' not be a vain word."²⁵ The leader with the energy, spirit, and balance to solve at once the problems confronting Europe would be the "man of the century." "But has this man been born? Will all the voices call for him in vain?"²⁶

The New Diplomacy

In a series of relatively optimistic articles published in Revue hebdomadaire in 1909 Hanotaux set forth his opinions on the diplomacy of the future. He believed that the subject matter and focus of international relations was shifting. The old territorial diplomacy within Europe and the more recent policy of colonial expansion were becoming features of the past. Europe's internal frontiers were virtually fixed. "Europe [had recently] . . . transplanted the struggles of her frontiers to other parts of the world. She went in search of vacant lands in order to dispute them. Outlets were the pretext. . . . She dreamed of a fruitful commerce in regions where men lived in loin clothes."²⁷ Colonial wars such as England's in the Transvaal were "extremely costly, very risky and . . . the emoluments appear less and less assured."²⁸

Hanotaux thought that with Europe's frontiers more or less set, with colonial expansion a policy of the past, that future diplomacy would deal principally with economic questions, that diplomacy would have to understand, cope with, and publicize the exploitation of markets. Diplomacy would principally deal with the competitive game of economic "conquests and influences, tariffs, treaties of commerce, loans."²⁹

This new situation ought to work toward peace:

Capital . . . creates among all the citizens of the world . . . a solidarity which weighs fatally on present divergencies. . . . Businessmen . . . are peaceful people Conducted by them, the world prefers to take risks at the green table of the Bourse, rather than at the red table of war. Thus pacific ideas are diffused. Cosmopolitanism enters into the struggle with nationalism.³⁰

"Economic activity, especially the extension and management of credit, can be seen as shaping the system which is being created for the new age in which the world is entering: the organization of peace."³¹ The pacifistic motives of the businessmen were actually behind the "development of international laws, treaties of arbitration, humanitarian conferences, attempts at disarmament."³²

The future diplomat must fully understand the calculations and strategies of business activity and be able to explain these to public opinion.³³

Let us summarize: the advent of democracy, the end of territorial quarrels, the achievement of nationalism, a truce in colonial expansion, economism, cosmopolitanism, pacifism, universal solidarity controlled by universal publicity, there is the new regime to which diplomacy ought to apply itself; such are the ambiances among which it ought to act and the contacts for which it ought to prepare itself.³⁴

The future diplomat must not only be concerned with financial and commercial evolutions, but also with labor and social transformation. The latter could some day "change the face of things and endanger the current state with the perspective of some future conflicts, perhaps of national and international disasters."³⁵

The future world for diplomacy which Hanotaux saw arising offered France an opportunity for an ascendant influence in the management of the world order:

We have not yet habituated the world and we have not yet habituated ourselves to the real power of our accumulation of capital. We dispose, so to speak, of the world order by the position which we have of being able to open or close, as we wish, the tap which regulates the economic level which, at least--we have seen more than once--prevents catastrophies and puts oil on the wheels.³⁶

France had in hand a powerful weapon: "they speak of the boycott (in extending credit) what a boycott that would be, if one wanted to try it! Dangerous, it is true, but how powerful!"³⁷

In the years after 1909 Hanotaux's vision of a new diplomacy, with its dual emphasis on "economism" and peace, would not be realized. Credit, commerce, and pacifist activities were all of importance in the world approaching the First World War. But it would be for Hanotaux a great frustration over the next few years to witness what he believed to be the continuing domination of international relations by the chauvinistic spirit of the old and outmoded territorial and colonial diplomacies.

France and the Americas

Hanotaux foresaw the increasingly important role which the Americas, especially the United States, would play in the world power balances. In 1907, at a time when the United States was building the Panama Canal, he wrote: "On that route between Europe and Asia one encounters America. She bars the way, and if she opens the door . . . she surely intends to keep the keys. . . . On that side something enormous and new is being prepared. . . . America amasses world gold."³⁸

In 1909 he wondered:

What will the 20th century bring? American power is a fact, now. She no longer has to prove it. Captain Mahan recently described the imperial necessities which greatness imposes on North America. Situated on the two oceans, she holds the balance which regulates the affairs of the world. Already she has contributed to maintaining the equilibrium between Russia and Japan in the Pacific Ocean. A day will come, perhaps, when she will be led, by the same law, to

intervene in the quarrels of the great European peoples. In this, her situation is rather analogous to that of France who has, within Europe, what is essentially a function of equilibrium.³⁹

In an article in 1912, "North America and France," published in The North American Review, Hanotaux said: "Peace is at the mercy of men's passions, and to control them a balance of power is necessary. The democracies of America will in the near future regulate this balance of power."⁴⁰ And, he added, "henceforth every conquering power will look upon the summit of American greatness."⁴¹

Given this lively awareness of the emerging power and influence of the United States, it is not surprising that Hanotaux, who was by nature and conviction as much a "doer" as a man of thought, should take the lead within his own country in promoting mutual understanding between France and the Americas. Combining his faith in the seductive magnetism of French Civilization with his conviction that public opinion was becoming more and more the master of national policies, he personally mounted a campaign to re-establish the historical, cultural, and personal links which he believed had once existed between France and the Americas, but which had been damaged or cut as a result of the Mexican fiasco of the 1860s, and had been neglected during the years when France was engaged in the tasks of imperial construction.⁴² This campaign was predicated on the belief that it was important to France and her future to cultivate the American connection and to do so, not merely among the governments, but among the peoples. It also rested on the conviction that it was important for Frenchmen to become better informed of the role of the

their civilization in the Americas and of what Hanotaux conceived to be the formidable sources of Franco-American compatability.

In 1909 he founded the Comité France-Amérique to promote understanding and intercourse between France and the Americas. The Comité, an organization of private citizens, was supported by a long list of distinguished patrons: Raymond Poincaré and Georges Clemenceau from government; Ernest Lavisse, the historian; Louis Renault, the industrialist; Auguste Rodin, the sculptor; Saint-Saens, the composer--to name a few who are still well known.⁴³

With Hanotaux as its energetic president it developed a variety of activities. Books were published. Affiliated committees were encouraged within the American countries themselves. An elaborate structure was developed. In 1912, Hanotaux headed the first "French Mission" to the Americas. This mission "represented the great activities--intellectual, religious, political, economic, artistic; it was an image of France under its diverse aspects which was shown in America."⁴⁴ It was received by American committees at Montreal and New York. Overall, the Comité's work appears to have flourished in the last years before the war. In addition, it provided Hanotaux with personal recognition and a wealth of contacts in the Americas, and a reputation at home as a leading supporter of Franco-American cooperation. This put him in an excellent position for his campaign, which he would have underway during the first days of the First World War, to enlist the participation of the American nations on the allied side.⁴⁵

It should be noted that the Comité France-Amérique was appropriate to Hanotaux's brand of imperialism, which was predominantly cultural, and which placed heavy stress on mutual understanding and cooperation between the French and other peoples, and on a search for common ground. The Comité is strikingly analogous to other French imperial organizations such as the Comité d'Afrique Française, but, of course, without promoting French domination in any form or any territorial ambitions. Personal contacts, French Civilization, and the promotion of commercial relations were to accomplish the national purpose.

On June 27, 1914, the day before the assassination at Sarajevo Hanotaux published an article on the "Panama Canal" in Revue hebdomadaire. In that article he noted that

. . . France and the United States are . . . drawing together, once again, on a very elevated plain; and this is not a negligible fact, since it is a matter of two great democratic republics, common in their tendencies, sisters in their institutions, which are persuading themselves each day, that nothing separates them and everything draws them together.⁴⁶

He also noted that from a political and military point of view, "the power of the two Americas, and, notably, of North America, will be found to grow infinitely"⁴⁷ and that "American imperialism could become a menace for everyone, if America . . . were not devoted to becoming, above all, a power of equilibrium"⁴⁸--a common attribute which she shared with France.⁴⁹

France and England

Although Hanotaux was a vigorous critic of the Entente Cordiale he favored good relations with England.⁵⁰ He believed that the settlement which had gradually been reached with England (between 1894-1904) was one of the most promising developments in world affairs. "The twenty conventions worked out over ten years . . . [brought] calm as by enchantment."⁵¹ As Foreign Minister, he himself had initiated most of these important steps, and he believed an excellent example had been set for powers still divided by conflicting interests: "Look at France and England . . . the understanding is realized . . . [thanks] to the mutual wisdom of the two countries."⁵²

He welcomed the return of England to the involvement in continental affairs which he believed the Entente Cordiale represented. He believed that the absence of "the greatest and most active of the powers" had exaggerated the "disequilibrium of Europe." "She was absent far too long, confining herself in her 'splendid isolation.' Her activity, hence her weight, was lacking in Europe. She had always been there, but watching, not participating."⁵³

But he vigorously criticized the policy of the Entente Cordiale. For France it was a dangerous policy; it fostered a false complacency; it distorted France's natural position as manager of the equilibrium among the powers; it represented a subordination of French policy to English interests. One of its worst features until 1911 was that some of its terms were hidden,⁵⁴ which aroused

Hanotaux's suspicions and encouraged Frenchmen to look at the entente with England as though it were an alliance, as though England could be counted on in a military showdown with Germany.

Not only were Frenchmen misjudging the reliability of the ententes, but the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian ententes were leading to some dangerous thinking in regard to Germany. With contempt for this foolishness he wrote:

The imaginations are rising. It is no longer a matter of a Triple Entente, but a Quadruple (Italy) or Quintuple Entente (Italy and Austria). . . . All the powers peripheral to the German Empire will join hands; they will stretch⁵⁵ around her in an unexpected figure, the "encirclement."

As has already been pointed out, he was absolutely opposed to the whole idea of isolating and encircling Germany. He referred to

one of the most reckless conceptions of modern diplomacy, the would-be policy of isolation in regard to Germany. As if one isolates, with paper and sealing wax, a power which disposes of a formidable army, the alliance of two great peoples and the effective friendship of several others! A continental blockade against a great continental power is even more absurd, if that is possible, than a continental blockade against a great maritime power.⁵⁶

Hanotaux's resistance to what he believed was a misplaced confidence in the Anglo-French entente was strengthened by his interpretation of his country's debacle in the Franco-Prussian War. Napoleon III's most disastrous mistake was his failure to transform vague understandings with Austria and Italy into firm alliances before the outbreak of the war. Had he done so, France would not have stood alone against the North German Confederation and the conflict itself would have been avoided.⁵⁷

Again and again, Hanotaux reiterated that "an entente is not an alliance." In the event of a Franco-German war, England would consult her interests. Entente or no entente, she would probably fight in the end to prevent German hegemony: "Three Great Powers, at least have an identical interest in not letting Germany, in a great struggle, win hegemony. Then--treaties or not--they would find themselves united and Germany would run the greatest risk to which her power could be exposed."⁵⁸ But she was in no way committed to rush to the aid of France at the first sign of trouble. France must be prepared to stand alone in the defense of her frontiers.⁵⁹

Hanotaux believed that the Entente Cordiale had tied France's hands and placed her in a trap which distorted her role among the powers and took from her her role as the manager of the equilibrium. Because of Delcasse's precipitous desire to settle France's claim to Morocco, not only had France given up residual rights in Egypt, but she had subordinated herself in a vague, uncertain, and frustrating relationship with England which worked to England's advantage; which had, in fact, placed England in a position to manage France for her own ends. France must rely on herself and reassert her natural role as the manager of the equilibrium among the powers.⁶⁰

Hanotaux's objections to the Entente Cordiale also arose from his interpretation of the nature of Anglo-French diplomatic interchange, which he felt was highly risky. He never attacked "perfidious Albion." On the contrary, he insisted that "British policy is the most straightforward in the world, for those who understand it."⁶¹ A French statesman must be careful in negotiating with the English.

He must understand that the difference in "style" and the different qualities of the two languages make a diplomatic process a thorny one. French statesmen are more concerned with general reasons and ideals; English statesmen are prudent, direct, restrained, and very firm in their views.⁶² The French negotiator wants to convince, while the English negotiator is content to win." And

one cannot imagine to what an extent the fundamental dissimilarity of the two idioms troubles the game . . . their technical language . . . is often open to diverse interpretations, sometimes between the nations; and, if interests are involved, it happens that it facilitates, even in good faith, some surprising retractions.⁶³

With the English it is necessary always to treat but also to . . . act; to seize and tie quickly; in any case, to never lose contact, to explain oneself, to insist, to go back to be assured that one is clearly understood, to march without detour and without a feint, to be exact in order to be faithful and to count on fidelity in exactitude.⁶⁴

French leaders have not always been quite up to dealing with the English. They have not consistently insisted on absolute clarity. They have let themselves be taken in, not so much by English duplicity, as by their desire to believe their own illusions. Wrote Hanotaux,

I admit the policy of rapprochement and of harmony with England. But I ask that this policy not subordinate . . . our interests to interests of England, our points of view to the English points of view. I ask only that everything be debated in full light, without these complicated mysteries revealing a mind hardly sure of itself. I do not know what is at the bottom of the mysterious word, "Entente Cordiale" . . . Friend of England, of course; but of France first of all. Albert Sorel, who fully shares my ideas on this subject, often tells me with his high historical competence: "There has always been an English party in France," and he adds, "Let us remain French!"⁶⁵

André Tardieu

A study of Gabriel Hanotaux's quest for the ascendancy of France is quite enough for a single dissertation. To compare him in detail with other contemporary commentators on foreign affairs would stretch the task beyond all reasonable limits. But there is a journalist with whom a comparison of general ideas, if not of views on specific events, really ought to be made. That is André Tardieu, a writer on foreign affairs who has been more widely recognized as a significant force in France in the last years before the outbreak of the First World War than has Hanotaux himself. Tardieu was widely read not merely for his vigorous points of view, but for an understanding of the positions of the French government, and sometimes even for the latest news.

Born in 1876, the son of a wealthy Parisian bourgeois family, young Tardieu was an academic prodigy. After finishing his education at the École Normale, he was given his chance to learn about diplomacy first hand. Through his father's connections (and, no doubt, because of his own superb qualifications), he was recommended in 1887 by Gabriel Hanotaux, then Foreign Minister, to the Marquis de Noailles, Ambassador in Berlin, to be one of the latter's attachés.⁶⁶

After serving in this post for several years, Tardieu became in 1901 a daily columnist on foreign affairs for Figaro. With the support of Delcassé, the Foreign Minister, "he won easy access to the embassies in Paris and even governments abroad."⁶⁷ In 1902 he left Figaro and joined Temps. But it was not until 1905 that he took over that newspaper's "Bulletin on Foreign Affairs."⁶⁸

As editor of this important section, Tardieu strengthened the information gathering and research capabilities of his newspaper, extended his network of personal contacts, and built up a considerable audience both within France and abroad for his articles.⁶⁹

"They passed, correctly, for being most often inspired by the policy of the different governments, even if on several occasions Tardieu manifested some independence" ⁷⁰ Occasionally, he enlarged his audience with a sensational 'scoop' as when he procured and published a secret agenda for the Algeciras Conference.⁷¹ Once or twice he was able to break important stories to the public before the French government itself was informed of them.

In 1910 Temps had a circulation of 36,000 as compared to 37,000 for Figaro, which would soon become a principal outlet for Hanotaux's articles.⁷² Considering that Tardieu was the great defender of the Entente Cordiale in the French press and Hanotaux the most formidable critic, it might be expected that they would have differed sharply on most fundamental matters, and most especially on their views of England. Although the differences between them were extensive and complex, they were not always as clear cut as one who has derived his impressions from the histories of the period would anticipate.

Tardieu emphasized the positive advantages of the entente with England, even though he was aware of its unreliable aspects, while Hanotaux stressed the complications it had brought to the French diplomatic situation and its weaknesses. Both men, in fact,

avored good relations with England. Both favored a more precise definition of the English relationship.

Hanotaux and Tardieu differed sharply in their interpretation of recent history, especially in regard to Anglo-French relations during those years when Hanotaux was Foreign Minister. Tardieu believed that these relations were very poor up "to the day when the Entente Cordiale was concluded."⁷³ Hanotaux believed that England and France had generally been friendly to one another in the years of Victoria's reign. Although there had been ample points of conflict around the world, most of the important outstanding differences had been settled by negotiations during his own tenure at the Quai d'Orsay.

Tardieu defended Delcassé against charges that his policy was aimed at isolating Germany.⁷⁴ Delcassé's failure in 1904 to inform the Germans of the Anglo-French agreement affecting Morocco has already been commented on. "In Temps Tardieu said that Germany had no reason for complaint, while privately he informed Radolin that he could not understand Delcassé's failure to communicate the agreement in normal diplomatic fashion."⁷⁵ Privately he was disturbed by what disturbed Hanotaux publicly.

Both Hanotaux and Tardieu believed that the Russian Alliance was of fundamental importance to France. Tardieu thought that it re-established the balance of power, augmented France's diplomatic value, and opened the way for "political combinations" with other powers.⁷⁶ Hanotaux believed, like Tardieu, that the Russian Alliance was fundamental to French independence and diplomatic flexibility,

but he was convinced that the further "political combinations," by which Tardieu meant the Mediterranean ententes had, in fact, squandered some of the advantages of the Russian Alliance. As long as France had enjoyed the security of that alliance, but had not tied herself too closely to either England or Germany, and had settled differences with them case by case, leaning first toward the one and then toward the other, then she had had diplomatic value and the ability to act, and had been successful in advancing many of her interests and helping maintain peace. But she had sacrificed some of this value and flexibility when she had tied herself too closely to England.

In stressing the benefits which he thought that France had derived from the Entente Cordiale, Tardieu took a position diametrically opposed to Hanotaux's. The Entente Cordiale, Tardieu said,

Procured for us, in Western Europe, a moral authority which made us a center of attraction; and, if it was calculated to expose us to certain difficulties, it rendered us in return capable of solving them (First Morocco). It was, in fact, the second phase of the diplomatic evolution which enabled us to issue progressively from a position of isolation.⁷⁷

He also believed that with the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 "a Triple Entente facing the Triple Alliance gave a new foundation to Europe's balance of power."⁷⁸ Rather than tying the hands of France, as Hanotaux thought, Tardieu believed that the Entente Cordiale meant that London and Paris had "mutually freed themselves from preoccupations that had long been a burden" and had "guaranteed each other a liberty of action which was equally precious to both."⁷⁹

Like Hanotaux, Tardieu understood that the Entente was not an alliance, that some uncertainties lurked within it. Yet, on the whole, he stressed his confidence in the diplomatic value of the relationship.

At present, France and England are friends, but not allies . . . when the relations of two great powers are concerned, precision is a duty and ambiguity a danger. For the moment, English policy and French policy run parallel; but they are not bound to each other.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, he felt that although neither side had given pledges, "in a time of crisis, such pledges would be spontaneously forthcoming from an identity of interests."⁸¹

Like Hanotaux, Tardieu was well aware of the limited military value of the relationship with England. But he felt it was justified diplomatically and, it might be said, preventively, vis-à-vis Germany.

In the present situation, England's diplomatic cooperation before a war would be of infinite service to us. When once war were begun, this cooperation would be of small avail. . . . And for things to be different, it would be necessary for the British Army, thoroughly reformed not only in its organization, but in its manner of recruitment, to become capable of taking energetic action on the continent⁸²

What Tardieu hoped for in 1908 was that in the long run the Triple Entente would be transformed into an alliance which would

impose on each the sacrifices required--on France and Russia an enlightened attention to their naval power, on which Great Britain must be able to count, and on Great Britain a thorough reform of the land forces, whose development both France and Russia are entitled to expect.⁸³

Tardieu was first and foremost a reporter, a digger after facts, who wrote clearly and bluntly, and was not especially inclined to deal in subtleties and nuances. He was a writer of clear, vigorous expository prose. Hanotaux was also an excellent writer,

but he was an essayist--urbane, abstract, tactful, and more concerned with subtle distinctions. Finally, there was a detectable underlying difference between the brilliant, confident but somewhat inexperienced fledgling in the world of international affairs and the equally brilliant but not quite so self-certain elder statesman who reflected from considerable experience on the ambiguities of international relations.

The two men were divided in their understanding of the "equilibrium among the powers." Neither would disagree that the principle of equilibrium aimed at achieving a balance of strength and influence sufficient, on the one hand, to provide a reasonable degree of stability in the relations among the powers and, on the other, to enforce the peace among them by discouraging any power or powers from attempting hegemony. Beyond this, the two understood the application of the concept differently, and the difference is significant. This difference may be illustrated and defined by looking closely at a quotation taken from the "preface" of Tardieu's France and the Alliance: The Struggle for the Balance of Power:

It was through the Russian Alliance that France issued from the isolation in which she had been placed by defeat. It was by her understandings with Great Britain, Italy, and Spain that she subsequently pursued the satisfaction of her interests. It is in the presence of the Triple Alliance, dominated by Germany, that she has raised the edifice of her agreements. It is against Germany that she had been compelled to defend and complete it.⁸⁵

The crux of the difference lies in the word "edifice." The last thing which Hanotaux wanted to do was to erect an "edifice" against any other power or powers. The conception is a static one.

It evokes walls. It evokes a vision of a closed system of relatively permanent and unchanging diplomatic relations and alignments. It is negative in the sense that this edifice has been raised against a particular power and solely in response to that power's situation and tendencies. This edifice, whether built for compelling reasons or not, could be construed to mean "encirclement."

It is not surprising that the Germans considered Tardieu's writings threatening. According to Malcolm Carroll, a student of both French and German public opinion, Tardieu's "ideas of the balance of power often seemed perilously close to the hegemony of the Triple Entente under the direction of France."⁸⁶

At the same time Tardieu treated the German fear of "encirclement" with a disdain which was insulting:

The Germans are complaining that they are being 'encircled'! But is it not a daily occurrence with them as with us that people with such illusions are confined? The alienist sees in them a symptom of a mania of persecution which may become dangerous.⁸⁷

Hanotaux, on the other hand, never appeared to lose sight of his convictions, that the equilibrium among the powers was open, flexible, and dynamic, that it was always at least theoretically possible to introduce constructive modification and change. If diplomacy were applied with consistency and skill, the equilibrium could be continuously modified to fit circumstances which were themselves constantly changing. Hanotaux did not see the possibilities for modification merely in the restricted light of Triple Alliance versus Triple Entente, but in the infinite complexity of the relations of each power with every other power. Hanotaux did not actively seek,

as Tardieu seemed to, a bipolar and comparatively static division of the powers, a balance of power through a "standoff" of the two great alliance systems. To Hanotaux, the "equilibrium among the powers" was not merely a statement of relationships but the activity (for which France was peculiarly well placed) of seeking the balance in a manner, which insofar as possible avoided confrontation and freezing of positions but aimed rather at a continuous negotiative process of settling disputes and harmonizing interests. Tardieu, by contrast, supported the changes in French foreign policy which were the work of Delcassé who, as Gordon Wright suggests, had rigidified "France's rather amorphous foreign policy into a pattern."⁸⁸

CHAPTER V: FOOTNOTES

¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les alliances et les ententes," Juin 1908, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 124.

²Ibid., p. 133.

³Ibid., p. 131.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'occasion manquée," Décembre 14, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, 1912-1913 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1914), pp. 193-194.

⁵Hanotaux, "Les alliances et les ententes," Juin 1908, p. 133.

⁶Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," Décembre 10, 1910, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 296.

⁷Ibid., p. 297.

⁸Ibid., p. 295.

⁹Ibid., p. 296.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 297.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 301.

¹⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "France-Amérique," Décembre 18, 1909, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 231.

¹⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Europe, qui nait," Novembre 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 59-60.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 62.

²⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix," Octobre 9, 1909, Revue hebdomadaire, X, II, p. 143. An article not included in the collected diplomatic studies.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 145.

²³Ibid., pp. 146-147.

²⁴Ibid., p. 151. At times Hanotaux's prophetic suggestiveness seems almost uncanny. He comments on page 147: "The sudden emotion which made in Germany [Hanotaux renders this in English] produces in England does not appease but only enlarges the anxiety, daughter of modern discoveries: submarines, wireless, aerial navigation. It is the end of isolation, 'splendid isolation.'" "A flock of airplanes will haunt from now on the mind of every English patriot."

²⁵Hanotaux, "L'Europe qui nait," Novembre 1907, p. 63.

²⁶Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix," Octobre 9, 1909, p. 146.

²⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, "La diplomatie de l'avenir," Janvier 30, 1909, Revue hebdomadaire, II, 1, p. 12.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²⁹Ibid., p. 13.

³⁰Ibid., p. 14.

³¹Ibid., p. 15.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., pp. 15-16.

³⁴Ibid., p. 17.

³⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "La diplomatie de l'avenir," Février 13, 1909, Revue hebdomadaire, II, 3, p. 334.

³⁶Ibid., p. 333.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Hanotaux, "L'Europe qui naît," Novembre 1907, pp. 63-64.

³⁹Hanotaux, "France-Amérique," Décembre 18, 1909, pp. 232-233.

⁴⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "North America and France," trans. Paul Fuller, Jr., The North American Review, CXCVI (December 1912), p. 816.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Hanotaux, "France-Amérique," Décembre 18, 1909, p. 229. Also see Gabriel Hanotaux, Pourquoi le Comité France-Amérique on a été fondé? Les premiers résultats et l'activité du comité de 1910 à 1913 (Paris: Comité "France-Amérique," 1913), pp. 3-5.

⁴³Hanotaux, Pourquoi le Comité France-Amérique . . . ?" See listing of the "Comité de patronage."

⁴⁴Gabriel Louis Jaray in Louis Madelin et al., Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: La Presse Française et Etrangère, 1945), n.p.

⁴⁵See Chapter X below, p. 406.

⁴⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "Le Canal de Panama," Juin 27, 1914, Revue hebdomadaire, VI, 4, p. 454.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 457.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 457-458.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 460.

⁵⁰It was the policy not the spirit of cordial understanding that Hanotaux attacked. In July 1912, he gave the toast at a reception he had organized as President of the Franco-American Committee for the visiting Canadian delegation: "I raise my glass to the union of governments and peoples, English, Canadian, French; I drink to the entente cordiale." See Temps, Août 1, 1912.

⁵¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La conference de la Haye: L'organisation de la paix," Juin et Juillet 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, p. 27.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Hanotaux, "L'Europe qui nait," Novembre 1907, p. 57.

⁵⁴Some of the terms of the Entente Cordiale were secret until the English published them in November 1911. Before this date, Hanotaux was frustrated and complained bitterly about secret diplomacy. He wanted to know what commitments there were, if any, of England to France and of France to England. When the secret clauses were published, he discovered what he had assumed all along, that they were an "empty bag," that they provided France with no specific guarantees. So he continued to assert that his countrymen were placing too much reliance on the relationship.

⁵⁵Hanotaux, "Les alliances et les ententes," Juin 1908, p. 129.

⁵⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "Le maroc et les puissances," Octobre 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 50.

⁵⁷Hanotaux, "Les alliances et les ententes," Juin 1908, pp. 133-134.

⁵⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Conclusion: L'Angleterre, L'Allemagne, et La France," Février 24, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 435.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 435-436.

⁶⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "Avertissement," Février 29, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. I-V.

⁶¹Hanotaux, "Conclusion . . . ," p. 441.

⁶²Gabriel Hanotaux, Fashoda et le partage de l'Afrique (Paris: Flammarion, 1909), p. 85.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 85-86.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 87.

⁶⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'entente cordiale et l'affaire marocaine," Novembre 25, 1911, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 403-404.

⁶⁶Rudolf Binion, Defeated Leaders: The Political Fate of Caillaux, Jouvenel, and Tardieu (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 200).

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 202.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 204.

⁶⁹Claude Bellanger et al., Histoire générale de la presse française, 3 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), p. 335.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 354-355.

⁷¹Wallace E. Adams, "André Tardieu and French Foreign Policy, 1902-1919" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1958-1959), pp. 94-96.

⁷²Bellanger et al., 3:350.

⁷³André Tardieu, France and the Alliances: The Struggle for the Balance of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), p. 45.

⁷⁴Adams, pp. 83-87.

⁷⁵Malcolm E. Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914 (Hamden, Conn.: Anchor, 1964 [1931]), p. 208. See "Radolin to Holstein," March 25, 1905, Grosse Politik, XX(I), p. 266 (note).

⁷⁶Tardieu, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 66.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 69.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 66.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 69-70.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 70.

⁸²Ibid., p. 72.

⁸³Ibid., p. 80.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. V.

⁸⁶Carroll, p. 223.

⁸⁷Ibid. From Temps, Juin 22, 1908.

⁸⁸Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times: 1760 to the Present (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966), p. 387.

CHAPTER VI

TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND TRIPLE ENTENTE: DYNAMISM AND DISARRAY, 1908-1911

Introduction

In 1907, in the comparatively hopeful atmosphere of the Second Hague Conference, Hanotaux was pleased that the struggle for overseas empire appeared to be over and that each of the great European powers appeared to be satisfied with its own status quo.¹ The prospects for peace seemed better than they had for some time. But his satisfaction with the international situation was short-lived.

In July 1908, the Young Turk revolt broke the calm in the East. Austria's seizure of Bosnia-Herzegovina followed in early October. The latter was a manifest disruption of the status quo and because it involved a unilateral abrogation of clauses in the Treaty of Berlin (1879), and because of complex diplomatic misunderstandings which need not be reiterated here, it was widely interpreted as a challenge to the authority of the Triple Entente, and ultimately, as a victory for the Triple Alliance.

Thoroughly aware that the gravest danger to European peace and stability lay in the East, in the Balkans and Turkey, Hanotaux wrote as part of his observations on the Young Turk revolt that "the fear of European statesmen has always been to see Eastern affairs

degenerate into a general conflict," and that "there exists . . . among the powers, some grave reciprocal suspicions which these sudden and complex events will not attenuate."² "To touch Turkey is to touch Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Rumania, Persia, Egypt, Moslem Africa; and immediately, Austria, Italy, Germany, Russia, and England are put on guard: the balance of the equilibrium is threatened."³

Furthermore, Hanotiaux believed that the seizure of the two provinces marked only the beginning of a concerted effort by the Germanic powers to expand their influence to the South and East.

In the East, the Triple Alliance feels strong; she is able to lean with all her weight, because there is no ditch between the enormous military power which is hers and the open field before her. From Austria-Hungary, to Rumania, to Turkey, and even to Asia Minor, there is a road clearly to be traced, it is the valley of the Danube. The "march towards the East" is a natural declivity for that formidable expansion of which we have just spoken.⁴

Hanotiaux felt that the status quo was the best of all policies in the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and in Europe in general: "one is well obliged to stick with that which is. For no one can foresee what would happen if one tried to work towards 'what ought to be.'"⁵

In 1910 and 1911 Hanotiaux published several closely related articles which focused rather consistently on England. These articles reflected his growing concern with the international situation, particularly with the possible repercussions on the European equilibrium of the serious internal crisis through which England was then passing and with the burgeoning economic, naval, and military

power of Germany, which, he believed, was directed against England.⁶ The crisis seemed to have a significant bearing on England's position as a world power. England had arrived at a crossroads in her history where she would have to make choices between pressing domestic considerations and the demands of imperial greatness. These choices were not only important to herself, but to others. On them depended the security of the British Empire and the equilibrium among the powers.

From Hanotaux's perspective, England's domestic crisis had come at a most inopportune time. Pressure from the Triple Alliance was continuing to grow in the Mediterranean, where the naval balance of power was shifting in its favor; and in the Balkans, Turkey, and the Near East. The viability, indeed the very existence of the Triple Entente, was being severely tested. This testing reached a climax late in 1910 when Russia and Germany negotiated an agreement at Potsdam on the Bagdad Railway. For Hanotaux this agreement underlined the shaky condition of the Triple Entente while at the same time opening the way for a direct Germanic challenge to the British Empire at the vital strategic crossroads of Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

A Study of the Congress of Berlin

In the fall of 1908, Hanotaux published a lengthy historical study of the Congress of Berlin (1879) in the Revue des deux mondes.⁷ This publication represents Hanotaux's attempt to substantiate in a recent historical context the special role of France in the

equilibrium among the powers and to illustrate what he regarded as the characteristic failure of French statesmen to perceive and cash in on their country's opportunities. The Congress of Berlin had been the diplomatic culmination of the historical period upon which Hanotaux had recently earned recognition as a leading authority with the publication of his Contemporary France. The study was published in the Revue des deux mondes virtually simultaneously with Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (October 5, 1908), an act which broke the status quo established by the Congress and initiated another in the series of Great Power crises which preceded the First World War.

At the Congress of Berlin, Bismarck had established the direction which world affairs would take for many years:

The France of colonial expansion and the Russian Alliance arose by necessity from the choices and declarations of Bismarck in 1878. . . . The future of Russia, of England, of France, of all the Great Powers was a function of the determinations taken by Germany at this crossroad of destiny.⁸

"Europe had gathered together for the first time since Germany's success [over Austria and France], and could have demanded an accounting, at least compensations; on the contrary, Germany managed new growth."⁹ Under Bismarck's direction,

Germany . . . had finished the great maneuver commenced at Duppel, pursued at Sadowa and at Sedan: this time it was Russia which she defeated and without striking a blow. After having broken the dikes in the West, Germany had broken out to the East and to the South; she established Austria-Hungary on the Danube and turned back the Slavs toward the steppes of Asia.¹⁰

At the Congress, French statesmen had failed to understand and to act upon a golden opportunity to assert French leadership in the affairs of Europe: "In a situation so complex . . . the role of a third power, neutral and impartial, could have become considerable. That role should have pertained to France. But France closed herself, not only in the strictest neutrality, but in the most severe abstention."¹¹ The French leaders were paralyzed by their dread of a Franco-German complication.¹² French abstention and English preoccupation with the Slavic spectre¹³ handed the direction of the Congress and the definition of relationships among the powers to Bismarck.

But Bismarck "feared . . . to see France growing bolder, and attempting to effect what he, in her place, would have effected, a union with Russia, or the preparation of a resolute action in common with Austria on the part of the Western Powers."¹⁴

Moreover, the French statesmen failed to raise the question of Egypt at the Congress. It was on everybody's mind. "They never spoke of it, but thought of it always."¹⁵ "The two powers [France and England] which found themselves face to face on the banks of the Nile, were, at the same moment, represented at the Congress of Berlin. What an opportunity to consolidate, to innovate, to bargain!"¹⁶

Both Germany and England had understood the importance of France better than the French had themselves: Bismarck proved this by his efforts to facilitate France's traditional policy of protecting churchmen in the Ottoman Empire. "No one better than the Prince understood the importance of the adhesion of France to the work of

the leading powers at the Congress."¹⁷ And Salisbury's offer of Tunisia to Waddington was further proof of the "unique power of France at the Congress of Berlin."¹⁸

The Balkan Crisis, 1908-1909

On October 5, 1908, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria declared the independence of his country from Ottoman suzerainty and assumed the rather pretentious title of "Tsar." The next day Count Aehrenthal, Foreign Minister for the Dual Monarchy, announced the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria. Both acts were violations of the Treaty of Berlin and were undertaken in evident collusion. Hanotaux's reactions invoked the lingering presence of Bismarck, his impact on the political morality of European statesmen, and his influence in shaping the aspirations of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. With his characteristic ambiguity toward Bismarck, Hanotaux also deplored the Prince's absence from the European scene where his genius and authority were badly needed. Count Aehrenthal and Prince Ferdinand had acted lawlessly, following the example which Bismarck had set. The current generation of diplomats had been "brought up on the knees of Bismarck, who was himself a disciple of Frederick the Great, who had said that he took what he wanted, then let his legal experts find the documentary justifications."¹⁹

Hanotaux thought that the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina marked a sharp change in Austrian policy from a policy of economic penetration and railroad building in the Balkans to a policy of political penetration. The name of this policy was "Balkan

Confederation" and its parent was Bismarck. Bismarck explained it in his Memoires: "The manner in which the Germanic Empire was constituted shows the way by which Austria could arrive at a conciliation of political and material interests in the peninsula: a Balkan Confederation under Austrian hegemony."²⁰ Austria's economic and railway policy aimed at Salonika; the political policy would aim at "grouping the Balkan principalities in order to dominate them." For the latter the "entente with Bulgaria" was "the first step."²⁴

In the same article in which he deplored both Bismarck's responsibility for undermining a respect for treaties, and the dangerous influence which he had exerted on Austrian policy, Hanotaux suggested that his presence and authority, now missing from the European scene, had been of immense value. Only a Bismarck would have a chance of leading contemporary Europe through a liquidation of Balkan problems. The present leaders were not "authoritative enough to withdraw us, without risks, from that wasp's nest."²²

The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a grave threat to the European order. It created a dangerous situation in which a collision of the Great Powers had to be avoided, for such a collision "would result, almost inevitably, in a world conflict."²³ The "moral unity" of the European Concert was badly needed.²⁴

The Triple Alliance had both been restored and had changed its character: it was becoming aggressive, at least active, and that change merited attention. Directed by Germany, the Triple Alliance was above all defensive and conservative; but with Austria and Italy claiming their role, the power triangle had turned its

point toward the South. . . ."25 "A Triple Alliance with renewed and defined ambitions begins to march towards the South, towards Constantinople, Salonika, Janina, Tripoli. . . . There is the affair which should occupy the next few years as the politics of world expansion was the great business of the preceeding years."26

If the Triple Alliance proceeded with restraint, it could make immense gains for itself in influence and opportunity in the Balkans and Turkey, gains to which Hanotaux offered no objections. If it

adheres to signed treaties, restrains its most ambitious elements, and upholds the defense of the status quo, . . . it will have consolidated European affairs and its own situation for many years. It will become, without striking a blow, the protector of the Balkan Confederation, born under its auspices; it will dispose of the commerce, the new prosperity . . . of these magnificent regions. . . . This would be for her a victory without the effusion of blood.27

"If, on the contrary, the Germanic world, led on by its own weight, should let itself slide down the slope, will the other powers stop the avalanche?"28 Hanotaux believed that they would stand and fight. Russia was weak, but recovering and would not stand idly by. Behind Russia was Slavism and France, and, finally, "by a phenomenon quite surprising in the history of the world, there is England. . . . England, assured by the cooperation of the powers of the counter-weight, will not let herself be dislodged from the Mediterranean coasts."29

The English Crisis, 1910-1911

When Hanotaux published his first article on the English Crisis in February 1910,³⁰ Great Britain was in the midst of her most serious domestic political upheaval since the crisis which preceded the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832. For several months the Liberal majority in the Commons and the Unionist dominated Lords had been locked in a bitter conflict over various economic and social measures which had been put forward by the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George. At issue were not only the vested economic interests of the Lords, who would face new taxes on their incomes and estates, but their constitutional power to veto measures passed by the Commons and supported by a majority in the country. In February 1910 these issues were not yet resolved and the crisis was destined to continue for more than a year. As a result of the narrowness of the Liberal victory in the recent elections, a settlement of the issues appeared even more hopeless than it had earlier.

Owing to its gravity and complexity, the English domestic political crisis had for Hanotaux a certain "grandeur." It was a "parliamentary crisis" in that it represented a confrontation and deadlock between traditional and progressive forces in the parliamentary arena. It was "budgetary" in that it required a solution to a breakdown in English finances. It was "social" in that it represented an assault on the privileged position of the Lords. And it was "antiunitary" by virtue of the position for arbitration which the elections had handed to the Irish and Welsh nationalities.³¹

Hanotaux's conservative bias placed him in favor of the Lords and of what he regarded as the traditions of "old England." He believed that the Liberal program seriously menaced those traditions and he regarded the "financial project" of Lloyd George as pure "Marxism," but with the difference that the French Socialists would "prefer to proceed quite honestly and logically by confiscation."³²

England's domestic crisis, grave enough in itself, was compounded by the intense pressures of German competition. Hanotaux expressed this metaphorically:

Germany has burst over the world economy. Her leaders test the current and think only of enlarging the sheet of water which rushes everywhere, insinuates itself, and mines away at the foot of the walls, climbs the parapets, smashes the bastions and pushes its slack water up to positions which were believed unattainable.³³

Moreover,

no-one is unaware that it is by the effective intervention of the German Government and the erection of tariffs that the great German industries, enriched by the domestic market, are able to compete with rival industries in the world market.³⁴

England would have to decide soon whether or not to abandon her long-standing policy of free trade in favor of protective tariffs. The competitive pressures exerted by German expansion were becoming so formidable that England would have to protect her economy if she wished to avoid a disastrous defeat.

What is England going to do . . .? Will she submit to the attack of "made in Germany"? Will she witness, impotently, the absolute ruin of her agriculture and a growing danger in her industrial areas where misery and mendacity rise with unemployment? Will she continue to leave her stock exchange open in order to finance new industries in Saxony and Westphalia? . . . Will she leave her incomparable market to the mercy of a conquest slow but sure? Will she consent

with a resignation all too sad to the humiliation of a defeat without combat?³⁵

Or would she, Hanotaux wondered, counter the threat with the solution of Joseph Chamberlain, which was both national and imperial, that is, protectionism.³⁵

But this alternative too, presented England with prospects so bleak, that the choice which Hanotaux posited was not really a choice but a dilemma. If England should go protectionist

will she not hear the rumble of universal furor? England has dominated the commerce of the world. . . . Her merchant fleets belong a little to everyone because she transports . . . the products created by other nations. If she stops, everything stops; the heart ceases to beat. . . . England, putting herself across the world movement created by herself becomes antagonistic to herself; she would create for the existence of others and her own existence a danger sudden and terrible, something like strangulation.³⁶

The German economic challenge was compounded by the German naval and military challenge. England had lost the immense naval supremacy which she had enjoyed only a few years earlier. She had abandoned the famous formula of "equality with two powers." Her pre-dreadnought fleet no longer counted. Germany understood this and had begun "to construct dreadnoughts with an intensity which would be foolish, if some deep thought, singularly disturbing, did not justify it" England still keeps a slight edge [twenty battleships to seventeen projected for 1912], "but the growth [of the German Navy] remains most disturbing, especially if one considers that England is obliged to watch over and defend an immense extent of seas, while Germany concentrates all her offensive forces in the North Sea."³⁷

At least as serious was England's military weakness:

In defense of Empires iron and steel are not sufficient: the true protection is the breast of the soldier. . . . The invasions from the continent . . . have been in all ages the cataclysmic stages in English history; in order to protect herself against this, England has only one resource, the organization of military service [conscription]. . . . Silence reigned almost absolute during the electoral campaign on this agonizing subject. Little was said about it, but it was consistently thought of. The English nation must make up its mind on this problem: it alone can do it and impose on itself, on its youth, such a sacrifice. . . ."38

At various times in recent diplomatic crises, the continental powers have had to weigh what England is worth. In spite of noisy affirmations and a little bragging by her defenders, England has never responded clearly to a question which has been clearly asked: "How many effectives will you have in time of war, on the island and outside?" Moreover, every future combination depends on the answer. Here again, England is at the crossroads: "to be or not to be."39

Hanotaux hoped that England would weather the crisis, that she would pull herself together and fulfill her responsibilities to herself and to the world.

Since it is a matter of the existence of a great nation and of the mastery which it exercises both over the world and over the vast empire of generous ideas, all the organs which represent her ought to enter into the game and exercise their actions. The crown has been up to now, silent. But Edward VII who wears it has only to follow the examples of his mother to learn the extent of his duties. In analogous crises, she intervened more than once, valiantly, wisely.40

This first article on the English crisis was, on one level, a warning to Frenchmen to beware of counting on an England beset with so many complicated problems; while on another, it was a plea to England to put her house in order, for her own sake and the sake of others. What Hanotaux saw at stake was more fundamental than the

friendship of France and England [he didn't seem to be anticipating any deterioration of this friendship] and more fundamental than whatever obscure commitments between the countries might or might not be hidden in the Entente Cordiale. What was at stake was England's capacity and will to continue to carry her world responsibilities and to respond as a great power to any international crisis which might arise.

In August 1910, Hanotaux published "The Imperial Crisis in England."⁴¹ This article provided his readers with his comprehensive evaluation of England's precarious prospects of remaining a great imperial power. It expressed his concern with the weakening of England's role in the balance of power, and the implications of this for the welfare of France: "The equilibrium of the world depends on it [the outcome of the English crisis] and nothing is of more interest to France. France would be the most sorely tested of all the powers if the athlete which Chamberlain called the 'tired Titan' abandoned the struggle."⁴²

Hanotaux felt that the British Empire was extended to the limit and was threatening to sink under its own weight. Too large already, the English were constantly being forced to enlarge it because of a variety of complications and challenges confronting them around the world.

In Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in Oceania, in the Americas, everywhere where she dominates, England encounters the obstacle: "Who land has, war has!" An almost superhuman vigilance hardly suffices to parry all the dangers. The responsibilities of government grow with the difficulty of governing.⁴³

The fate of the Empire hinged on the outcome of the internal crisis, an outcome which depended, in turn, on resolving a dilemma which appeared almost unresolvable. England must increase her already crushing outlays for armaments and, at the same time she must do more for the poor.⁴⁴ English democracy was demanding economic satisfaction. "Opinion is the ruler of the world everywhere, but especially in England."⁴⁵ "If democracy is not satisfied, will it not draw back its support, necessary to the order and grandeur of the Empire; moreover, in order to satisfy it, will they not compromise the defense and stability of the Empire itself?"⁴⁶

Why had the Empire held together for so long? Why shouldn't it continue to hold together for a long time to come? "I would answer quite simply, while inspiring myself with the old classic formula, that it has held together through 'isolation' and through 'splendor' and that it threatens to fall apart at the approach of competition, through the diminution of prestige."⁴⁷

The strength and stability of the Empire had rested on the remarkable success of the English in persuading others of its "grandeur" and "splendor." The Empire had been carried along by a world-wide prestige which the English have carefully nurtured.

Having been prudent enough to make herself master of the telegraph cables, the "great" press, and the news agencies, England has said what she has wanted to say and has spread only "good seed," that is to say, what has been profitable to her. The first lesson received by each reader when opening his morning paper--indisputable lesson up to now--was that which taught of the grandeur of England, and educated in a tone which admitted no contradictions.⁴¹

The facade which was perceived in the mists of the Channel and the imagination appeared so noble and imposing that no one tried to learn what was behind it. The brutal realism of the Germans was necessary to tear the veil and dissipate the mirage.⁴⁹

Prestige would no longer suffice. England would have to face the realities which confronted her.

The realities are: in peace and in war a people must pay for its substance and its goods in order to succeed. . . . A great Empire defends itself only with arms; an acquired situation is defended only by effort. To prosper one must work, to succeed one must have order, method, and unity.⁵⁰

Potsdam and the Bagdad Railway, 1910-1911

In the winter of 1910-1911 the international situation appeared to Hanotaux to be in a state of terrible uncertainty. During this period he published two of his most impassioned articles of the pre-war years: "The Bankruptcy of Encirclement" (December 1910), and "It is Necessary to Choose" (February 1911).⁵¹ It seemed to him that a complex cluster of developments was coming to a head, that the Triple Entente was in serious danger of dissolution, and that France was arriving at a crossroads where she must make awesome choices in regard to her relationships with the other powers.⁵²

Underlying his thinking was a continuing uncertainty in regard to England. In "The Bankruptcy of Encirclement" he reiterated his fears about England, stressing this time that England might be forced to experiment with federalism because of the pressures being exerted by the Welsh, Scots, and Irish, particularly the last named; or with agrarian socialism because of the pressure exerted by the poor. Either experiment would weaken England further to the

outside.⁵³ Germany, on the other hand, had "profited skillfully from favorable circumstance." She had "brought all her activities to the point where the Triple Entente, by a series of failures exposed her flanks, that is to say, in the East."⁵⁴

Two events, more or less concurrent, and part and parcel of the same operation, marked Germany's success: the failure of the Young Turks to secure a loan at Paris which led them to turn to Germany, and the Russo-German agreement at Potsdam regarding the Bagdad Railway. In both cases Germany's object was clear: "a momentary weakening of the Triple Entente by a blow straight at England, at the point which aims most directly at the heart."⁵⁵

Hanotaux understood that France's "principal means of action" in Turkey derived from her "preponderant position" in Turkish finances, her "participation in the service of the debt and her control of the Board of Directors of the Banque Imperiale Ottomane."⁵⁶ So he regarded it as ominous and was most unhappy with what he felt to be the heavy handed bungling of the French government when the Young Turks, who were friendly to France and who he felt had a special affinity for French civilization,⁵⁷ failed to secure a loan at Paris and turned to the Germans who obligingly came up with the cash.

Herbert Feis, in his Europe: The World's Banker, 1879-1914, shows that the Turkish Government turned to Germany against its "original desire." The loan brought the Germans back into favor with the Turks. Hitherto, they had been in disfavor with the Young Turk government because of their past association with the deposed Sultan.

The Turks suspected the French of imposing onerous conditions because of a desire to act on behalf of the Russians to stall Turkish armaments. Germany, henceforth, appeared to the Turks to be their only dependable ally.⁵⁸

Hanotaux thought that Germany's target in the East was England, that the Bagdad Railway project was predominantly strategic in intent, and an important factor in a "great duel" which would "not necessarily be military."⁵⁹ He believed that it was aimed at England "far from her base of operations, at the most sensitive and exposed point in her dominions, at the gates of India and Egypt."⁶⁰ For Germany, this concentration of purpose and energy had come after a period of frustration and disappointment overseas.

After having failed . . . in diverse world enterprises where she encountered the open, declared and united opposition of her maritime rivals, England, France, and the United States, the German Empire has found this new way and has resolutely committed itself to it. "Greater Germany" returns to the continent without abandoning the seas.⁶¹

For that prolific and hardworking race there remains only one field of action, the East. Germany turns herself in that direction with that force of enthusiasm resulting from her own weight. The "march toward the East," Drang Nach Osten, such is the war cry of the new Germanic invasions.⁶²

Germany's pursuit of the Bagdad Railway project, coupled with her continuing heavy emphasis on naval preparations, revealed a strategy of ironic implications for those who had propounded Germany's encirclement.

Germany prepares . . . her strategic positions with a view towards a military or diplomatic operation on a vast scale which appears, quite decidedly, directed against England: an immense crescent stretching from the North Sea to the

Persian Gulf. The Bagdad Railway depends on the Kiel Canal Left wing, right wing, so the scheme is designed, at first peaceful, later perhaps military, of a vast and reversed "encirclement."⁶³

The event which seemed to throw everything into question was the Russo-German agreement at Potsdam.

In September 1910, Izvolsky surrendered his position as Russia's Foreign Minister to Sazanov and became the ambassador to Paris. Izvolsky was distrusted by the Germans for his role in the Bosnian Crisis. Sazanov favored improved relations with Germany, which opened the way for a rapprochement between the two powers. Meeting at Potsdam, the sovereigns, William and Nicholas and their principal ministers, Sazanov, and Bethmann-Hollweg and Kiderlen-Wachter, exchanged assurances. The Germans indicated that "Germany was neither bound nor inclined to support any new Austrian ambitions in the Balkans" and that Germany "regarded the Balkan Railroad purely as an economic enterprise." The Russians promised that "if England pursued an anti-German policy, she would not find Russia on her side." Bethmann-Holleweg was also led to understand that "Russia would no longer lay any obstacles in the way of the construction of the Bagdad Railway as far as Bagdad."⁶⁴

In his December 10, 1910, speech to the Reichstag, Bethmann appears to have exaggerated the real significance of the Potsdam talks by interpreting them as "a renewed assurance that Germany and Russia would not enter into any hostile combinations one against the other." This fell "like a bomb in Paris and London, where Sazanov had allowed the impression to prevail that Persia and the Bagdad Railway were the only important questions discussed."

The serenity of the Triple Entente was considerably ruffled by Sazanov's separate negotiations with Germany in a field where England and France had very active interests. . . . Prominent men, like M. Hanotaux in France, and Mr. Lloyd George in England, asked whether Sazanov's conduct was not leading to a dissolution of the Triple Entente.⁶⁵

Although he was disturbed by the Potsdam Agreement, Hanotaux felt that Russia's willingness to reach an understanding with Germany had made a contribution to peace:

Kiderlen-Wachter and Sazanov found themselves, for the first time face to face while the imperial cousins exchanged the usual cordiale assurances. These new ministers had something to say to each other precisely because they were new. Rarely do successors walk exactly in the footsteps of their predecessors. On both sides, they were ready to close the door on the past and to look not for "that which divides but that which unites."

Certainly, between Russia on the one hand, and Germany supporting Austria, on the other, things could not remain, without danger to peace, in the state of tension in which the Bosnian Crisis placed them. It was necessary to find . . . grounds for understanding and rapprochement. They looked and found it in Asia.⁶⁶

Hanotaux thought that Russia had "not precisely committed herself in the game with Germany. Her tactic consisted rather in escaping . . . in letting the formidable current pass which she tried to block for the last ten years." Nor had she "put herself in contradiction with the precise modalities of the 'alliance.'"⁶⁷

Hanotaux believed that the greatest possible good might come out of the Potsdam Agreement, that it might open the way to a general settlement in the East. He quoted with approval an article in the Gazette de Weser which he believed had been inspired by the German government: "The problem remains in suspense. It remains in the future an object of general exchange for European diplomacy.

The Potsdam interview will have furnished the base for a pacific discussion." And added that for diplomacy ". . . a magnificent subject is offered for its activity. It is a matter of a division of influence in Central Asia, as the nineteenth century saw several in Africa and the Far East."

And, Hanotaux added that

It is not beyond the wisdom of the governments, beyond the firm attachment of the peoples to peace, to crown, by a conciliatory conclusion these long and laborious rivalries. Europe can take up, in a common agreement, the policy of Alexander towards Babylon without being obliged to cut, with the sword, the Gordian knot.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, a Russian "rapprochement with Germany could not but have direct consequences on the respective positions of the of the Great Powers in Europe." Russia

counts on Germany to contain Austria in the Balkans; in exchange, she leaves the field free to the economic ambitions of Germany in Asia. . . . The Bagdad railway will not encounter any opposition from the side of Russia. . . . Of the three powers who stood in the way of the project England and France remain.⁷⁰

Because he felt that the Russo-German rapprochement presented public opinion with a changed situation and a resulting necessity of making choices, and because he believed that it is necessary to "see clearly in order to choose,"⁷¹ Hanotaux vigorously attacked the secrecy surrounding the Triple Entente.⁷² The public had a right to know: "under a government of opinion, with removable ministers and presidents who . . . has the right to impose a hidden policy. To whom, does the 'secret of the king' belong?"⁷³

Yes and no, do there exist any formal commitments between the three powers, Russia, France and England? Yes or no, are the three policies tied together? Yes

or no, does the entente have in view any precise objectives? Yes or no, does it dispose of effective means?⁷⁴

Whether it is a matter of Morocco or a matter of Persia, the question is the same. To where does it extend, at what point does it stop. The geographical and moral reach of that ample and vague combination, the Triple Entente? Does it cover the world? Does it confine itself to the limits of our little Europe?⁷⁵

Which are, among the eventualities which could happen, those which are viewed as interesting the consortium. If a power acts on its own lead, for its own interests, does it engage the others? And, if it disengages itself, does this harm the union?⁷⁶

France must choose. "Russia has made her choice; she has rallied to German policy in Central Asia; she had disinterested herself in the struggle for the Persian Gulf." Will France "follow Russia or will she adhere to the side of England?"⁷⁷ England "turns towards France and with the means without number of which she disposes--supports herself, perhaps, on unknown clauses of the pact of entente--she embraces us, entwines us, coils herself around us, if I dare say, in order to make a common front in the East."⁷⁸

If France has made commitments, she must keep them. But Hanotaux wondered if she might not in fact be free because of the informal nature of the ententes. He felt that if this were so her long run position was "excellent."⁷⁹

"In acting a little late, she would become, without doubt, the arbitrator of world competitions, as she could have been at the Congress of Berlin, if her negotiators had better understood their power and had employed it better."⁸⁰ But, for the moment, France needed to make a choice. She could follow Russian policy in its evolution or she could join her policy more and more directly to

that of England. In the former case, she would be tending to renew the "continental bloc" and then events in the East would be of secondary interest:

If Germany directs her attentions toward the East and towards Asia, she would disengage more from the West and from Europe. . . . Since we have let the traditional situation which the Catholic protectorate assured us in the Ottoman Empire perish, the Eastern Question is hardly anything more to us than a Mediterranean question⁸¹

On the other hand, French policy could be

joined, more and more directly to that of England. . . . To abandon England in the difficult pass where she finds herself is a serious matter. The consequences could be mortal. Ten years of cordial understanding could not lead, without danger, to such a fiasco.⁸²

"History has marched. It brings, with some new points of view, the most agonizing realities. It presses us; it poses the terrible dilemma: Africa or Asia, alliance or entente. It is necessary to choose."⁸³

Relations Among the European Great Powers:
A Commentary on Hanotaux's Views, 1908-1911

Hanotaux was convinced that the Triple Alliance had become aggressive, that it had finally decided that the direction for expansion (not necessarily military) was in the Eastern Mediterranean and along the Berlin-to-Bagdad axis. Consequently, he assumed that German interests in Africa, particularly in Morocco, had been relegated to a secondary plane. This assumption was reinforced by the Casablanca Agreement of 1909, which Hanotaux understood to mean that Germany had at least acceded to eventual French political predominance in Morocco.

Hanotaux wrote that Austria was taking the lead in aggressively extending the influence of the Triple Alliance in the East. He made this point not only at the time of the Bosnian Crisis but much later in "It is Necessary to Choose." He asserted that "Austria has led the great Empire of the North."⁸⁴ But in spite of such an assertion he remained more than a little ambiguous as to who really was leading whom. When he wrote of the grand strategic conceptions of the Triple Alliance, of the Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway as a threat to England, he was referring to Germany and saw in this strategy "a single directing thought."⁸⁵ Germany was the predominant power in the Triple Alliance. Her ambitions were more extensive and more dramatic. What Austria would do or what Italy would do was only a subtheme.

Hanotaux was more sympathetic with Austria than with Germany. He believed that Austria had allowed herself to be misdirected by Bismarck into centering her ambitions in the Balkans after her defeat by Prussia. But, for all that, Hanotaux believed that she performed a necessary role in Eastern Europe and wrote a sympathetic article to that effect on the eve of the First World War.⁸⁶ At the outbreak of that war, any lingering ambiguity as to who was calling the shots for the Triple Alliance had, in Hanotaux's view, disappeared, and he would hold Germany entirely responsible for the war.

Although he did not like to see the status quo upset and the Treaty of Berlin violated, Hanotaux did not challenge Austria's ultimate right to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁸⁷ One may suspect that he saw the all-too-obvious analogy between Austria's position

vis-à-vis Bosnia-Herzegovina and France's vis-à-vis Morocco. Each of the two Great Powers had responsibilities in the respective territories, but both were prohibited by international agreement from asserting full authority. France was tied to the Act of Algeciris. She had been carrying the heaviest responsibilities for maintaining order in Morocco. In 1909 Hanotaux stated the principle which he believed applied in such situations. This was as applicable to Bosnia as Morocco. It implied an ultimate right of acquisition, and he believed it had determined most of the African settlements: "From each according to its responsibilities, to each according to his works."⁸⁸

Because of the recent strengthening of the Austrian and Italian fleets, he was concerned about the naval balance of power in the Mediterranean and suggested that the time had come for an Anglo-Russian agreement opening up the Straits for the warships of all nations.⁸⁹ He was not in favor of an agreement which would permit Russia to occupy Constantinople. He had always felt that Russian occupation of Constantinople would be extremely dangerous for European peace. He made this point in the 1892 "plan" which has been discussed, and as Foreign Minister he had restrained Russia in the East. He never lost sight of the Anglo-Russian antagonisms in Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean. As long as the Straits question remained unresolved he had little confidence in the durability of the Anglo-Russian entente. He would have liked to see that relationship more firmly established by means of an agreement on the Straits.

He believed that the Triple Alliance was successfully maintaining its solidarity, while the Triple Entente was in danger of dissolution. The Triple Entente had not shown well in the Bosnian Crisis. England appeared to be weakening and her future was uncertain. Russia was looking to her own interests in the East and doing so at the expense of England's. Because of the secrecy surrounding the Triple Entente it was impossible to know exactly what it meant, and, therefore, how far and to what it committed France.

What England needed to do was to put her house in order and live up to her responsibilities. She must do her part to offset the expanding power of German hegemony wherever it might manifest itself. To do her part she must create an army which the Germans would respect. Only with a large conscript army would England weigh sufficiently in the continental balance of power and be convincingly prepared to challenge the Germans on the approaches to Suez and the Persian Gulf. Only when such a British army had been brought into existence would the Germans see England as a power to be reckoned with anywhere short of the water's edge.

The Potsdam Agreement appeared to signal that the dissolution of the Triple Entente was possible and even imminent. Although Russia had not repudiated her alliance with France, she had stepped out of the path of the German march toward Bagdad leaving England exposed on the route to India and Egypt. France must choose between moving closer to Germany and Russia and, as a result, of stepping aside herself from the pending Anglo-German confrontation, or of siding with an England which appeared to be weak, uncertain and unreliable.

Although Hanotaux did not state his choice in "It is Necessary to Choose," it is apparent that it could not have been England.

Hanotaux preferred not to make a choice at all, at least not in the sense of making a permanent commitment to one side or the other. To have sided with Russia and Germany would have been helpful in Africa by encouraging Germany to keep her attentions riveted on Bagdad, but it could also have meant writing off French involvement in the East and it might have encouraged the hegemonic tendencies of the Germans. To have sided with England was too risky and was not the kind of commitment that England had earned. Further, it could create dangers for France on her German frontier for the sake of predominantly English interests in the East. It could alienate Russia. It could literally mean the choice of the entente at the cost of the alliance.

Hanotaux hoped that the Triple Entente did not conceal secret commitments. If it did not, then France's diplomatic position was "excellent." France could work the middle ground between Russia and Germany, on the one hand, and England on the other, and in a settlement of conflicting interests in the East, she, France, could have the last word. In an Eastern Crisis, Hanotaux believed that France was in a position to have the last word, a point which he developed at length in the articles which came to comprise the second volume of the diplomatic studies.

Ultimately, Hanotaux hoped that the Potsdam Agreement was a positive step towards a general settlement, that it would lead to a pacific discussion, which in turn would result in a division of

influence in Central Asia. He hoped that the rivalries of the European Powers in that part of the world could be brought to an end.

Finally, Hanotaux deplored the fact that Europe did not possess a statesman of Bismarck's stature, a figure who could furnish the genius and leadership necessary to reach a mutually acceptable settlement among the Great Powers in the Balkans and Central Asia. That Hanotaux preferred that such a statesman would be French, could, I suppose, be left without saying. But he would suggest more than once that he would rather see such a statesman arise in another country, say in England or Germany, than to see a difficult situation degenerate into an European War. A great European leader would, after all, be great by virtue of perceiving and mediating everyone's interests. France, Hanotaux believed, could have achieved important objectives at the Congress of Berlin, which was under Bismarck's direction, if only her statesmen had made proper use of the French position. Hanotaux sought the diplomatic ascendancy of France in Europe under the direction of a great French statesman. But, as long as French interests would not be derogated, or French policy subordinated to the policy of other states, he was prepared to accept the leadership of a foreign statesman for the sake of an acceptable and peaceful settlement. He did not seek the ascendancy of France at any price.

CHAPTER VI: FOOTNOTES

¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La conférence de la Haye: L'organisation de la paix," Juin-Juillet, 1907, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 27-28.

²Gabriel Hanotaux, "La réforme turque," Août 1908, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 150.

³Ibid., p. 149.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," Décembre 1910 Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 301.

⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "La nouvelle Turquie," Juin 1901, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 208.

⁶Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," p. 306.

⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, "Le Congrès de Berlin: I. La guerre et les preliminaries du Congrès," Revue des deux mondes, XLVII (Septembre 15, 1908); "Le Congrès de Berlin: II. Le Congrès," XLVII (Septembre 30, 1908).

⁸Hanotaux, "Le Congrès de Berlin: I . . . ," pp. 267-268.

⁹Hanotaux, "Le Congrès de Berlin: II . . . ," pp. 497-498.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 514.

¹¹Hanotaux, "Le Congrès de Berlin: I . . . ," p. 253.

¹²Ibid., pp. 254-257.

¹³Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, Contemporary France, IV, trans. E. Sparvel-Bayly (New York: G. P. Putnam Sons, 1909), pp. 307-308.

¹⁵Hanotaux, "Le Congrès de Berlin: II . . . ," p. 507.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 509.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 505-506.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 510.

¹⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'annexion de la Bosnie-Herzegovina: L'indépendance de la Bulgarie," Octobre 1908, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 153-154.

²⁰Ibid., p. 156.

²¹Ibid., p. 157.

²²Ibid., pp. 158-159.

²³Ibid., p. 160.

²⁴Ibid., p. 168.

²⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "La crise balkanique," Avril 1909, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 188.

²⁶Ibid., p. 189-190.

²⁷Ibid., p. 193.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 193-194.

²⁹Ibid., p. 194.

³⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les élections anglaises," Février 1910, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 247-263.

³¹Ibid., pp. 252-253.

³²Ibid., p. 251.

³³Ibid., p. 255.

³⁴Ibid., p. 254.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 255-256.

³⁶Ibid., p. 256.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 258-259.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 260-261.

³⁹Ibid., p. 261.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 263.

⁴¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La crise impériale en Angleterre,"
Aôut 1910, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 281-294.

⁴²Ibid., p. 293.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 282-283.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 292-293.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 283-284.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 293.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 288.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 289.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 291.

⁵¹Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," Décembre 1910, pp. 295-309; Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," Février 1911, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), pp. 311-325.

⁵²Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," pp. 312-313.

⁵³Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," p. 300.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 301.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 306.

⁵⁶Ibid, p. 305.

⁵⁷Hanotaux, "La reforme turque," p. 146.

⁵⁸Herbert Feis, Europe: The World's Banker, 1870-1914 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1965, c. 1930), pp. 322-326.

⁵⁹Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," pp. 320-321.

⁶⁰Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," pp. 301-302.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 301.

⁶²Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," p. 318.

⁶³Ibid., p. 317.

⁶⁴Sidney B. Fay, The Origins of the World War (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964, c. 1928-1930), I:271.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 274-276.

⁶⁶Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," pp. 303-304.

⁶⁷Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," pp. 318-319.

⁶⁸Hanotaux, "La faillite de l'encerclement," p. 308.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 308-309.

⁷⁰Hanotaux, "Il faut choisir," pp. 319-320.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 313.

⁷²Ibid., p. 311.

⁷³Ibid., p. 314.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 311.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 315.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 322-323.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 321.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 323.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 324.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., p. 325.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 317.

⁸⁵Ibid. In October 1912, Hanotaux wrote that Germany was "tied to Austria-Hungary" and that "she would follow her to the end; that must be admitted as an European axiom." See Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" Octobre 12, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 119-120. But in April 1913, Hanotaux was wondering if Austria-Hungary would continue to run the risk of perishing by remaining subordinate to Germany and "blindly and obstinately anti-Slav?" See Hanotaux, "La prise de Scutari," Avril 25, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, pp. 289-290. In February 1914, he was convinced that the powers of the Triple

Alliance would follow Germany's example. See Hanotaux, "Conclusion," Fevrier 6, 1914, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 443-444.

⁸⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Autriche-Hongrie et les slavs du sud," Revue hebdomadaire (Juillet 25, 1914).

⁸⁷Hanotaux, "L'Annexion de la Bosnie-Herzegovine . . . ," pp. 161-162.

⁸⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Nouveaux horizons," Juillet 1909, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 223.

⁸⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La question des Detroits," Mai 1910, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1912), p. 418.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEDITERRANEAN ENTENTES: CRISIS AND DENOUEMENT IN 1911

Second Morocco, 1911

As Foreign Minister Hanotaux had believed that Morocco would fall in the ordinary course of events under the domination of France.¹ Because of her position in Algeria, France had the advantages of an experienced relationship with Islam and of contiguity--so often the key factor in colonial acquisitions.² He had worked to preserve Morocco by maintaining the status quo until the ripening fruit should fall of its own accord into the hands of France.³ This was his policy of "conservation"⁴ or, as he put it in 1908, of "vigilant abstention."⁵ He believed, in 1908, that the Mediterranean ententes had marked the abandonment of this traditional Moroccan policy and had distorted France's whole diplomatic position: "the axis of our diplomatic activity which had been applied to maintaining the equilibrium among the powers had been misplaced."⁶

Because Delcassé had left the Germans outside of his system of agreements, because he neither settled with them or properly informed them, he had, in effect, invited the German reaction which sent the Emperor William to Tangier, created the most serious threat of a Franco-German war in many years, forced his own resignation, and

made it necessary for France to submit the Moroccan question to an international conference. Everything had followed logically from Delcassé's mistakes, including the Act of Algeciras, which Hanotaux deplored.

Hanotaux regarded the Act of Algeciras as a derogation of French sovereignty because it allowed France's competitors to supervise her Moroccan policy. It was an impossible agreement which had given France the responsibility without the authority.⁷ It was being undermined by events and "to the impossible no one is held."⁸ He believed that the prevailing political system in Morocco was nothing more than "the unruliness of tribes tempered by the exactions of raids."⁹ Sooner or later intervention would be necessary. In 1908 he wrote that the Act of Algeciras was "condemned to come to an end soon . . . in two years, two and one-half maybe . . . and then?"¹⁰

Moreover, the policy of the French government was equivocal and dangerous. This was an "illusory" and "contradictory" policy of "peaceful penetration" which consisted of "deploying considerable forces so as to hold them at the coast and to threaten--without acting."¹¹ Not only was this antagonizing the other European powers but it was making France take on the appearance of an enemy of the Moroccan people.¹² This would not only have the effect of making an eventual French protectorate less rather than more acceptable to the Moroccans, but could disturb France's relations with other Islamic peoples, the Algerians, for example, a danger to which Hanotaux was always acutely sensitive.

Late in 1908, Hanotaux summarized his views on what the French policy towards Morocco ought to be. His statements could easily lead to the conclusion that he was cynical, that he was proposing that seduction would be more effective than rape in the conquest of Morocco.

If it could be clearly understood that we do not wish [to destroy] either her integrity or her independence. We have declared that often enough! If once reassured, as she has need of us, she will come together with us. . . . It will not be long before that regime will no longer be able to break away from us: a formula very simple ought to regulate our conduct: "the protector is he who protects."¹³

Territorial contact, the power of money, the authority of example, all that which constitutes the relationship of a good neighbor will give us the preponderant situation which we formerly occupied and which we ought never to have lost. That's the true "peaceful penetration," that which avoids all the risks of a brutal conquest and which, with time, will be no less efficacious.¹⁴

But there is no reason to doubt that Hanotaux sincerely believed that France could win her way in Morocco mainly by patience and persuasion. His theory of how independent backward areas are transformed into protectorates is not entirely clear, but it is clear that he did not think that the Moroccan protectorate should be forced, but should come about more naturally as a result of a developing relationship between France and the native civilization. He clearly believed that this protectorate would allow for a mutually advantageous association between the protector and the protected and that the latter could be persuaded to accept these advantages. Only secondarily should a French takeover be the outcome of "events," of developing political necessities. But this, in the end, would be the way it happened.

In the spring of 1911 the French government decided to occupy the Moroccan capital of Fez. On May 21 French troops entered the city. Hanotaux felt that France had acted "because it was necessary to act."¹⁵ She had acted against a "terrible anarchy" which threatened to spread throughout the Moslem world.¹⁶ She had acted in defense not only of her own interests, but those of civilization. Her act had been a natural historical denouement following logically from the conquest of Algeria.¹⁷ Hanotaux did not believe that French Foreign Minister Cruppi's declaration to the Chamber of Deputies that the troops would return to the coast after a native military force had been organized was at all realistic. France would be forced to stay: "The facts will be stronger than the will of men."¹⁸

Although Hanotaux supported the occupation of Fez he did not welcome it. He would have preferred to have seen France establish her position in a more natural and leisurely way. He believed that there were so many objections to entering the "wasps' nest" of Morocco that "many Frenchmen (of whom I am one) have refused, as long as it was possible, to approach the obstacle, and, in any case, would have preferred other ways."¹⁹

Although he sensed that German diplomacy would be lying in wait for France, he did not think that Germany would push matters to extremes over the occupation of Fez. He believed that Germany's experience at the Algeiras Conference, at which most of the other powers had lined up against her, would tend to discourage her.²⁰ He also believed that Germany was directing her attention and energies toward Turkey and Bagdad and that she had consequently relegated her

interests in African expansion onto a secondary plane.²¹ He also interpreted the Franco-German agreement of 1909 on Morocco, which had been undertaken to clarify the meaning of the Act of Algeciras, as providing German assent for French political predominance in Morocco when this should become necessary.²²

In March 1911 the Germans had indicated to the French government that they would regard the occupation of Fez as a violation of the Act of Algeciras and that such a move would reopen the Moroccan question. But a specific German reaction to the occupation of Fez did not begin to unfold until about a month after the event. This reaction, which brought about a serious international crisis, was the work of the German Foreign Minister, Kiderlen-Wächter. Emperor William had been reluctant to make much out of the French move, which he tended to see as "an act of duty and a useful diversion of French forces from the Rhine front." Kiderlen had to entice his support for a tough stand by holding out the prospect of substantial territorial gains without war. "Kiderlen hoped to wipe out earlier failures by gaining substantial compensations. His plan assumed that England would take no interest in the area which offered no threat to her key to the Mediterranean."²³

Even though Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador in Berlin, had agreed in principle to compensating Germany in the Congo, Kiderlen went ahead with his campaign to put pressure on the French by despatching the gunboat, Panther, to the Moroccan port of Agadir, where it arrived on July 1, precipitating the more heated phase of the crisis.

Meanwhile, on June 28, a new French government was formed with Joseph Caillaux as Prime Minister. Caillaux was willing to work out a Moroccan settlement with Germany which would have provided her with compensations in the Congo; but on July 15, Kiderlen, impatient with the fact that France had not yet made Germany a specific territorial offer, demanded that she be ceded the entire French Congo. This was wholly unacceptable to the French who, on July 18, informed the English of what the Germans were asking. On July 19 Le Matin broke the news to the French public. On July 21, the English Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, gave his famous Mansion House Speech. Although he mentioned neither Morocco nor Germany his remarks were understood to be an official warning to Germany that she had better pull back, moderate her demands, and stop bullying the French, because if she forced a war on France she must also expect to fight England. The Germans were surprised and indignant, but this expression of English firmness and the unyielding attitude of the French shook Kiderlen's reputation at home and led William to switch to the cause of moderation. In early August, Kiderlen agreed to negotiate with Jules Cambon on the basis of an offer of a "large piece" of the Congo. The subsequent negotiations over geographical details dragged on for many weeks. The final agreement was not signed until November 4, 1911.²⁴

At that time the Germans recognized the French protectorate in Morocco in exchange for a rather large but what is generally agreed to have been a relatively worthless piece of the French Congo. Most of Hanotaux's articles were written after the worst of the

crisis had passed and during the long period of Franco-German negotiations.

While these negotiations were in progress, Hanotaux was deeply worried about the prospect that France would make vital concessions to Germany in the Congo. On the one hand, he was afraid that the Germans were threatening the geopolitical heart of the French African Empire. He was afraid that they were seeking to wrest from France the land dominating "the communications between the basins of the three great African rivers, Niger, Congo, and Nile . . . ," the most "prominent positions in Africa."²⁵ He also suspected that they were trying to place themselves in position to become the eventual heirs to the Congo Free State.²⁶ On the other hand, he encouraged a holding of the line against excessive concessions by evoking the memory of Savorgnan de Brazza: "It is his work, the work of his thought, his labor, his life, which is put in jeopardy at the present hour."²⁷

This latter concern was natural for Hanotaux. If de Brazza's achievements were threatened, so were his own. As Foreign Minister, it was he who had supported the activities of the explorer. He indicated that he had derived his understanding of the strategic importance of the French African territories from the "founders and masters, the Jules Ferry's and Brazza's."²⁸ He was willing, however, to see some reasonable concessions in the Congo, provided that "Congolese unity is respected and territorial communications remain assured in Central Africa."²⁹

The Franco-German settlement of November 4, 1911, confirmed Hanotaux's worst fears. He was furious about it. He felt it had

destroyed the unity of the Congo and cut the vital lines of communication in Africa. A "domain equivalent to two-thirds of France had been abandoned at the stroke of a pen." The work of Brazza and his collaborators had been annihilated. The "reverberations would be infinite on the development of French influence in Africa and the African continental equilibrium." Nothing was really settled. "Perpetual conflict was enclosed in the agreement."³⁰ The Governments knew "perfectly that between two countries like Germany and France any equivocal arrangement . . . is a 'world danger.'"³¹

His anger was intense and personal:

When one thinks of the beautiful dream of empire which we had conceived, when one remembers the statements in which France could glory . . . : from "Algiers to Brazzaville" we are in our own; when one returns to the origins of that plan so carefully elaborated, so valiantly executed; when one remembers the works of the explorers, their desperate struggles, from the first act of Brazza to the final act of Marchand--twenty years of efforts, twenty years of sacrifice, to arrive at this renunciation--one asks of oneself in truth how such things could happen, or rather, one finds them so contradictory to reason, that one does not see how they can be realized; one can still believe that they will not be realized!³²

The most dramatic statement of the anger and anguish of France occurred in the debate of the agreement in the Chamber of Deputies on December 14, 1911, when the Catholic nationalist, Albert De Mun, a friend of Hanotaux's and a fellow member of the French Academy, mounted the tribune. De Mun had not addressed the Chamber since 1902 because of a heart ailment, so it was understood that he was speaking out at the risk of his life. He was greeted with a "salvo of applause" clear across the Chamber from the right to the extreme left. Like Hanotaux, De Mun felt that the agreement had

wrecked France's plan for a great French Empire in Africa reaching from the Mediterranean to the mouths of the Congo, and he was afraid that Germany had secured a position from which she could eventually pre-empt the Belgian Congo. Like Hanotaux he interpreted the Franco-German agreement of 1909 on Morocco to mean that political interests and the right to maintain order in Morocco were to be left to France. Consequently, he could not see why Germany had despatched the gun-boat. The applause was almost unanimous when he asked: "When and how was the thought of that territorial abandonment given birth, which has come to be called the price of the protectorate of Morocco?"³³

In the end both French and German diplomacy had failed. Hanotaux regarded the agreement as a screen behind which both diplomacies were hiding.³⁴ He felt that the French diplomats had been frightened at first, but that public opinion had partially saved the situation by resisting the pressure for extreme sacrifices and calling Germany's "bluff."³⁵ The crisis had, in fact, stimulated a strong popular sentiment of resistance; and Jules Cambon, in his negotiations with the Germans, had made use of "the state of public opinion in France as an argument against accepting excessive sacrifices."³⁶ Nevertheless, Hanotaux felt that France had not obtained what she could expect to obtain from "equity and geographical and historical necessity."³⁷

Hanotaux was unimpressed with British help. On August 5, 1911, he felt that if England had really wanted to help that she would have sent a ship into the waters of Agadir. He felt that this

abstention and a certain coolness on the part of Herbert Asquith, the Prime Minister, had had the effect of indirectly encouraging German diplomacy. He thought that Lloyd George's Mansion House speech was a "coup de barre," but he did not think that it was having an "effective result." He admitted that England was a "sympathetic confidant" of France, and would probably want to take part in the conversations if Germany asked too much, but he did not feel that it was "quite certain that she would not tie her hands in advance, by an eventual division, agreed upon with Germany, of the Portuguese African colonies."³⁸

The Failure of German Moroccan Policy, 1906-1911

In 1908 Hanotaux believed that events were alternating between the Balkans and Morocco with an "almost fatal rhythm."³⁸ But by the time of the Second Moroccan Crisis in 1911, he appears to have felt that this rhythm had subsided. The agreement of 1909 had come in the meantime and the Germans had been concentrating their attentions along the Berlin to Bagdad axis. He was surprised that they made as much out of the expedition to Fez as they did. He felt that the Germans were unwise, given their intense interest in improving their position and expanding their influence in the East to antagonize France so thoroughly for the sake of an African compensation: "That sudden about face which turned German policy back to African and Europe, was it fully reflected upon, was it reasoned, was it reasonable?"⁴⁰

Moreover, this view that Germany had acted contrary to her interests was implicit in the continuing significance which Hanotaux attached to the discussions at Potsdam. He believed that for France Potsdam had represented a missed diplomatic opportunity. It had also represented an opportunity for Germany because a rapprochement with France as well as Russia would have given Germany the optimal chance to expand her opportunities in the East, especially at those points where her ambitions were blocked by England. If France had chosen to bargain with Germany at Potsdam, she might have avoided the complications with which Germany presented her in 1911. Conversely, if Germany had really wished to find and exploit her opportunities in the East, she would have been better off to have sought an understanding with France than to have heavy-handedly exploited a situation beyond French control for a cheap territorial gain.⁴¹

Hanotaux felt that Germany's Moroccan policy over several years had been inconsistent and perplexing. She had followed a policy of "sudden leaps and turns." In fact, Germany had apparently not been in control of her "system or her nerves. Three or four themes or syntheses--not all easily reconcilable--had been put forward by her . . . in order to justify the policy of sudden leaps and turns."⁴²

Hanotaux did not think that Germany had won much of a victory. The agreement was "as troublesome for Germany as for France. False orientation, false satisfaction, false appeasement. Everyone is discontented, everyone remains disturbed"⁴³

The crisis was a most unfortunate display of ineptitude and irresponsibility on the part of Kiderlen, who "with his self-styled Bismarckian procedure had not known how to reach the goal"44 German interests in Morocco could have been safeguarded "without gravely damaging the acquired colonial situation of France."45

Kiderlen had made use of Morocco as "a good opportunity to mark his arrival in affairs and to step on the tail of France." To this

simplistic realism, a little superadded idealism would not have been hurtful; better informed, the minister would have seen that one does not trouble in vain the repose of the whole world; by assuming with a light heart the role of bugbear and glutton, he has perhaps not fulfilled every duty of his task and has not satisfied the real interests of his country.46

As disciples of Bismarck the German policy makers were failures:

Bismarckian policy was energetic, certainly; but it was farsighted and it knew where it was going; even if it used force, it aimed at tangible results, proportioned to the efforts, developing according to a line of conduct wisely reasoned and identical to itself. Has that method been transmitted to the disciples?47

Peace was in Germany's interest.

No more against France than against England does Germany have an interest in resorting to armed conflict. In the general international situation, she has everything to win in peace and everything to lose in war. If war breaks out, three Great Powers, at least, have an identical interest in not letting Germany win hegemony in a great struggle. Then--treaties or not--they would find themselves united and Germany would run the greatest risk to which her power could be exposed.48

In spite of the weaknesses of the Triple Entente and even if peace should witness its dissolution, a German attempt to achieve hegemony

through military conquest would draw the three Great Powers of the entente together to stop her.

Hanotaux still wished "to believe in an arrangement and final detente." He felt that even if by "a cascade of unforeseeable errors, things turn into a world conflict, that it will still be necessary one day to resolve the Moroccan situation internationally" and wondered if it would not be better to undertake such an arrangement "sooner rather than later." He felt that an "African peace" could serve as the base of a more general settlement. His own country

would accept . . . a generalization more vast; she would not refuse to look for the conditions of an appeasement of which the entire world feels the need. Analogous feelings, as much as one can judge, are widely prevalent in the German public and among the peoples of the Triple Alliance. Is it beyond human powers--and diplomatic aptitudes--to find the ground where these favorable intentions can be brought together in order to establish, on the base of an African peace, a stable arrangement, loyally universalized?⁴⁹

Although he dreamed of a general settlement, Hanotaux did not want another Algeiras Conference on Morocco. He felt that France's political situation had been "ameliorated," but that her "juridical situation" was "mediocre." France would be appearing "before a Tribunal before which she had commitments which she had not kept." "At the price we have paid for the compliance of one of the judges we can estimate what it could cost us to satisfy the entire areopagus."⁵⁰

The Failure of French Policy, 1904-1912

Placing the Agadir Crisis in the context of the Potsdam agreement, Hanotaux complained that French policy makers had "lost

an opportunity which would have permitted them to determine the terrain of the [Moroccan] negotiations."⁵¹ He believed that France could have pushed herself into the Potsdam conversations.⁵² But, instead, the French government "believed that it should tie its destiny to that of England."⁵³ In doing so it "subordinated French policy" and "damaged French interests."⁵⁴ In February, 1912, after the French had received news of the Haldane visit to Germany, Hanotaux thought that France had been left holding the bag: "that which is certain is that Russia and England have taken the lead in negotiating aside with Germany, while we have remained hypnotized in our positions."⁵⁵

Hanotaux hoped that the second Moroccan Crisis marked the denouement of the false orientation given by Delcassé to French foreign policy: his abandonment of the policy of equilibrium, the policy of working the middle ground among the powers, for the policy of the Mediterranean ententes. The Mediterranean ententes included not only the Entente Cordiale, but the secret entente with Spain and whatever concessions lay hidden within it, and the entente with Italy giving her a free hand in Tripoli.⁵⁶

By entering into these ententes France had given up her freedom of action,⁵⁷ and had put herself in chains.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the current crisis had proceeded logically from this mistaken policy:

Tangier, Algeciras, the Arrangement of 1909, the march on Fez, the occupation of Agadir, such was the development of the irresistible facts which came to lead eventually to the state of tension which we have today.⁵⁹

Now that the secret clauses of the Entente Cordiale had been made public by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, it was clear that the whole understanding was limited to case by case considerations. England had been free to decide in the present circumstances whether she would act or "disengage" herself. There were no further secret articles. Edward Grey had said: "We have published the articles of the secret agreement of 1904 with France . . . no other secret accord exists."¹⁰

Herbert Asquith, the Prime Minister, had said, "There is no secret engagement with any foreign government obligating England to render a military or naval service."⁶¹ Moreover, England had gone so far as to encourage Germany in her African ambitions in order to divert her attention from the East. Alluding to the German desire to obtain access to the Congo and the Ubangi, Grey had said, "We have facilitated it as much as it has been in our power." And he had also promised in regard to German African ambitions that England would not be a "dog in the manger."⁶²

Hanotaux insisted that now that the Entente Cordiale had been published it should be understood for exactly what it was:

The Entente Cordiale . . . does not convey in itself any clearly determined consequences or precise clauses on the general position of the powers in the world; it provides no engagements or sanctions giving, to one or the other of the two countries relying on it, any positive guarantees in that which concerns their general interest or in view of certain grave eventualities. . . .

The Entente Cordiale decides, uncontestably, on a sympathetic loyalty of the two diplomacies; but for that which concerns the concrete facts it has been only a diplomatic proceeding having as its sole objective the regulation of certain particular affairs, Egypt, Newfoundland, Morocco. . . . All that had need of being elucidated--however obscurities and mysteries were accumulated.

The Entente Cordiale produces, consequently, at the present moment, its supreme effect, while working for the regulation of the Moroccan affair. One could say that the activity [of the Entente Cordiale] will be exhausted through this settlement, if it is not enlarged, if it is not transformed,⁶³

that is, if it does not acquire the precise modalities of a treaty of alliance.

The French public had been misled in regard to the origins of the Entente Cordiale. They thought that it originated in the minds of French statesmen, that it was a French diplomatic coup. Not at all, Hanotaux argued. The Entente Cordiale had actually been initiated by Joseph Chamberlain who had first proposed the partition of Morocco to the Germans.⁶⁴ England, whose main concern was to keep "any great European naval power from dominating the African coast opposite Gibraltar,"⁶⁵ had been ready to look for any combination which would guarantee the Straits of Gibraltar. In the end, England had created "a place of 'friction' between France and Germany. Morocco had been the "bait." England had ceded it to France knowing that France would treat with everyone but Germany. They had counted on Morocco as an "apple of discord."⁶⁶ "For ten years, English diplomacy was able to maneuver; she averted, ahead of time, every countermove; she tied to her destiny those who would pay her dearly and would incline the balance toward her"⁶²

Furthermore, the antagonism was increased when "King Edward invented the policy of 'encirclement.'" a "policy of appearance, not of reality."⁶⁸ England, with the unwise complicity of French statesmen, had created an international situation in which Germany tested her encirclement again and again:

The Germanic powers . . . decided to test the strength of resistance of fragile appearance which opposed them. Austria-Hungary moved first; she leaned on the Balkans and annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, not without being assured the complicity of a client of Russia, Bulgaria. Russia was defeated twice, at Sofia and at Belgrade; she was unable to obtain the compensation claimed by her, freedom of the Straits. Poor start for the Triple Entente.⁶⁹

Austria satisfied, Germany occupied herself with her own affairs: she tested England and France at Constantinople, England and Russia in Asia, France and England in Morocco. At Constantinople "Young Turkey" abandoned the Western powers; at the Potsdam meeting Russia consented to a division of influence in Persia and adhered to the Bagdad railway; in Morocco, finally, France was left on the outside to explain herself to Germany.⁷⁰

It had "become more and more evident that the Moroccan affair had been the directing force in world affairs for the last ten years and that England had controlled this motion."⁷¹ In effect, England had occupied the position among the powers as the manager of the equilibrium which Hanotaux coveted for France.

But his response to this admission was not anger with "perfidious Albion," but disgust with French statesmen for their illusions: "the deceived have been those who wanted to deceive themselves. British policy is the most forthright in the world for those who understand it: and, in the actual circumstances, many reasons may explain its evolution."⁷²

In suggesting that the crisis had had some positive outcomes, Hanotaux said that "no action is without efficacy, above all, when it is directed by British genius." England had "gained ten years," while "assuring herself" of "French cooperation on the continent." France herself, at least, had "obtained recognition of her Moroccan protectorate."⁷³

Throughout the crisis Hanotaux continued to support the principle of friendship between England and France. He stated that "no rivalry, no competition present or future separates [the two policies]; on all parts of the globe, the conflicts are resolved." And, he asserted proudly, "I would not deny the benefits of an enterprise in which, it is permissible to say, I energetically collaborated." But, he insisted, "I ask that [French] policy not subordinate, in the part it takes, French interests to the interests of England." France must be first: "Albert Sorel, who fully shared my views on this subject, said to me often with his fine historical competence: 'There has always been an English party in France,' and he added: 'Let us remain French.'" ⁷⁴

For a precarious entry in Morocco, the projected settlement imposes Spain on us as a neighbor in the North, Italy as a neighbor in the East, England and Germany as cooperators in the interior of the country, without speaking, of course, of the development of otherwise dangerous German ambitions in the Congo. We are alone in our vast African domain; we are surrounded there, everywhere, by formidable rivals whose first move may be to group themselves against us. ⁷⁵

But if France were to discover that she had been deserted by her friends, if she were left alone to parry a common danger, then she would "look for something else." ⁷⁶ The hint here was unmistakable. If France were deserted by her friends in Morocco, then France could find a rapprochement with Germany in her own best interests. But Hanotaux was not suggesting a subordination of French to German policy, merely diplomatic cooperation with the Germans vis-à-vis Russia and/or England in conformity with her own interests:

If it were a matter of Germany, I would ask, equally, that France keep her hands free from that side, that she always act according to her duty and her actual and permanent interests, without fearing anything or forgetting anything.⁷⁷

A policy which would be no less disturbing than the other . . . looks in the current circumstances for the point of departure for a Franco-German rapprochement. The danger--the same on both sides--would be to subordinate our activity in the world, employing our value and our resources either for the one or for the other of the two equally exclusive tendencies. If we have to take a position some day, let us make it for ourselves and not for others. We ought to tie our hands only if we obtain in exchange sufficient satisfaction or securities.⁷⁸

Anglo-German Conversations, 1911-1912

Hanotaux thought that an accommodation between England and Germany was a possibility. He warned the French public to:

watch out; between them there are no causes of conflicts on which matters could not be arranged. If we count on the eventuality of an inevitable war, we will wake up some day completely disillusioned.⁷⁹

Without having entered for fourteen years, into the secret of the gods, knowing nothing more than what the whole world knows, I stated, from the very first, that between Germany and England, there is no quarrel that cannot be accommodated.⁸⁰

As to naval armaments, he thought (remarkably) that that question could be left out of the discussion.⁸¹ As to commercial competition, England and Germany were "enriching themselves in a parallel manner."⁸² As to common interests, they would both be interested in parrying the threat of international socialism, in the future of the Portuguese colonies, in railways in the Belgian Congo, and possibly, in the Bagdad railway.⁸³ All in all he thought that if his "conjectures" were confirmed that they could be summed up in a "simple formula," that "England would divert, as far as possible, the

German effort from Asia to Africa." If this happened then the Germanic weight would press on France. "The March to the West" would be substituted for the "March to the East."²⁴

Characteristically, Hanotaux did not reproach the English for their conversations with the Germans. In fact, in regard to the very important matter of peace, their move was constructive. "In trying to consolidate peace, the English ministers have filled, in conscience, the first of their duties towards their country and, I add, toward the world." Sir Edward Grey had declared that improved Anglo-German relations are not incompatible with England's friendship with other powers.⁸⁵ Hanotaux believed that this would have been evident even if it had not been said because "England has diplomatic authority only if she plays both games at once. She will not be imprudent enough to turn her back on France and put herself at the mercy of Germany."⁸⁶

The French public is accustomed to the idea that in the case of a European war English reinforcements would be decisive. They count on the unexpected arrival of British regiments either at Hamburg on the rear of the German armies, or in Belgium on their flank, or in Champagne in order to protect Paris. They willingly repeat the statement attributed to I know not which English minister: "Our frontier is on the Vosges." It is not some tactician of the living room who has made the "redcoats" intervene on his game board. More than once, in the deliberations of our government, such eventualities have, it appears, been seen. By dint of hearing the same story, they end up believing it. Without insisting, henceforth, I will not cease repeating that the beginning of wisdom is not to count on others.⁸⁷

Poincaré Comes to Power

After many years of waiting in the wings, of remaining aloof from political strife, avoiding duty in the successive cabinets, and abstaining on controversial legislation, Raymond Poincaré, who had nevertheless acquired a national reputation for strength of character, energy, intellectual gifts, and national fervor, became Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on January 14, 1912. Frenchmen wanted a strong leader who would stand up to the Germans and work for peace.

Hanotaux, of course, was pleased. Second Morocco, he thought, marked the culmination of the false orientation of French policy represented by the Mediterranean ententes. Consequently, this was a difficult but opportune time for Poincaré to take responsibility, to try to reassert the natural role of France in Europe and seek peace through the European Concert. Many years later, in his biography of Poincaré, Hanotaux suggested that "with the intellectual penetration and foresight which were his magistral gifts he saw in complete clarity the danger and difficulty of maneuver."⁸⁸

On January 13, 1912, the day before Poincaré formed his cabinet, Hanotaux published an article in which he deplored the discontinuity of French policy caused by the rapid turnover of ministers at the Quai d'Orsay and suggested that what was needed was

to take a manly look at things, to know exactly where our rights are, our commitments, our possibilities, and when everything has been carefully ventilated, to inform the country of the situation, to make, if they have a place, the necessary sacrifices and conclude⁸⁹

In the same article he asked that French policy after being "enclosed in some sense" in the Moroccan affair for many years "feel itself freed."

If the combinations which claim the future are extended, enlarged, applied to new eventualities which it is now easy to foresee, like the Eastern complications, the Mediterranean complications, then France could be ready for new conversations. Time marches on. Destiny does not turn its eyes to the past, but to the future. Consequently, if they wish to talk, let us talk, if they wish to treat, let us treat. But let us treat firmly this time⁹⁰

The Friendship of Hanotaux and Poincaré

In his short, intimate biography of Poincaré, Hanotaux recalls that "it was fifty years ago that I met Poincare and for fifty years we have been friends."⁹¹

The friendship began in about 1877, when Poincaré, who was seven years younger than Hanotaux, was a student at the École de Droit. Among others who dined together frequently at Laveur's, a popular meeting place for students, were Henri Poincaré, Raymond's cousin, who would become the foremost mathematician of his generation, and Alexandre Millerand, himself a future President of the Republic.⁹² Hanotaux had finished his work at the École des Chartes and had been placed in charge of his seminar in the sources of modern history at the École des Hautes-Études, and was working on Richelieu.⁹³

Aside from Hanotaux and Millerand, Poincaré had few close personal friends. Fernand Payen, a biographer, felt that he was "always a little dry, distant, and authoritative: familiarity of tone, an easing up of manners, were not his way,"⁹⁴ the kind way of saying that he was something of a cold fish. Perhaps it took the

older, more open and ebullient Hanotaux, who appears to have always had friends in abundance, to reach the young self-isolated Poincaré. Be that as it may, the friendship is entirely understandable.

Both came from the Franco-German frontier. Both were passionate nationalists, committed to the recovery of the grandeur of France. They were much alike in intelligence and talent, in a mastery of detail and procedure, in a love for rational discourse. They were surely two of the most promising young men in France, as indeed were Millerand and Henri Poincaré.

But Poincaré developed into a masterful politician while Hanotaux did not. Although Poincaré fashioned a public reputation for high principles and irreproachable character, he was much more ready to make the compromises necessary for personal political success than was Hanotaux. For example, in 1912-1913 Poincaré spoke as a "rigid and uncompromising republican" but broke a promise when he sought right wing political support to reach the presidency.⁹⁵ Hanotaux himself complained that his friend lacked "firm political principles."⁹⁶

During the years when Hanotaux was Foreign Minister, Poincaré also served in the cabinets as Minister of Finance or Minister of Public Instruction. Hanotaux, Poincaré, Louis Barthou, and others were "members of the déjeuner des neufs, a dining club of political friends. Poincaré was particularly close to Hanotaux."⁹⁷

Hanotaux and Poincaré cooperated for many years in efforts to strengthen the principle of executive leadership in the government of the Third Republic. Many Frenchmen were perennially concerned with

the frequent turnover of the ministries, the figurehead nature of the presidency, the uncertainty and lack of direction which these weaknesses imparted to policy, and with how this all looked to other countries. Even before he had become Foreign Minister, Hanotaux had confided to his "Carnets" (May 24, 1894) that

The Parliamentary regime, such as it is practiced among us since the institution of the Republic, has done its time. It is impossible to suppose that a great country can keep its rank and handle its affairs while changing ministers every six months. Unfortunately, it is to be feared that the necessary modifications will be produced, as always, only as a result of grave exterior crises.⁹⁸

Roughly, there were two directions to go in order to strengthen executive leadership in the Third Republic. Either the turnover of ministries could be reduced to provide continuity of persons or the presidency could be transformed into a meaningful office. Success in the first direction could mean the British system with its strong parliamentary executive. Success in the second could mean (at least this is what Hanotaux and Poincaré counted on in 1912-1913) a presidency with the moral authority and supervisory leverage (achieved through the reassertion of the power of dissolution) which would impart direction and continuity to the parliamentary system. By constitutional amendment it could even mean an American style presidency.

Working together, Hanotaux and Poincaré tried each of these directions at different periods. In 1896, Hanotaux encouraged Poincaré to go to the country with a series of speeches with the purpose of enlisting public opinion in the task of strengthening and reforming the Parliamentary system.⁹⁹ Around 1900 they sought, along

with Paul Deschanel, Alexandre Ribot, and others to reduce the turnover of ministries by supporting the formation of a federation of republican parties of the center, the Democratic Republican Alliance. Although this group was formed, it proved to be too weak and undisciplined to attain its purpose.¹⁰⁰

In September 1912, Hanotaux was the first leader of opinion to suggest publicly that Poincaré would make an outstanding president.¹⁰¹ He argued at that time that the presidency had the necessary powers which, if they were asserted, would revive the office, and that "all that was needed was a worthy president to exercise them."¹⁰² Included among the powers was the important option of dissolving the Parliament, which had not been exercised since McMahon had used in it 1877, precipitating the "Seize Mai" crisis.¹⁰³

In February 1913, Hanotaux expressed his high hopes in the new president:

Among the men of his generation he is raised to the first rank because he really is the first. . . . He will be the high counselor of his ministers; the authority which he will exercise on them will be accepted, because he will act with sincerity and wisdom. . . .¹⁰⁴

In Poincaré's ascension to power in 1913, Hanotaux found hope for new strength, wisdom, and continuity in the government of France, for the reassertion of France's traditional role in international affairs, and for peace. In spite of immense disappointments along the way, Poincaré remained at the center of Hanotaux's hopes down to the beginning of the First World War.

Conclusion

Hanotaux believed that the Second Moroccan Crisis had revealed the failures of both French and German statesmanship. In the bitter aftermath of the crisis he saw enlarged dangers of world conflict. But he was not totally disillusioned with Germany. He did not believe that war was inevitable.

The crisis appears to have stirred him to as much antipathy toward England as toward Germany. He blamed France's predicament vis-à-vis Germany on England, on the ensnarement of France in the Mediterranean ententes. He blamed Joseph Chamberlain for initiating the Entente Cordiale (which is not to say that he did not blame Delcassé for going along). He blamed Edward VII for the policy of encirclement. He failed fully to appreciate the Mansion House Speech as evidence of English support for France. His contention that England should have sent a warship to keep the Panther company at Agadir seems an unrealistic quibble, his concern at one point that France's friends and enemies would divide her African claims among themselves, presents a momentary flash of paranoia.

Considering his admission of the weakness of France's juridical position in Morocco, Hanotaux was, perhaps, more surprised than he really should have been by Germany's reaction to the occupation of Fez. He may also be faulted for pinning too much retrospectively on the Potsdam conversations as an unexploited opportunity for avoiding Second Morocco altogether, and for overestimating the importance of the "strategic crossroads" in Africa and, hence, the value of the disputed Congo territories.

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CHAPTER VII: FOOTNOTES

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⁸Ibid., p. 41.

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⁴⁰Hanotaux, "La négociation franco-allemande: Que vaut l'accord?" p. 397.

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⁴⁶Ibid., p. 397.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Hanotaux, "Conclusion: L'Angleterre, l'Allemagne et la France," p. 435.

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⁵⁰Hanotaux, "La négociation franco-allemande: Que vaut l'accord?" p. 385.

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⁷⁶Ibid., p. 380.

⁷⁷Hanotaux, "La négociation franco-allemande: L'entente cordiale et l'affaire marocaine," p. 404.

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⁷⁹Hanotaux, "Conclusion: L'Angleterre, l'Allemagne et la France," p. 429.

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⁹⁰Ibid., p. 157.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE EASTERN CRISIS, THE ARMED PEACE, AND THE THE FAILURE OF THE STATESMEN, 1912-1913

The Italo-Turkish War

The articles which eventually were to be collected in the second series of Études diplomatiques began to be published in the spring and summer of 1912. At that time, Hanotaux was preoccupied with the Italo-Turkish War, which he perceived as a serious threat to the equilibrium, especially in the Mediterranean.¹

On September 29, 1911 Italy had declared war on Turkey and in the following days and weeks had landed an expeditionary force in piecemeal fashion in and around Tripoli, the object of her aggressive policy. Although Italy had been preparing the way diplomatically for this move for many years by obtaining the acquiescence of one power after another, in the event she acted precipitously, irritating her allies and potential adversaries alike, the only exception being Russia, which, as a result of the recent Racconigi Agreement, gave Italy passive support. Further, Italy soon found herself in a box. Her military preparations had been almost comically inadequate, her first military moves weak and strategically unsound. This encouraged the Turks and Arabs to resist. A network of armed Arab bands emerged, whose resistance was stiffened by religious fanaticism. Guns were smuggled in with the connivance of the French. Before long the

Italian expeditionary force had swollen to 100,000 men, but victory eluded the Italians.²

Growing desperate to end the war and to force Turkey to accept the outright annexation of Libya, the Italians turned their attention to naval action to put pressure on the Turks. In April and May, 1912, Italy occupied the Turkish held Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean. In July some Italian torpedo boats raided the Dardanelles. But even these moves, carried out in the face of increasing pressure from the Great Powers, did not end the war, because Italy was prevented, in the end, from striking Turkey in a vital spot.³ Turkey concluded peace with Italy only when she was forced to by her war with the Balkan League.

In his commentary on the Italo-Turkish War, Hanotaux was mainly concerned with its impact upon the European and Mediterranean equilibrium and the closely connected problem of its impact on Islam. He did not regard the Italian move against Tripoli as an exact analogy to France's recent move into Morocco. Although he would have liked to have seen matters develop more slowly and naturally in Morocco, he did believe, in the end, that France had marched on Fez out of necessity, while the Italians had "acted like Germans by trying to force the hand of events."⁴

He was afraid that what Italy was doing would set off a virtual free-for-all among all the interested parties in the Mediterranean: "It is with the Islamic powers and among all the Islamic powers, it is with all the Mediterranean powers and among all the Mediterranean powers that the struggle is henceforth engaged."⁵ He

was afraid that with the coming of the Italo-Turkish War that "the Mediterranean questions suddenly passed to the first plane and the unforeseen growth of the Austrian and Italian fleets made the balance tip to the side of the Triple Alliance."⁶ He was afraid that this shift in the balance of power would end with the confinement of France to the Western Mediterranean, that she would lose her authority and liberty in the East.⁷

He was most afraid that Italy's invasion of Tripoli might lead to a general uprising of Islam which would seriously endanger France's possessions in North Africa. "The Islamic faith has been awakened. Italy has cracked the Aeolian bottle and unchained the tempests, so much the worse for her, so much the worse for us."⁸ He felt the precariousness of the French position and believed that the European powers had a common interest in learning how to manage Islam and in preparing its rightful place for the future.⁹ He reiterated the plea he had made in La paix latine almost ten years earlier against a crusade, a war of extermination against Islam, which he felt would leave in "Mediterranean souls and through them, in the entire world, the germ of an implacable and infinite hostility."¹⁰ He was convinced that European superiority of "discipline, intellectual preparation and arms" was not enough. "Numbers, courage, abnegation, religious faith, are also forces."¹¹

But France could play a leading role in working for peace and harmony with Islam. By virtue of her North African possessions, she was

a great Moslem power. . . . Having known how to bring to our Moslem populations and to obtain from them, at the price of long and persevering sacrifices, a kind of security and mutual comprehension, we can only continue to develop these first seeds, for the greater good of general harmony and peace.¹²

Hanotaux did not exonerate France from responsibility for the difficult situation confronting her in the Mediterranean. Again, he reiterated the complaint that he made during the Moroccan crisis, that the Mediterranean ententes had restricted French action.

As to France she sees the consequences unfold of those Mediterranean ententes which she underwrote ten years ago. From Fez to Tangiers to Madrid a net hems us in, which also is knotted at Tunis, Algeria, and in the oases of the Sahara. We are obliged to stand to arms in our Islamic possessions while our secular interests call us elsewhere. The East calls us, but the West holds us.¹³

Even more emphatically he warned:

The temerity of Italian and of non-Italian politicians appears, who, while precipitating Mediterranean events, have disposed by their secret treaties of the African and Mediterranean equilibrium. They do not touch with impunity that which touches the whole world. The conventions of 1904-1905 will have the most far reaching repercussions on the history of the world.¹⁴

He felt that an international conference to settle the Italo-Turkish War would be pointless. At the time of the Bosnian Crisis, the "prospect of a conference ran into the obstacle of the resolutions, declared by Austria-Hungary, of not allowing discussion of the seizure of the two provinces. . . ." Italy "would begin by setting aside any debate on Tripoli and, without doubt, some of the points seized in the Aegean Islands." "The occupation of Egypt by England is a poor example, but an excellent precedent."¹⁵

If such a conference should be held he did not want France to take the leadership. He preferred

to leave to others the responsibility of convoking it and presiding over it. Bismarck handled these international deliberations In spite of all his authority he saw more than once, at the Congress of Berlin, the destiny of Europe slide from his hands. And who, in contemporary Europe, has the ascendancy, the tact, the spirit of decision of a Bismarck?

Besides, Bismarck did not care for conferences unless the decisions were "debated and underwritten in advance by all the partners."¹⁶

In spite of his rejection of the conference, Hanotaux deplored the absence of the European Concert. For many years, from the Congress of Berlin until around 1902, the European powers had worked together with enough harmony to guarantee peace and stability.

If a power threatened the general European order, then the others

joined elbows, closed ranks, and stopped it to the point where order was re-established; exchanges of views were made from cabinet to cabinet in the sentiment that they were examining [an issue] in complete security, according to the principle which guided each and all--peace by means of equilibrium.

None of the powers "dared unmask ambitions too risky or too adventuresome for fear of being brought back a little rudely to respect proprieties mutually consented to and carefully controlled."

Austria-Hungary was content with administering Bosnia-Herzegovina.

France watched over Morocco without caring to precipitate events.

Italy did not formulate any claims on Tripoli.¹⁷

This relatively stable and harmonious situation began to break down around 1902 when the powers "began to deliberate on the famous 'Mediterranean ententes.'" This "troubled the general

discipline" and divided Europe into "two groupings, the 'ententes' and the 'alliances.'" This led certain powers to assert themselves dangerously. This led in turn to "Tangiers, Algeciras, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Rif, Agadir, Tripoli." At the same time, the "contradictory and incoherent" quality of the "rival combinations" allowed "to float outside the conventional groupings, a power like Italy, which came, one day, to follow her own bent."¹⁸

The First Balkan War

As the Italo-Turkish War was ending in negotiations the Balkan War began. The First Balkan War broke out in October 1912. Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, in spite of their own bitter rivalries, succeeded in banding together long enough to inflict a crushing military defeat on the Turks. When the dust began to settle a few weeks after the opening of hostilities, all the Turks had left in Turkey-in-Europe was Constantinople, whose outer ring of fortresses remained under heavy pressure from the Bulgars, and the other beseiged garrisons at Adrianople, Janina, and Scutari. The status quo had been most decidedly upset. When the war began, most of Europe expected the Turks to win.

The success of the Balkan states had been made possible by Russia which had contrived to measure her influence among them by fostering the formation of the so-called Balkan League. The agreement which was the key to this loose knit combination was the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance, which was worked out with the help of the Russians. Russia made the mistake of thinking that she could control her proteges.

She had thought that the League was directed against Austria and that it did not intend to precipitate a war against Turkey. She had even reserved the right to veto any aggressive action by the League. In any case, as the war drew near, she was overwhelmed with second thoughts. Indeed, the war quickly confronted her with the prospect of a Bulgarian occupation of Constantinople which, above everything else, she coveted for herself.

During the summer and early fall of 1912 Hanotaux was aware that a precipitous move by one of the Balkan states would create a serious crisis for Europe.¹⁹ He believed that the status quo must be maintained. He was afraid that if the little states seized Salonika, Austria-Hungary would intervene;²⁰ or if they seized Constantinople, Russia would intervene. The fundamental question from the standpoint of the Great Powers was the Mediterranean question:

As important as the territorial questions in the Balkans may be, they remain on the second plane, being localized in some sense in a corner of Europe. . . . But the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Straits, the great ports, like the Sude, Smyrna, and Salonika, that is something else.²¹

As to Turkey herself, Hanotaux could not have cared less about her fate except insofar as her demise would affect the interests and relationships of the Great Powers. Turkey had never been anything more than an armed camp. It had become a "decomposing corpse," spreading disease in Europe.²² The Turks' diplomatic skill had "consisted in opposing to each other European greeds: the sick man defended himself by endlessly modifying the clauses of his will."²³

At the beginning of the First Balkan War Hanotaux published two articles in which he presented his views on the implications of

the impending explosion for Europe and the probable courses of action of the several Great Powers. His greatest worry stemmed from the fact that he sensed that the statesmen of Europe were in no way masters of the events which were unfolding:

If there is, beyond any intelligence and particular good faith, a governing will, it is that of events: if there is a superior decision it is that of destiny. At certain hours, one senses that humanity plays its destiny blindly with cards which it does not dare to turn up. We are at such an hour.²⁴

He felt that the Balkan League had been directed against both Austria-Hungary and Turkey, but that it would elect to strike against Turkey first.²⁵

He thought that Germany and Austria were leaning with all their weight on the Balkans."²⁶ Their policy was "Turkish" in the sense that they intended to conserve for themselves "the fat morsel which Turkey still offered to European conquest in Europe and Asia."²⁷

Germany and Austria-Hungary were determined to keep the Russians out of Constantinople. Germany, he felt, was "tied to Austria-Hungary" and that "she would follow her to the end: that must be admitted as a European axiom."²⁸ He did not believe, however, that the two powers were "coldly resolving to push things to the extreme."

Bismarck had always been "a partisan of temporizing, and his pupils could not ask for better than to stick to his method." But they were "not the Masters of events"²⁹

Hanotaux felt that Russia and England were ultimately responsible for the Germanic pressure in the Balkans, Russia because she had allowed France to be crushed in 1870 and England because she

had united with Germany and Austria-Hungary against Slavism in 1870 and because she had given birth to "the ambitions of Austria-Hungary on the subject of Bosnia-Herzegovina."³⁰

Localization of the war would depend on Austria and Russia, the Great Powers most directly involved. They would have to find the formula of agreement for which they had been vainly searching. Much would depend on whether or not Germany and England would "employ their authority to appease and not envenom the conflict."³¹

Hanotaux was very uncertain about what Germany and England might do. They had not as yet made themselves clear: "of all the powers, these two, the great silent ones, Germany and England, preoccupy me the most. Is the current crisis going to lead them to measure each other or to hear each other's voices?" In any case, a "general spirit of harmony between the two choir masters is necessary; in a word, it is necessary, in the midst of conflict, to reconstitute the European Concert."³²

Hanotaux discerned what he believed to be a durable solution to the threat to peace posed by the impending war, a solution which would do much to reduce the tension among the Great Powers. This solution could be found in an agreement between Russia and England on the Straits: "If they should see how to come to an agreement, they would be prepared to bring Europe's suffering to a precious and durable appeasement. By their harmony and their union a calm would be produced" Russia's need to break out of the Black Sea would no longer be left to "the destiny of arms."³³

To be successful, however, such a solution would have to be worked out, not simply between Russia and England by bilateral agreement, but with the cooperation of the other Great Powers. In short, the spirit of the European Concert was called for: "The question of the Straits, that is the nub. What is England's aim? Will she have, and will the cabinets have with her, the wisdom, the flexibility to settle it, or will they leave it to the destiny of arms to settle it?"³⁴

What will be the role of France in these conditions? She is "an agent of conciliation and peace. If it is a matter of formulas to disentangle, of nuances to define, of misunderstandings to dissipate it is the genius of our race to employ itself successfully in these matters. In this, M. Poincaré will not be lacking" ³⁵

Underlying Hanotaux's advocacy of Anglo-Russian agreement on the Straits were certain dire alternatives which must have presented themselves to him. First, there was his perennial fear of an Anglo-German rapprochement. The Choir Masters might indeed listen to each other's voices. If Russia should threaten intervention in the Balkans to save her little Slavic sisters from a Turkish victory, or if, on the other hand, she should threaten intervention at Constantinople because that city had fallen to those same little sisters, might not the traditional English fears of the Slavic specter be reactivated and might she not welcome a rapprochement with Germany to counter it?³⁶

In an article published in Figaro a few days after the outbreak of the war (October 19), "Les puissances et la guerre,"

Hanotaux expressed encouragement at the restraint which the Great Powers were showing. He was pleased with the Italo-Turkish peace because it meant that Italy had returned to the "concert" and reaffirmed the guarantee of Ottoman integrity, and that now all the Great Powers were outside the conflict. He detected dissensions in both the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, between Austro-Hungarian and Italian ambitions in Albania and along the road to Salonika, and between Russia and England because England had "not hidden her intentions not to abandon the Sultan." In the end, everything would "have to come before the Areopagus of the powers," but a conference would now be premature.³⁷

By November 8, 1912, when Hanotaux's next article was published, the Turks had been decisively defeated and were at the mercy of their adversaries. The status quo had been destroyed. There was now a "new order." He was not displeased that Bulgaria appeared to be the principal heir to Turkey-in-Europe and the major force in this new order.³⁸

He was completely opposed to France serving as mediator between the Balkan states and Turkey on behalf of the other powers. He understood that such a suggestion had emanated from the Triple Alliance. As far as he was concerned the English could try first. France had "no particular reason to throw herself in the first rank into that difficult *melée*" She had done what she could to keep the peace, but the war had come and it was best for her to wait until its end, to remain "disinterested," to refuse "dangerous invitations" to assume the responsibilities without compensation.³⁹

In his next article "Vers l'entente," published in Revue hebdomadaire on November 16, 1912, Hanotaux set forth for the first time the formula which he felt expressed the correct policy of the Great Powers toward the Balkans. "The formula 'The Balkans to the Balkan peoples' is the most simple of all. They have conquered their independence."⁴⁰ In this article, which was generally optimistic, he indicated his belief that a "European spirit" existed: "the opinions of the peoples and the tendencies of the governments are converging towards solutions which, if no accident or act of desperation comes to interrupt the normal march of things, ought to lead us to our new understanding." The mission of diplomatic activity was "the founding of a new Europe."⁴¹ First let the "Balkan states be masters of the destinies of the peninsula." Then, the Great Powers must reach a settlement. The conciliatory dispositions of the peoples and governments "must find a day and a terrain on which to be manifested."⁴²

Hanotaux's subsequent article was published under the title "Les Balkans aux Balkaniques." It appeared on November 22, 1912 in Figaro. In this article he deplored the intervention of the Great Powers in the Balkans in violation of the principle "the Balkans to the Balkan peoples." The old policy had again taken the field with a naval intervention at Constantinople and the intervention of the Triple Alliance at Belgrade on behalf of Albania.⁴³ Hanotaux felt that such actions rested "on an illusion . . . that a diplomatic 'Europe' really existed, a Europe having a plan of conduct, some views for the well being, for the general interest." Such a Europe

did not exist. There was only "an European state of mind, an 'opinion' both peaceful and desirous of frank and prompt solutions; but that general disposition . . . had still not created its international organ, and the routine diplomacy . . . could not detach itself from the old programs"44

In spite of the intervention at Constantinople and Belgrade, Europe still had a choice: "either to pursue the errors which have failed in the East and the Far East and intervene in order to lengthen the quarrels under the pretext of appeasing them . . . or to aid in the birth of the young nations" If the Triple Entente would return immediately to a policy of "disinterestedness" this "would have a force of propaganda, of . . . contagion . . . , which rapidly, would put the other powers in the impossibility of holding to a narrow system of mediocre egoisms and shortsighted ambitions." This would open the way to a functioning of the Concert of Europe, to "large and definitive settlements." "The the most delicate questions, unsolvable in discord, like the question of the Straits and even that of Albania, could be approached in a true spirit of pacification and concord."45

Hanotaux thought that the European dilemma of either intervening futilely and perniciously in the Balkans or of serving as midwife in the birth of young nations was being posed not only for the Balkans but for the whole Ottoman Empire, that the dilemma did not "exclude the Islamic peoples." The Ottoman Empire was collapsing in Europe. Its collapse in Asia would follow.

Re-establishing on their origins, stimulated by the example of neighboring peoples, they [the Islamic peoples of the Ottoman Empire] would be quite different if they felt more stability before them: Turkey, Syria, Arabia, they are not closed to progress, if one will only give them the leisure to work in peace for their independent development.⁴⁶

Hanotaux wanted the Great Powers to reach a general settlement of the Eastern Question. What he did not want was their military or diplomatic intervention in the Balkan War. Above all, he did not want them to convene a conference which would imposed conditions of peace on the Balkans, that is, he did not want a "Congress of Berlin."⁴⁷ He hoped that they would align their policy with the pacific spirit of European opinion and take up what appeared to be an exceptional opportunity to reach a settlement among themselves. The status quo had been broken. Turkey was tottering on her last legs. The Balkan states were vigorously asserting their independence. The independent spirit of Islam had just manifested itself in its tenacious defense of Tripoli against the Italians. The time had come for the Great Powers to compose their differences, leave the Balkans to the Balkan peoples, determine the future of Asiatic Turkey and, in effect, reach an accommodation with Islam.

Hanotaux would have violated a principle of diplomacy if he had offered a blueprint for this settlement in advance. This settlement could be reached only through complex negotiations among the powers, and these negotiations would have to reach solutions before any Congress could convene. Nevertheless, because it is important in understanding him, an attempt should be made to discern his thinking as it pertains to this settlement.

On the one hand, Hanotaux was not prepared to condone a scramble for the spoils in Asiatic Turkey. The region was not a carcass to be dismembered by the Great Powers in a spirit of hostility and greed. He expressed the fear that the Great Powers were engaged in just such an arbitrary and pernicious division of the region, that they were dividing Asiatic Turkey into "spheres of influence."⁴⁸ Moreover, he indicated again and again that the aspirations of the Eastern peoples, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, and others, ought to be nurtured and respected.

But, on the other hand, when Hanotaux completed La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe, he would write in the preface that "Our generation had carefully kept the vast Eastern domain to serve as compensations when the horn would sound for the foreseen general liquidation. We transmitted this heritage and these expectations to our successors. How could we let the opportunity slip away?"⁴⁹

Was Hanotaux guilty of contradicting himself? Was he saying one thing in one breath and the opposite in the next? Was he arguing in one context for the independence of the Eastern peoples and in the next that the division of their territories would settle the European quarrels?

These apparently contradictory positions were reconciled by the two radically different kinds of diplomatic climates in which the settlement might be worked out and in which the relationships of the Europeans with the native peoples defined. One alternative was the spirit of greed and suspicion which Hanotaux saw as the prevailing mood in the diplomatic relations among the powers, the other was the

spirit of concert, of cooperation for the general good, which he hoped would come to prevail. In the first, the Great Powers could be seen as wolves, snarling at one another over the prey, obviously unconcerned for the prey's well-being; in the latter, they could be seen as a panel of benign tutors, friendly with each other, reaping certain benefits to be sure, and applying discipline whenever necessary--but sincerely interested in the independent development of their charges.

What would be the "compensations" for the Great Powers? How does the very idea of "compensations" square with Hanotaux's concerns for the independent development of the native peoples?

France had no territorial interests,⁵⁰ but she had important economic and cultural interests. These would have to be protected as would similar interests of each of the other powers. Russia would have to have her right to send warships through the Straits recognized, although she would not necessarily have her way at Constantinople. British strategic interests at Suez and the Persian Gulf would have to be protected. An acceptable balance of power would have to emerge in the Mediterranean.

France's interests were in Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean. She had no territorial ambitions in either the Balkans or Asiatic Turkey. As to the Balkans, she would win the gratitude of the Balkan peoples by supporting their aspirations for independence. The independent Balkan states would, if they worked together, provide an effective counterweight to the immense weight of the Germanic powers upon the region.⁵¹ For France, the fostering of a

counterweight would be to continue a policy going back to Francis I. Through her capital market and her cultural influence France would "render to them such services that they would become habituated to turning to" France. Their need for more money would guarantee that they would not repudiate their shares of the old Turkish loans. They would "neglect no means to instruct themselves: they have need of European culture and in particular of French culture"52

As to Asiatic Turkey, French interests were similar. National aspirations should be supported. Hanotaux felt that "a colonial extension . . . would be . . . a political error of incalculable consequences," that it would expose France to "implacable hatreds."⁵³ French capital and French culture would guarantee French influence, as would the special capacity of the French to get along with Islam. The traditions of the "Catholic protectorate" were important. This had been neglected in recent years because of the intense anti-clericalism which had dominated French political life; but Hanotaux felt that it should be valued "not as an instrument more or less efficacious, for religious propaganda, but as a means of civilization and influence."⁵⁴

Hanotaux certainly hoped that the settlement would be principally a French achievement, that France would perform her natural role of manager of the European equilibrium and arbiter of peace. Such a settlement arrived at in such a way, would not only reduce the antagonisms and recover tranquility among the Greater Powers, but it would go a long way toward establishing the diplomatic ascendancy of France in Europe, protect French interests, and

enhance French influence in the Mediterranean, in the Balkans, and throughout Asiatic Turkey; and it would pacify Islam. It would be the realization of Hanotaux's dream of a "Latin Peace." It would be a triumph, not so much of French military or economic power, as of French genius and French civilization.

On November 1, 1912, Hanotaux confided his hopes and his doubts to his "Carnets":

A word about my impressions on the subject of the Balkan War. I feel that we could turn it to account in order to raise France and place her at her rank in Europe. But a great spirit of risk and sacrifice would be necessary. Is the nation capable of it? . . ."⁵⁵

But he was disappointed. A year later, on November 7, 1913, he wrote that

French diplomacy, conscious of its situation and its resources, would have had a unique opportunity to found in Europe and the world a finished balance and a definitive unity. The disappearance of Turkey could have furnished the necessary compensations in order to resolve all the European quarrels⁵⁶

The Sickness of Contemporary Europe

Throughout most of 1912 and 1913 Hanotaux perceived a worsening of an already poor international situation. In February 1913, as the first Balkan War was flaring up again after the Young Turk coup d'etat and the London negotiations were collapsing, he wrote: "The circumstances, so serious already in 1912, are worse in 1913. In 1912, one could foresee a crisis in the Balkans; in 1913 one is in the presence of a catastrophe, . . . European peace is more exposed than it was then."⁵⁷ In June 1913, in his article "La paix de Londres. Est-ce la paix?" he lamented the intervention of the

Great Powers in the Balkans, criticized their work as prologue to further conflicts, and deplored the poisoning effects which the extended negotiations had injected into the Balkan situation.⁵⁸

The Treaty of Bucharest (August 10) did not clear the air. Throughout the fall of 1913, Hanotaux felt that the "diplomatic balance appeared positively mad," that "things were at their worst."⁵⁹

This situation brightened slightly in December 1913. At that time, England emerged from what had been to Hanotaux a worrisome period of "evasiveness" and of flirtation with Germany, and presented certain propositions to the Great Powers on Albania and the Aegean Islands, a move which he interpreted as a re-affirmation of the Triple Entente. At the same time, Germany and Russia drew abruptly apart over the appointment of the Prussian general, Liman von Sanders, as the commander of the model Turkish army corps at Constantinople.⁶⁰

But in February 1914, Hanotaux concluded La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe with an ominous though vague warning of even worse to come:

The drama is only in its first act: the others are going to unfold logically; we have had the Eastern Crisis, we will have the Mediterranean Crisis, and then, without doubt, the European Crisis. And, each time, France will be put on the spot. She will run great risks; but, if her leaders know how to guide her according to the law of her history and the force of her situation, she will find her hour.⁶¹

Accutely sensitive to a sickness of the European order, Hanotaux was more successful in evoking the symptoms of the malady than in presenting its causes. At a time when events were "in some way, escaping the will of diplomats and statesmen," he felt that

"panchauvinism reigns; the blind passions which it engenders are most formidable." He wondered "will the tableau be pushed into the night? . . . As to the future consequences, none can foresee them." As to himself, he would not "celebrate pacifism to the death; but, in the presence of danger, . . . would prefer to drink in that exaggeration than in the contrary excess."⁶²

He detected a dangerous lack of realism in the aspirations of the Great Powers. The governments were unwilling "to resign themselves to some sacrifices, to renounce not realities but dreams, and that perhaps is the most difficult! Each of the European megalomania's looks for its pathway,"⁶³ and in opposing each other they condemn themselves to infinite danger and finally to impotence.

He sensed that the disorder was partly psychological and that the prognosis was in doubt:

The European body is sick; but can't we add to its physiological miseries, too real, the quite modern aggravation of a sort of nervous disorder. A feverish state feeds on over excitement and a general irritation which could, either turn to worse attacks, or resolve itself in a sudden detente.⁶⁴

He suggested that the "romanticism of the 19th century has willed us sicknesses: will the pragmatism and realism of the 20th century cure them? Who will reintegrate into the world the sentiment of equity and order?"⁶⁵

He also felt that Europe was trapped in the world wide net of her own imperialism, that Europe was caught

in a unique phase of world history, when the Eastern Question and the Far Eastern Question are posed simultaneously . . . a prodigious enlargement of international debates. The planet has been shaken in some way by the policy of colonial expansion, and Europe, after having taken it up, can no longer renounce it. She must continue whatever it costs right to the end.⁶⁶

Hanotaux did not regard nationalism in itself as a root cause of Europe's sickness. His own nationalism was not intrinsically chauvinistic. For all his obsession with the greatness of French civilization and his aspirations for the ascendancy of France, he was tolerant of other nationalisms. His nationalism was, in fact, rooted in the Republican and Bonapartist traditions of the mid-nineteenth century which were sympathetic to the aspirations of the other European peoples: Poles, Rumanians, Italians, and even Germans. It was a nationalism, to use Gaullist terminology, which dreamed of a peaceful and harmonious "Europe of the Fatherlands." For Hanotaux, ". . . nationalism is not a regression! The nation is the most perfect organism invented up to now to sustain and perfect the society of man. . . . Nations exist; they have been, for a long time the instruments of war; they could become, they should become the instruments of peace."⁶⁷

Hanotaux did recognize, however, that one of the most serious problems besetting Europe and making everything more difficult and dangerous was a spirit of virulent and imperialistic nationalism. "It is the excitement of nationalism pushed to the point of explosion; it is the bellicose spirit of races seeking expansion; it is the hatred of a neighbor considered as an obstacle; . . . this feeling, as old as the world, is called imperialism today."⁶⁸

As he looked at contemporary Europe, Hanotaux was perplexed by the contradictions that he saw. On the one hand, there were the signs of robust health which seemed to call for an optimistic attitude. On the other hand, there were the symptoms of a terminal

illness, which seemed to call for the darkest pessimism. When he looked at the marvelous prosperity of Europe, which existed side by side with the protracted international crises and crushing burden of armaments, he confessed his perplexity:

Does one not perceive one of the symptoms of a state which almost escapes diagnosis, in the contradictions which dramatize, in some way, the economic lives of the peoples. Everywhere the advances are incessant and unprecedented: Germany grows richer, England, so rich, grows richer . . . Russia (in spite of prolonged crisis) increases enormously, her labor, her production, her debt. Everywhere the statistics are rising and passing the most favorable predictions; and this irresistible progress is accomplished in full crisis, while the people complain that the public charges are growing and each appears on the point of succumbing under the weight.

Strange mixture of flourishing health and intolerable illnesses.

These evils, are they real or imaginary?⁶⁹

The Armed Peace

Throughout 1912-1913 Hanotaux deplored the fact that Europe was living in a condition of "armed peace." This armed peace was guided by the principle that "the best way to avoid war is to foresee it and prepare for it."⁷⁰ It was expressed in an unlimited expansion of armaments. In July 1912 Hanotaux wondered how long the game could last: "Are they arming only to frighten each other, or will the hour come when, according to the consecrated phrase, the 'guns will go off on their own?'"⁷¹ In August 1913 he indicated that the Great Powers had been guided through the crisis which terminated with the uncertainties of the Treaty of Bucharest by "the system of armed peace." He added that "the 'armed peace' remains peace; that is all that can be said for it. . . . The system is less onerous perhaps and, in any

case, it is less bloody than war itself. But it resolves nothing; it is without conclusion, without issue, without glory, and without pity."⁷²

Germany was responsible for the arms race. Hanotaux was never the least ambiguous on this point. Prompted by German newspaper attacks against the naval convention which Poincaré had signed in Russia in August 1912, Hanotaux asked rhetorically: "Who started the armaments race, first on land, later on the sea? . . . Who commenced that enveloping maneuver (toward Bagdad and on the high seas) for which the Triple Entente has searched for a counterpart?"⁷³

Hanotaux stoutly supported the Three Year Military Service Law which became the pivotal issue in French politics after Poincaré's assumption of the presidency in February 1913. It remained at the center of public debate until the Chamber of Deputies passed the measure in July and indeed, beyond, because of the diehard opposition of strong forces on the Left. The Three Year Law had the effect of enlarging the standing army by extending two years compulsory service by a year or, in the language of the system, by requiring each "class" of the "contingent" to serve three rather than two years. Aside from certain political advantages accruing to the Right in their perennial struggle with the Left, the reasons behind the legislation were straightforward. Germany had recently expanded her army. The international situation continued to appear uncertain and dangerous. The only way in which France, with her population declining relative to Germany's, could hope, even temporarily, to meet the Germans on equal terms was to extend the length of service.

The army leaders wanted it too because it appeared to accord with their theories of offensive war and their related belief that regulars would be much more valuable than freshly mobilized reservists.⁷⁴

In his arguments on behalf of the Three Year Law, Hanotaux did not entirely condemn the Germans for their enlargement of their armaments. He recognized that the "reconstituted strength of Russia imposed on Germany the necessity of providing more powerfully than ever for her eastern frontier," and that "the defeat of Turkey and the sudden growth of Slavic influence in the Balkans was a subject of preoccupation for the Central Powers." He admitted that the general instability in Europe condemned nations to "redoubled precautions," and that Germany had a right to utilize her power to protect her interests. Finally, he conceded that Germany's military preparations did not reveal any immediate goals. But, he insisted, the Germans "should clearly admit that . . . as it is said in mathematics, the reciprocal is true. Every other power, or, to speak clearly, France has the right . . . to push her precautions to the limit."⁷⁵

In August 1913 he saw the Germans adhering

with a violent faith and an energetic harshness to this system of armed peace, of which they were the inventors, because they judged it most advantageous to their security and their interests. Exposed as they were on their three frontiers, north, east and west, they wanted to prevent war by dint of preparing for it and rendering it so terrible that it became unrealizable

As to Germany's interests, the peace which she sought, contrary to the feelings of her own people was "peace with hegemony." That was why her "military strength, her power to threaten, her power to

intimidate, were always being developed." Germany was "the mistress of armed diplomacy as much as of the armed peace."⁷⁶

Emperor William

When the Germans celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of William II in the early summer of 1913, Hanotaux responded with an article. The Germans, he thought, had a right to be proud of their achievements over the last quarter century, especially their impressive economic and demographic growth.⁷⁷ In the article, he evoked a concentrated impression of what he found most disturbing in the behavior of the Germans and their sovereign.

Germany, militarist and armed to the teeth, "standing, helmet on its head, in the middle of Europe," was "astonishing everyone, disturbing everyone."⁷⁸ Even worse was the uncertainty and ambiguity in the intentions of the Emperor and the Germans on the issue of war or peace.

The policy of the glove of iron or the glove of velvet, which of the two is truly that of the Emperor, that of Germany?

I believe in all sincerity that at the bottom of the soul of William II, as at the bottom of the German soul, this question is posed and remains posed. But doubt persists as to the response⁷⁹

Hanotaux perceived that in evaluating the personality of the Emperor there persisted, "even among his subjects . . . a certain embarrassment," which could

be attributed to a kind of uncertainty and ambiguity existing on the goal which the Emperor had proposed and on the direction which he had imparted to affairs since he mounted the throne. He who would have liked above all to be saluted by the title, "Emperor of Peace," appears above all as the "Emperor of Armaments."⁸⁰

Hanotaux felt that the Emperor's policy was heavily impregnated with Bismarckianism, but because it was not "fully and frankly personal" had created confusion. Over the past quarter century the circumstances had been favorable to his best inclinations. But, Hanotaux wondered, what if the question of war or peace were posed to him "no longer in the leisure of meditation, but the poignant anguish of reality?"⁸¹

In spite of the ambiguity and uncertainty, Hanotaux remained hopeful about William. He found it reassuring that William's role in the various Franco-German crises of recent years had been played at the behest of his ministers and against his personal inclinations⁸² and believed that he had many fine personal qualities, that he was "a sovereign worthy of his race and his crown," that he was "in full possession of his authority and his power," that he had "done much good, and that he could do still more."⁸³

Although he had let opportunities slip past, he could, over the upcoming twenty-five years of his reign, earn the "beautiful title of the Emperor of Peace," and earn it without losing his reputation as a German patriot. Hanotaux was prepared to see the German Emperor lead the way to a settlement of Europe's conflicts.⁸⁴

Austria-Hungary

Hanotaux was remarkably sympathetic to Austria-Hungary. He believed that Austria-Hungary was necessary to Europe, that if the Empire did not exist it would be necessary to invent it. He saw it as an outpost of the West in the East, as a great Catholic empire

with great historical traditions. He recognized that the "contrasts and antagonisms which co-exist in [the Empire] have led to experimenting, for a half-century, with that sort of constitution which Jean-Jacques Rousseau announced as the future solution of the great national and international problems, the confederation." He recognized that it had been "modish" to forecast the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but he felt that she had never been "more alive" or "better understood the essential necessity of her existence and the importance of her role."⁸⁵

Hanotaux thought that "for many years the axis of European affairs had been at Vienna" and he believed that, in Europe, the Empire had ordinarily been "an agency of order and conciliation,"⁸⁶ and that "the wisdom and authority of the Emperor Franz Joseph had been, many times, the highest recourse of diplomacy in desperation."⁸⁷

Hanotaux was convinced that Austria-Hungary had chosen the wrong path in her relations with Europe when in 1879 Count Andrassy had placed himself in Bismarck's hands and accepted the alliance with Germany. Count Beust had wanted the Empire "to abstain from any engagement towards Germany, to remain free among the diverse groups which divided Europe, to play a very limited role between Russia and Germany, and to maintain the equilibrium while keeping a sort of arbitration over the great European quarrels." But instead, Austria-Hungary "attached herself to the fortunes of Prussia, allowed her a free hand in Germany, and turned her own ambitions toward the South and toward the countries of the Danube." Not only had Austria-Hungary played into the hands of a Bismarck who felt that it was "of

fundamental advantage to us that Austria and Russia have some opposed interests in the Balkans,"⁸⁸ but had made a fundamental long range error in weighing her own opportunities in the Balkans. She had never counted on the Balkan states becoming the heirs of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹

Before the outbreak of the First Balkan War Hanotaux suspected that Germany had "subordinated her general policy to Austria-Hungary in the Balkans in spite of Bismarck's famous words 'that all these quarrels are not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier.'"⁹⁰ But when Austria proved after the outbreak of the war that she had no territorial ambitions in the Balkans, and after Germany's influence in Turkey appeared to be on the rise, Hanotaux saw the situation more and more in reverse, that is, he came to feel that it was Germany which was leading the way. In April 1913, he wondered if Austria-Hungary would continue to run the risk of perishing by remaining subordinate to Germany and "blindly and obstinately anti-Slav."⁹¹ Hanotaux was wondering whether or not Austria-Hungary might not be ripe for a shift in her policies and alliances.

Ascendancy or Isolation

Beneath the turbulent waters of international relations and events Hanotaux perceived a potential opportunity for France to achieve diplomatic ascendancy. He understood that "peace by equilibrium" was the French policy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean: "that formula is the French policy, the entire French policy, nothing but the French policy. France is, among the powers, the natural

agent of grouping and rapprochement."⁹² He believed that France was in an excellent position to perform these functions because in an Eastern crisis the other Great Powers would have to await her decision, and that in deciding last, she could manage the equilibrium and mediate the situation.⁹³ His main support for this contention was the authority of Bismarck and, somewhat less significantly, his understanding of the nature and limitations of French interests in the East.

Bismarck had discussed in his Memoirs the positions which the various Great Powers would find themselves in if Russia should take action to close the Black Sea. If Russia should attack Constantinople, Bismarck perceived that "Austria, England, and Italy would always have to take a position sooner than France, because the interests of France in the East were less urgent and subordinate to the Franco-German frontier." If Russia took such a step, he thought that she would "probably see herself attacked from the other side," that is, by Austria and Germany. This would still leave France free to make her choice of neutrality or war.

On the other hand, Bismarck thought, "if Russia were peaceably to obtain the right to block the Bosphorus, then the powers which found themselves diminished [Austria, England and Italy] would probably keep quiet, because they would await the initiative of their neighbors and the decision of France. . . ." Hanotaux believed that Bismarck's observation could be summarized in two brief statements: "Success will belong to the power which knows

how to wait the longest. The powers will await the decision of France."⁹⁴

This view that France could manage the balance because she was in the position to choose is reiterated in various contexts throughout the second volume of the diplomatic studies.⁹⁵ But Hanotaux's hopes for French mediation of the Eastern Question were, of course, never realized. He would conclude that France had not known how to make herself heard, that she had been too humble and deferent. But he would still believe that "if her leaders know how to guide her, according to the law of history and the strength of her situation, she will find her hour."⁹⁶ This is what he would say, but under the surface lurked the fear that France would be isolated, that France would be left out.

There was a fundamental tension in Hanotaux's thought between his desire for sufficient openness and flexibility in the international system to enable France to act as the agent of the equilibrium among the powers and the manager of an eventual general settlement, and his fear that the interpenetration of the groups and instability in the alliance system might lead in the end to the isolation of France. Hanotaux did not seek rigidity in the system, but the lack of rigidity stimulated his fear of diplomatic isolation.

In February 1913 he brought out what he perceived to be the extremely confused relationships among the powers:

Are you surprised that the two groups which are opposed in Europe, are being penetrated, if I dare say, partially, and that they have lost, in regard to one another, something of their severe rigidity? In the desire, probably sincere, of escaping surprises or avoiding obstacles, the governments

have maneuvered, rounding the angles; they have not forgotten the infinite resources of "tours de valse," and "counter-assurances"; from one group to the other, they are trying everything, even flirtation.⁹⁷

In May 1913 he expressed his fear of isolation; that France would be left out.

If Russia, Germany, and England in the East, if Austria and Italy in the archipelago and Adriatic, are in the process of distributing among themselves that which escapes the victorious Balkans, if the famous Bagdad railway will be the cord by which Turkey will be choked and on which the three powers will draw united through arrangements begun at Potsdam, are we to remain only passive spectators of the dismal operation, are we alone foreclosed from the heritage of the sick man? Or, if there is still time to act, what must our policy be in the East?⁹⁸

Throughout much of 1912 and 1913 Hanotaux was afraid that England would reach an accommodation with Germany detrimental to the Triple Entente and the relationship with France. He felt that English policy had been hesitant and indecisive, that England had been asking herself for sometime whether it would be best "to persevere in the race for armaments or to look for some modus vivendi with Germany."⁹⁹

Although he did not pursue England's internal and imperial difficulties with anything like the relentless concentration of the first volume of the diplomatic studies, he felt that England must make choices, and that she must surrender her position at some points to strengthen it at others. Although completion of the Bagdad railway network would mean that she was "menaced by land and sea," she "did not know on which point to concentrate her efforts and her resources, on which point to make sacrifices and resign herself to inevitable abandonments."¹⁰⁰ Hanotaux feared that England would make

her choice and relieve much of the pressure which was on her by reaching an accommodation with Germany. On the other hand, he hoped that she would see fit to place her immense influence and prestige behind a settlement with Russia which would settle the question of the Straits and relieve the threat of Germanic hegemony in the East.

From England's standpoint her ententes with France and Russia were of immense value because they left her free to engage in the struggle with Germany while at the same time "creating in the world a favorable opinion of her cause" and "leaving all the doors open to her in the future."¹⁰¹ Again and again Hanotaux insisted that "an entente is not an alliance" and that English "policy is the most straightforward in the world for those who want to understand it."¹⁰² In March 1913, in reference to a declaration by Prime Minister Asquith, he reminded his readers that England did not consider herself committed to intervene in continental affairs.¹⁰³

Hanotaux believed that in the Eastern Crisis England and Germany have been brought together by their common interests:

Wrongly or rightly, they are both apprehensive about the excessive expansion of the Slavic races in the Eastern Mediterranean. Russia always appears to them as a formidable spectre, either because she tries to occupy Constantinople, or because she limits herself to dominating the city indirectly. . . . Berlin and London have been in permanent contact since the beginning of the crisis, and one can say that the two cabinets have done all that is humanly possible to do to save Turkey. . . . The cabinets of London and Berlin, equally peaceful, pursuing some analogous objectives, are saying that the famous Anglo-German antagonism, with which the vociferous advocates of the Entente Cordiale flatter themselves, is not entirely irreducible.¹⁰⁴

By June 7, 1913, Hanotaux believed that an Anglo-German settlement had come very close to being reached. Sir Edward Grey had just told the House of Commons: "There is . . . a kind of understanding that Germany will agree not to extend the line beyond Bassorah without our consent, on the other hand that we will not oppose its construction up to that point. That seems to me a very clear agreement."¹⁰⁵ Hanotaux had felt all along that the Bagdad Railway was the most vital outstanding issue between Germany and England.

If this issue could be resolved, Hanotaux wondered what was coming next. He suspected that the fate of Asiatic Turkey would soon be decided. He interpreted some further comments of Sir Edward Grey to the House of Commons as a threat of this possibility:

Up to the present, said the chief of the Foreign Office, the events have prevented the powers from elaborating a plan of reforms for Asiatic Turkey. . . . But we all know--and the Turks know it, at least as well as anyone--that disorders and massacres in Asiatic Turkey would raise another question which would be not less agonizing for Turkey than for the powers who have economic interests in Asiatic Turkey. . . .¹⁰⁶

Hanotaux did not believe that Germany was enjoying as much success with Russia as she was with England. Nevertheless, he did not discount the possibility that a settlement would be reached even there.

Russia, since Potsdam, has appeared decided to sacrifice everything to her peaceful and economic progress. If it were not for the very serious quarrel raised by the nomination of a German general at St. Petersburg, everything would lead us to believe that with some concessions in Armenia, Germany would not be far from having won her case, even at St. Petersburg.¹⁰⁷

In April 1914, Hantoux continued to see great underlying instability in the alliance system:

The terrible alternative; war or peace, torments all free minds; and have we not seen that, everywhere also--precisely because the dilemma is being posed--some new combinations are studied, are made the object of current conversations and almost official discussions. The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente are being measured in this respect: the Balkan Crisis has broken the equilibrium: for that to be re-established some great displacements of forces are to be foreseen.¹⁰⁸

Hantoux's system entertained visions of both triumph and disaster. In one version, France successfully asserts her natural leadership and serves as the architect of the future of Europe. In the other, France is isolated, with major decisions being made beyond her reach and against her interests. Bismarck thought that the Great Powers would await the decision of France, that in deciding last her role would be decisive. But what if the Great Powers refused to wait?

The Failure of the Statesmen

Throughout the depressing months of the Balkan Wars Hantoux expressed a recurring concern that events were moving beyond human control, or at least beyond effective management by Europe's current generation of statesmen. In October 1912, he sensed that "one does not know where destiny carries us. . . . But that which one knows well, is that no one is the master of the wind, of the sail, or the rudder."¹⁰⁹ In November, he referred to the impotence of the Great Powers in the Balkans.¹¹⁰ The following March he deplored this impotence in strong language and suggested that "the principal danger of the present hour is that no one appears to know where we are going. Europe is not

directed."¹¹¹ He was concerned that European opinion was not being properly informed and asked "that one of the European statesmen, be he English, Russian, German, or Austrian, take the direction of opinion firmly in hand and that he say quite loudly what can be said and what ought to be said."¹¹² He felt that there was still a "peaceful will at the bottom of the minds; only they do not know how to . . . externalize it." There was "a sort of incapacity, a paralysis of governments"¹¹³

In June 1913, Hanotaux summarized his impression of the performance of Europe's statesmen.

I am afraid that in the high places in Europe they persist in not seeing things in their reality and in their consequences: they do not want to see, they do not want to comprehend; or, better really, they do not see, they do not comprehend.

When, in the long years, the hour of history will have sounded, when the dim official lamps will obscure no longer the brightness of things, nor official eloquence the truth, perhaps the definitive judgment will be pronounced and perhaps it will be more severe than anyone thinks.¹¹⁴

Hanotaux never lost his faith in the power of diplomacy. He believed in statesmanship, authoritative leadership, and negotiations. He believed that the facts contain those "equitable solutions" which Bismarck had always been able to discern.¹¹⁵ Although the Great Powers followed Bismarck's repressive policy in the Balkans, if Bismarck were to return and weigh the facts he would probably take the opposite course and support the nationalities¹¹⁶ because the Balkans to the Balkan peoples was the simple clearcut solution contained in the facts.

What was needed was an European statesman who would take the initiative for peace, would discern solutions, and persuade all Europe to accept them. Hanotaux hoped that Raymond Poincaré, who had the French genius for negotiation,¹¹⁷ would become this leader. Though he was well aware that Poincaré faced immense difficulties and though he never directly attacked his friend for his handling of affairs, Hanotaux thought that France had missed a unique opportunity to lead the way to a settlement of Europe's quarrels when she had gone along with the intervention of the Great Powers in the First Balkan War¹¹⁸ and then participated in the London Ambassadors' Conference. Poincaré, of course, had been in charge of French diplomacy when these things happened in 1912.

Hanotaux knew perfectly well that he was in a position to be more "theoretical" than Poincaré who had the actual responsibilities for the conduct of foreign relations. The fact that, in 1912, he became the earliest and a most eloquent advocate in the press for a Poincaré presidency is ample evidence that he did not give up on his friend or even blame him much for the failures of French diplomacy. Instead, Hanotaux hoped that the presidency would enable Poincaré to overcome obstacles and transcend difficulties which he had not been able to overcome or transcend as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

Hanotaux endorsed Poincaré for the presidency of the Republic with the hope that he would perpetuate and strengthen the revival of French nationalism. Assuming that Poincaré would be successful in asserting the political influence and latent prerogatives of the presidency at home, Hanotaux also hoped his friend would be in a

strong position in the presidency to assert the role of France in Europe, defend French interests, and define through diplomacy the European peace. The presidency would give Poincare an opportunity to communicate in relative equality with the principal European monarchs, Nicholas, William, Franz Joseph, and King George, all of whom, with the exception of the unpredictable German Emperor, were, in Hanotaux's estimation on the side of peace and in positions, whether as constitutional monarchs or not, to exercise considerable authority over their governments and peoples. In the presidency, Poincaré would have the stature and continuity both to bypass and to influence the generally less predictable, frequently changing, evasive, and ultimately more dangerous, cabinets. He would lead Europe through the monarchs to detente, international stability and peace. He would realize through the activities of his presidency the diplomatic ascendancy of France.

Conclusion

Throughout 1912 Hanotaux persisted in his vision of an ascendant France in a peaceful Europe. He embodied in his own soul the aspirations, fears, and contradictions of contemporary Europe. He aspired to the benign predominance of France, to her leadership of Europe. He feared and sought to avoid a general war but in supporting the Three Year Law participated in its preparation. He clung to the hope that his aspirations for France and for peace were both realizable and reconcilable. As contradictory, unrealistic, and fuzzy in detail as his ideas and aspirations now seem, it can at

least be shown that his friend, Raymond Poincaré, approached the task of conducting France's relationships with others in 1912 with ideas and aspirations similar to Hanotaux's. He learned from experience that some of the ideas and aspirations did not work, as will be shown in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER VIII: FOOTNOTES

¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Avertissement," Février 10, 1914, Études diplomatiques: La Guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. V.

²Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914, trans. and ed. Isabella M. Massey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), I:340-349.

³Ibid., pp. 362-363.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," Juin 1, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 22.

⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," Avril 13, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 5.

⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "Après le voyage de Russie," Septembre 7, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 100.

⁷Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," p. 20.

⁸Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," p. 5.

⁹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 6. Also see Gabriel Hanotaux, La paix latine (Paris: Combet, 1903), p. XXVIII.

¹¹Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," p. 8.

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹³Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," pp. 19-20.

¹⁴Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," p. 5.

¹⁵Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," p. 25.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 28-30.

¹⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "La marche vers l'Est," Juin 30, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 60.

²⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" Octobre 12, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 118-119.

²¹Ibid., p. 122.

²²Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'occasion manquée," Décembre 14, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 197.

²³Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," p. 12.

²⁴Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" p. 124.

²⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre dans les Balkans," Octobre 11, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 127.

²⁶Ibid., p. 126.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 126-127.

²⁸Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" pp. 119-120.

²⁹Hanotaux, "La guerre des les Balkans," p. 128.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 128-130.

³¹Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" p. 121.

³²Ibid., pp. 120-123. Choirmasters? Throughout "La guerre des Balkans . . . ," as a literary device, Hanotaux extends the metaphor of the European concert; i.e., each of the Great Powers is a member of the European orchestra which, without a leader to direct it, has fallen into discord.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les puissances et la guerre," Octobre 19, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 135-136. At this time relations between "England and Russia were more strained than at any time since 1907." See C. J. Lowe and M. C. Dockrill, The Mirage of Power, Vol. 1: British Foreign Policy, 1902-1914 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 133. "In the Foreign Office only Nicolson remained a staunch supporter of the Entente with Russia" but he feared a different outcome. "The permanent Under-Secretary feared that Russia would soon become alienated by England's lukewarm attitude toward the Entente and that, as a result, she might turn to Germany, with devastating consequences for England's security in the Near and Middle East," Lowe and Dockrill, p. 133.

³⁷Hanotaux, "Les puissances et la guerre," pp. 134-137.

³⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "La France et la Bulgarie," Novembre 8, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 140.

³⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Que fera l'Europe?" Novembre 9, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 148-149.

⁴⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "Vers l'entente," Novembre 16, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 148-149.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 151.

⁴²Ibid., p. 155.

⁴³Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les Balkans aux Balkaniques,"
Novembre 22, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 167-169.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 167-168.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 168-171.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 171.

⁴⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Que fera-t-on à Londres," Décembre 6, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 184.

⁴⁹Hanotaux, "Avertissement," pp. IV-V.

⁵⁰Hanotaux, "Que fera-t-on à Londres," p. 135.

⁵¹Hanotaux, "La guerre des Balkans," p. 127.

⁵²Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'intérêt de la France," Janvier 18, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 227-230.

⁵³Gabriel Hanotaux, "Le règlement oriental," Janvier 2, 1914, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 421.

⁵⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "Nôtre politique future en Orient," Mai 23, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 312.

⁵⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," ed. Georges Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Janvier-Juin 1977), p. 119.

⁵⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'heure décisive," Novembre 7, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 401.

⁵⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Europe évolue," Février 22, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 240.

⁵⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "La paix de Londres? Est-ce la paix?" Juin 7, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 318-329.

⁵⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Conclusion," Février 6, 1914, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 443.

⁶⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "La conflict des grandes puissances," Décembre 13, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 409-411.

⁶¹Hanotaux, "Avertissement," p. V.

⁶²Hanotaux, "Les affaires d'Orient," pp. 23-29.

⁶³Gabriel Hanotaux, "La deuxième guerre des Balkans," Juin 12, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 347.

⁶⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "La paix larvée," Mars 14, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 258.

⁶⁵Hanotaux, "Avertissement," p. IV.

⁶⁶Hanotaux, "La marche vers l'Est," p. 62.

⁶⁷Gabriel Hanotaux "Le temple de la paix," Août 23, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 394.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 390.

⁶⁹Hanotaux, "La paix larvée," p. 258.

⁷⁰Hanotaux, "La guerre italo-turque et l'Islam," p. 3.

⁷¹Hanotaux, "La marche vers l'Est," p. 61.

⁷²Hanotaux, "La temple de la paix," pp. 286-390.

⁷³Gabriel Hanotaux, "M. Poincaré en Russie," Août 16, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 88. Also see Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Europe et les armements," Mars 29, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 267.

⁷⁴Richard D. Challener, The French Theory of the Nation in Arms, 1866-1939 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 78-90.

⁷⁵Hanotaux, "L'Europe et les armements," p. 268.

⁷⁶Hanotaux, "La temple de la paix," p. 389.

⁷⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, "Vingt-cinq ans de règne," Juin 20, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 332.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 333.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 334.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 333.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 333-337.

⁸²Ibid., p. 334.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 334-337.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Pour la paix," Mai 3, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 295-296.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 295.

⁸⁷Hanotaux, "Vers l'entente," p. 157.

⁸⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "La prise de Scutari," Avril 25, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 288-289.

⁸⁹Hanotaux, "Pour la paix," pp. 297-298.

⁹⁰Hanotaux, "M. Poincaré en Russie," p. 89.

⁹¹Hanotaux, "La prise de Scutari," pp. 289-290.

⁹²Hanotaux, "Après le voyage de Russie," p. 105.

⁹³Gabriel Hanotaux, "Rencontre d'empereurs," Juillet 6, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 54-55.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Hanotaux, La guerre des Balkans . . ., p. V, pp. 90, 230-426, 447.

⁹⁶Hanotaux, "Avertissement," p. V.

⁹⁷Hanotaux, "L'Europe évolue," p. 245.

⁹⁸Hanotaux, "Nôtre politique future en Orient," pp. 307-308. Also see "La paix de Londres," p. 326.

⁹⁹Hanotaux, "Après le voyage de Russie," p. 97.

¹⁰⁰Hanotaux, "La marche vers l'Est," p. 63.

¹⁰¹Hanotaux, "Après le voyage de Russie," pp. 98-100.

¹⁰²Hanotaux, "L'Europe évolue," pp. 239-240. Also see Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1907-1911, p. 441.

¹⁰³Hanotaux, "La paix larvée," p. 257.

¹⁰⁴Hanotaux, "L'Europe évolue," pp. 247-248.

¹⁰⁵Hanotaux, "La paix de Londres," p. 325.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 326.

¹⁰⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Europe vue de Berlin," Décembre 13, 1913, Etudes diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), pp. 406-407.

¹⁰⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "En vue des élections," Revue hebdomadaire (Avril 4, 1914), p. 10.

¹⁰⁹Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix," p. 124.

¹¹⁰Hanotaux, "La France et la Bulgarie," p. 140.

¹¹¹Hanotaux, "L'Europe et les armements," p. 261.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 266.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 273.

¹¹⁴Hanotaux, "Vingt-cinq ans de règne," p. 335. Many historians have asserted that there was a dearth of outstanding statesmanship in pre-World War I Europe. Among the more recent, Laurence Lafore perceives a "failure of imagination." See Laurence Lafore, The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1965), p. 267. Joachim Remak asks, "Where were the men of power whose overriding desire was peace, and whose abilities matched their motives?" And answers, "They were dead." See Joachim Remak, The Origins of World War I, 1891-1914 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 88. Oron J. Hale deplores the general failure to ask "What a civil war would mean to Europe, and how will it affect the position of predominance that the European nations enjoy in the world?" See Oron J. Hale, The Great Illusion, 1900-1914 (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 313.

¹¹⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, Contemporary France, trans. John Charles Tarver (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), I:130.

¹¹⁶Hanotaux, "L'occasion manquée," p. 198.

¹¹⁷Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix," p. 124.

¹¹⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Heure decisive," Novembre 7, 1913,
Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris:
Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 401.

CHAPTER IX

HANOTAUX AND POINCARÉ, 1912-1914:

A PARADOXICAL FRIENDSHIP

Confidence in Poincaré

Although Hanotaux was not consistently satisfied with Poincaré's performance, he was confident that he had the abilities of an outstanding statesman. In an article published in Figaro on August 16, 1912, Hanotaux defended Poincaré's current trip to Russia. He first expressed his personal confidence in Tsar Nicholas, and then stated that "M. Poincaré is clarity and precision itself. These two natures were made to please each other. Despite factious prognostications . . . , I count very much on such a meeting to establish solidly the peace of the world."¹

Although Hanotaux recognized in Poincaré the potentialities of an outstanding statesman, he knew perfectly well that Poincaré could not control events and he was not notably optimistic about his chances of success. After extolling Poincaré's gifts as a negotiator and pacifier in his article of October 12, 1912, he immediately warned his readers against optimism, by suggesting that

there is, beyond any intelligence and particular good faith, a directing will, that of events; there is a superior decision, that of destiny. At certain hours, one senses that humanity plays its hand blindly with certain cards that it dares not turn over. We are at one of these hours. Let us be attentive, collect ourselves, and be ready.²

Although Poincaré did not achieve all that Hanotaux had hoped for, and although he made concessions to events which Hanotaux deplored, Hanotaux understood the difficulties of his situation, and defended him. In August 1913, in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, Hanotaux wrote:

The quarrel which certain papers seek with M. Poincaré, M. Barthou and M. Pichon is unjust and unjustified. French opinion and diplomacy are not infallible certainly; but their intentions are right; we feel neither hatred, jealousy, or envy in regard to anyone. In the crisis that just happened we had no responsibility from beginning to end.³

On October 12, 1912, while arguing for an Anglo-Russian Agreement, Hanotaux states that "if it is a matter of formulas to disentangle, of nuances to define, of misunderstandings to dissipate, it is the genius of our race to employ itself successfully in these matters. In this M. Poincaré will not be lacking" ⁴ When, on November 16, 1912, Hanotaux suggested that France could serve as the "honest broker" in an international settlement, his readers could not have been in doubt as to who the broker would be. Poincaré would assume the role of Bismarck in European affairs.⁵

In his popular biography of Poincaré, published in 1934, Hanotaux pointed back at the "difficulty of maneuver" which had confronted his friend.⁶ Hanotaux knew what it was like to struggle with events and against obstacles both from his study of Richelieu and his personal experience at the Quai d'Orsay.

The Hanotaux/Poincaré Friendship: 1912-1914

Throughout 1912-1913 Hanotaux and Poincaré maintained their friendship. This friendship was at times strained, but never broken.

Neither man controlled the other. On matters of policy there were conversations between them, but for the most part, Poincaré kept Hanotaux at arm's length on state matters. This was wise because Hanotaux could and did say many things in the press, including his sharp criticisms of the English relationship, which, had they been attributed to Poincaré would have been politically damaging.

What these two strong-minded men had in common was not necessarily a mutual and immediate influence on one another nor identical views on particular issues, but a commonality of fundamental outlooks. The commonality of the two was shaped by their origins on the Eastern frontier, by the best formal education France could provide, by a shared struggle to cope from a conservative republican and nationalist viewpoint with both the internal weaknesses of France and the harrowing tide of international events, and, above all, by thirty years of friendship and intellectual interchange.

For this commonality to be fully appreciated, for the paradoxical nature of their friendship to be properly understood, it is necessary to recognize that the two were at work in radically different personal situations in the last years before the war. Hanotaux, theoretician and commentator, wrote his articles for the press. His responsibility was to argue a position on issues and events, to do so before the public, and to present this position more or less fully. Not being responsible for the government, he had far greater latitude than Poincaré in what he could say. He could speculate publicly in ways Poincaré could not. He could dare make statements offensive to

allies. Poincaré, on the other hand, had not only the responsibilities, but the frustrations and limitations of his office. He had to be more circumspect. There was much he could not say. An impolitic statement could mean political disaster.

In a conversation of March 1914, the two explicitly acknowledged this difference in their situations. Out of political necessity brought on by the declining political appeal of the Right, President Poincaré had called on the radical senator, Gaston Doumergue, in December 1913, to form a government. This had upset Poincaré's friends. At Figaro "the editors . . . affected not to believe the news."⁷ In the March 1914 conversation, Poincaré reassured Hanotaux amiably that "Doumergue directs the business of his ministry as you would do it yourself." He also said, "Gerald Nobel [a mutual friend] told me: 'There is a philosopher, it is I,' adding, 'there is another philosopher, Hanotaux.' 'I added,' said the President: 'There is a third one, it is I.'" Assenting vigorously, Hanotaux replied: "Our situations are not the same."⁸

In his articles, Hanotaux made it a point to deny his own access to the "secrets of the Gods," that is, to inside information. In 1912 he wrote: "M. Raymond Poincaré . . . has just accomplished the traditional trip to Russia. Without pretending to penetrate into the secret of the gods, it is permissible to state what has struck opinion."⁹

In his "Carnet" entry for March 12, 1912, Hanotaux reported a conversation with Poincaré which is illuminating. On a personal mission for his friend, Rodin, Hanotaux had brought an offer from the

sculptor which he writes would have given the French State all Rodin's "work and his collections . . in exchange for a very modest sacrifice." For whatever reasons, Poincaré did not enthusiastically seize the offer. So Hanotaux pushed: "There is your reputation. If you say no you will have the responsibility before history." He wrote down later: "If someone complains he will not budge. . . . This other fear [for his reputation] will perhaps make him act."¹⁰

This entry shows that Hanotaux felt that Poincaré was at times stubborn and very sensitive about his reputation. And it shows that Hanotaux did not hesitate to push Poincaré. It concludes on this note: "He said not a word to me about politics. He ignored me."¹¹

Be that as it may, two months later the two were cooperating on a sensitive political matter. Poincaré states in his memoirs that with Hanotaux's help he was able to confirm that the Russian Foreign Minister Sazanov was the prime mover in an effort to obtain the recall of the French ambassador to St. Petersburg, Georges Louis. Hanotaux hosted a dinner for Poincaré with the Russian Grand Duke Nicholas, another close friend of Hanotaux's, and a member of the Institute of France. The Grand Duke provided Poincaré with the needed information.¹²

Hanotaux was helpful on other occasions. By virtue of his position as President of the Franco-American Committee, he helped Poincaré stage a great reception in 1912 for visiting dignitaries from the Canadian Government. This gave Poincaré the opportunity "to extend to the whole British Empire, and especially the Dominion of

Canada, the friendly assurances which France had earlier given to England."¹³ Poincaré also mentioned in his memoirs that while on a state visit to England as President of the Republic, he had an after-dinner conversation with Prime Minister Asquith and "also with Mrs. Asquith whom I had already met at Paris at a little luncheon given by Gabriel Hanotaux."¹⁴

Hanotaux passed information along to Poincaré. The aged Empress Eugenie, of whom Hanotaux was very fond, had told him "of the approaching war in the Balkans as the result of a half-confidence made to her by the Prince of Montenegro."¹⁵ In early 1913 he could report to her that he "had warned Poincaré while indicating to him my source."¹⁶

In his "Carnet" entry for March 30, 1914, Hanotaux remarked that Poincaré had recently talked to him "with precision" on the Caillaux-Calmette Scandal, but did not relate what was said.¹⁷ In fact, this was the rule: when Hanotaux had political conversations with Poincaré he did not record their content in his "Carnets."

Joseph Caillaux

Poincaré may have been behind Gaston Calmette's vicious attacks on Joseph Caillaux in Figaro which began in late 1913 and which led to Calmette's assassination on March 17, 1914 by Caillaux's irate wife. This tragic and rather seamy course of events proved to be the French scandal of the era and Mme. Caillaux's trial (she was not convicted) dominated the front pages of the French papers in late July 1914, until it was finally upstaged by the deepening European Crisis.

Calmette, who had been the editor of the paper, had been publishing Hanotaux's diplomatic studies and articles on domestic politics. He was an advocate of a strong French presidency¹⁸ and had been an early supporter of Poincaré for president. He had felt that Poincaré and his friends "would save France from ruin at the hands of the Radicals."¹⁹

Joseph Caillaux had been Prime Minister and, for all practical purposes, the de facto Foreign Minister, during the Second Moroccan Crisis, and had worked out the settlement with Germany which conservative nationalists had found so hard to accept. Further, he was a vociferous opponent of the Three Year Law²⁰ and, as Minister of Finance, was advocating an income tax which was utter anathema to the moderate and conservative bourgeoisie. Caillaux was, in the eyes of the moderates, a dangerous person.

Gordon Wright doubts that Poincaré was behind the attacks on Caillaux, but recognizes that "Calmette was a close acquaintance of Poincaré and would not have undertaken his scurrilous campaign in the face of active presidential disapproval."²¹ Moreover, Wright believes that Poincaré would have found Calmette's articles "politically agreeable."²² Further, Wright also recognizes that keeping Caillaux out of the Quai d'Orsay was a powerful motive to Poincaré because "Caillaux's return to the post would have weakened the Triple Entente."²³

Was Hanotaux involved in the attack on Caillaux? He was close to Poincaré and Calmette, and was a bitter opponent of most of what Caillaux stood for. In the late winter and spring of 1914 he was

developing a fresh campaign in the press to save France. He felt that he was less afraid than others, with the possible exception of Alexandre Millerand, to take risks.²⁴ Playing dirty does not appear to have been his way, but at this time he was desperately concerned for the future of France. On the other hand, there had been a civil exchange of letters between Hanotaux and Caillaux in February 1912, in which Hanotaux had agreed to meet with Caillaux to discuss his articles on the Moroccan Crisis and in which Hanotaux assured Caillaux that there was nothing personal intended.²⁵

This is pretty inconclusive and speculative. No one will probably ever know whether Poincaré and/or Hanotaux encouraged Calmette. But the incident has left an unpleasant impression of rats gnawing in the walls where no one can get at them.

Disappointment with the Poincaré Presidency

Hanotaux proposed Poincaré for the Presidency in 1912. After his friend's election in early 1913 he expressed high hopes that he would give the French government strong leadership and clear direction both at home and abroad. But President Poincaré failed to achieve the hoped for preponderant influence within the government. Instead, his popularity waned as the months went by, and the hold of the moderates on Parliament, of men like Aristide Briand and Louis Barthou, slipped away until in December 1913 the President was forced to turn to the Radical, Gaston Doumergue, to form a cabinet. At least Doumergue supported the precious Three Year Law. He was Poincaré's last viable choice short of Caillaux, the Minister of Finance, and the acknowledged leader of the Radicals.

Hanotaux was disturbed by these trends and by the apparent failure of the Poincaré experiment. In an article published in Revue hebdomadaire on April 4, 1914, he wrote

the uncertainties of the present hour appear so much more cruel, as they have succeeded with startling speed the hopes conceived only last year. The rise of a national party, the election of M. Poincaré, the vote on the law of abnegation and patriotism, all led one to anticipate a revival. It was an hour of hope and confidence such as few we have known, and a few months have spoiled everything.²⁶

Hanotaux blamed the Parliament and the "system" rather than the personal failings of Poincaré. As a solution he suggested that the constitution should be revised, that "the Constitution of 1875 . . . is not a 'fetish.'"²⁷

In Figaro, on April 10, 1914, he suggested that the reforms of the Constitution could eliminate parliamentary irresponsibility:

The executive power has been allowed to be despoiled little by little of all its authority; we have a government which does not govern and which neither in fact or in law is responsible. Let us fortify it, while recovering for it, its responsibility: an American style presidency, surrounded by institutions of control, carefully elaborated, is not so frightening. In the face of a usurpative Parliament, the executive will form the counterweight²⁸

In the April 4, 1914 article he wrote: "We will not conduct France and the Republic toward higher destinies with the present system, that is certain: the proof is made. . . . The revision would become then, the last step and the sanction for a program of revival and salvation."²⁹

The publication of these articles was politically embarrassing to Poincaré. Clemenceau pounced on them and accused not only Hanotaux but also Briand, of working for a dictatorship of Poincaré. Clemenceau

cited the fact that Hanotaux and Poincaré were both vacationing in the South and had been together before the publication of the articles.³⁰

Poincaré wrote Hanotaux a letter, dated May 9, 1914, asking him to write a denial of presidential complicity in the articles. With a note of ironic disgust Poincaré concluded: "It appears that we can no longer lunch together when we are friends of thirty years without conspiring."³¹

On May 11, 1914, Hanotaux indicated in his "Carnets" that he found the "little incident" disagreeable because Poincaré "appears to have taken it to heart." And he confirmed that Poincaré and he had not conversed about the articles: "He invited me to lunch. We said not a word about politics; besides, he never speaks to me about them."³²

On May 23, 1914, in a Revue hebdomadaire article, "Après les élections," Hanotaux published a denial of Poincaré's complicity. He indicated that the article Clemenceau had referred to ("En vue des élections") was "at the Revue fifteen days before the horrible encounter" and that "in my short visit with M. Poincaré not a word of policy had been discussed."³³

Although this seems sufficiently final, it leaves one with more than a fleeting shadow of a doubt. For one thing, Hanotaux tried to play the matter down just a little too much in the language he used in his notebooks: "A little incident," he said. And he wrote that "these articles made allusion to a possible modification in the constitution with a tendency to the 'reinforcement' of the

powers of the executive."³⁴ "Made allusion to?" "A tendency?"

The articles were polemics in which Hanotaux was involved heart and soul and they had the purpose of stimulating a revision of the constitution which would vastly strengthen the powers of the executive!

Carnets are not necessarily the essence of candor; not when back up evidence might be handy to support a vital point. Responding many years later (February 25, 1938) to a question from Gordon Wright regarding Poincaré's influence on his articles, Hanotaux replied: "We doubtless talked about it with President Poincaré, but common sense was enough."³⁵

Hanotaux's assertion that he and Poincaré never talked about politics simply was not true, although it was true that Poincaré appears to have often kept Hanotaux at arm's length on political questions.

It strains this historian's credulity to have to conclude that in a private luncheon together a proposition so close to Hanotaux's heart and of such obvious import to Poincaré would have gone undiscussed or, for that matter, that Poincaré, faced with what he now knew might very well be six frustrating years as a President without much authority, would not have privately endorsed a suggestion which could, if it gathered enough support, immeasurably strengthen his office. Either Poincaré really didn't know what his friend was about to propose (was Hanotaux giving Poincaré a public shove?) or the two tacitly conspired to cover the record after they were "caught by Clemenceau. To me the latter appears the more likely. And Hanotaux's letter to Gordon Wright tends to confirm it.

In his memoirs Poincaré wrote that he told Theodore Roosevelt in 1914, when the latter visited France and suggested that France might do well to imitate the American presidency, that such a suggestion was foolish.³⁶ But by the time that Poincaré wrote his memoirs he was again governing France as a parliamentary executive. He may have wanted to defend his reputation against old charges (Clemenceau's) of Napoleonic ambitions. And Roosevelt was dead.

Hanotaux, Poincaré, and the Entente Cordiale:
Complementary Approaches

In his excellent study of The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914, Samuel Williamson accused Gabriel Hanotaux along with other conservative writers, of waging a "vicious campaign" against the entente. He felt that these attacks were an expression of the French obsession with "Perfidious Albion."³⁷ The source of Williamson's view is Paul Cambon, specifically his letter to his brother, Jules, of February 27, 1912.³⁸ In his memoirs Poincaré does mention opposition in the French press to the Entente Cordiale, but he does not mention that Hanotaux had a part in it. He insists that the only "systematic adversary" of the Entente Cordiale had been M. Ernst Judet, who had undertaken a passionate campaign "not only against M. Clemenceau and Delcassé . . . but against all British statesmen."³⁹

That he would not criticize his friend in his memoirs is perhaps inevitable (he appears to have worked on them while a guest in Hanotaux's home), but it may be more pertinent that, while at the Quai d'Orsay, he had made use of Hanotaux's articles to press Paul

Cambon, and through Cambon the British to clarify and extend their commitment to France. The underlying threat in Hanotaux's articles was that, if England proved unreliable, France would look for something else (some form of continental alliance) and that England could find herself isolated and without friends at a time of great vulnerability, when she was facing a host of internal and external challenges.

The assumption which Williamson appears to have made, that Hanotaux and Poincaré were working at cross purposes, is questionable. Hanotaux criticized the Entente Cordiale and English policy. Poincaré worked diligently to strengthen the Anglo-French understanding. But these approaches were functionally complementary.

Given their friendship, given Hanotaux's energetic support of Poincaré for the presidency and, later, for a strengthening of Poincaré's presidency by constitutional amendment; given Hanotaux's help in such a difficult matter as the George Louis affair, their approaches could not have been entirely antagonistic. Given Poincaré's relentless determination to strengthen the tie with England, friendship could not have survived with a person who was "viciously" bent on the entente's destruction. Conversely, Hanotaux could not have supported for the highest public office anyone who seemed to him to be unrealistic about the English relationship or inclined to misrepresent the security it offered to the public. Finally, Figaro, which regularly published Hanotaux's views on England, was sometimes more "Poincarist" than Poincaré himself.

It is easy to reconcile the two approaches. Hanotaux could state things in the press which Poincaré might personally have felt but could not say for political reasons. If Poincaré had sharply and publicly criticized the Entente Cordiale or the London Ambassadors' Conference or Sir Edward Grey, or if he had publicly expressed fears that France might be isolated by the desertion of Russia and England, if he had stated publicly those things which Hanotaux was stating publicly, then he would have run the risk of destroying both the Triple Entente and public confidence in himself.

Poincaré and Paul Cambon

To understand the complementary relationship between Poincaré's statesmanship and Hanotaux's published views it is useful to be aware of the relationship which persisted between Poincaré and Paul Cambon, the French ambassador to England. The men disliked and distrusted one another, a fact Poincaré covered up.

In his memoirs Poincaré implied a consistently congenial working relationship. At one point, for instance, but not without a trace of irony, he refers to a lengthy letter, which he had received from Cambon in December 1912, and which elucidated the theme that the Germans ought to be blocked from the Aegean as a "magnificent history lesson."⁴⁰

It is, of course, understandable that in memoirs designed not only to throw the best light on his own actions but to confirm the inevitability of the German onslaught and the totality of German war guilt that he would cover up internal bickerings, uncertainties, and

personal distrust on the French side. Moreover, by the time the memoirs were composed, Cambon, along with Poincaré, had come to occupy a niche in the pantheon of heroes created by the First World War. Nothing could be gained by showing that Cambon had not always known what he was doing.

Cambon, in a letter of November 28, 1912 to his brother Jules, Ambassador to Berlin, went to extremes to belittle Poincaré:

Poincaré will never comprehend what a diplomatic conversation is, nor his role as President of the Council and Foreign Minister. . . . He ends by losing himself in telegrams, propositions, and papers and he has the tendency to let it be believed that if all his great efforts come to nothing it is because he is badly served by his agents.⁴¹

Cambon gave the impression of being intellectually uninspired and imprecise. In his correspondence, both official and unofficial, he never tried to come to grips with the views expressed by Hanotaux, whose views were certainly infinitely more balanced and much friendlier to England than Cambon ever implied.

Much historiographical attention has been given to Cambon, but he appears to be over-rated. No one can doubt that he was skillful at the graces of ambassadorial life. The Entente Cordiale was considered the achievement of his life. He was especially popular with the Germanophobes in the British Foreign Service. Arthur Nicolson was his best English friend. But the fuzziness of some of his general ideas was appalling. Nowhere in the hundreds of pages of Hanotaux's work have I found anything quite like this:

I have not hesitated to tell him [Arthur Nicolson] that, as I say here to your Excellency [Poincaré], that we find ourselves in the presence of a concentrated campaign whose inspiration ought to be searched out abroad, among

our common rivals [Triple Alliance] and whose principal auxiliaries in the three countries [England, France and Russia] meet with a group of Israelites who have vowed a hatred to the death of the Triple Entente, first because it includes Russia and finally because it obstructs the Berlin Government.⁴²

No wonder Poincaré found Cambon trying.

The impression that Cambon was lazy and not especially competent is widespread in the record. In August 1911, after the Moroccan Crisis had been going on for many weeks, de Selves, the French Foreign Minister

cabled Paul Cambon to initiate naval conversations without delay. Naval talks were already underway, the ambassador fired back and had been since the Clemenceau ministry. This might be true, de Selves retorted the next day, but Paris certainly knew nothing of any exchanges between the admiralty and the French naval attaché. "It is necessary," he caustically observed, "that the latter quickly edify our Naval Staff on these results." Stung by the rebuke, Cambon investigated and discovered that his confident assertion was groundless: there had been no extensive naval talks such as he had imagined.⁴³

Pierre Miquel quotes Charles Roux's description of a meeting between Poincaré and Cambon in 1912:

Poincaré questioned Cambon on the technical points of the Statute of Tangiers and found him grossly unprepared. Cambon was embarrassed. Returning to London, he had let it be understood that his encounter with our Prime Minister, was that of a diplomat with a lawyer. On his side, Poincaré did not hide from anyone that he had found him 'tired'⁴⁴

Poincaré must have been shaken by an incident in March 1912. Cambon almost let the Anglo-German naval negotiations get away from him, with possible disastrous results. At that time, he failed to perceive the serious dangers to the Entente Cordiale inherent in certain information which Grey had passed on to him. In fact, he was very satisfied with what he had been told. This led Sir Francis

Bertie, the English ambassador at Paris, to violate a professional taboo and to beseech Poincaré to let him speak to him, not as the ambassador, but as a private person. Bertie then explained the real significance of what was happening between England and Germany and urged Poincaré to speak with a strong voice at London. This he proceeded to do, and to do through Cambon, but the incident could not have improved his confidence in his ambassador.⁴⁵

The tension between Poincaré and Cambon was not unknown among the circle of ambassadors in London. Prince von Lichnowsky, the German ambassador, communicated to his government that there was a "lack of agreement" between the two and that Poincaré was reproaching the French ambassador "with having up to the last moment declared in his reports that war in the Balkans was improbable, and with having thus caused French policy to be taken by surprise by events."⁴⁶

It is true that as Foreign Minister, Poincaré cracked down on the diplomatic corps which had been enjoying a high degree of independence. According to Pierre Miquel he felt that "an ambassador should in no case be independent of the government no more than a general or a prefect"⁴⁷ He felt especially constrained to keep a careful watch over Cambon's shoulder and to make doubly sure of what he was doing. In November 1912 Cambon wrote his brother Jules: "It is necessary never to stop repeating to him: 'This is what you have ordered me to do and I have obeyed your instructions.'"⁴⁸

G. P. Gooch points out that in preparation for the London Ambassadors' Conference Poincaré "reminded Cambon that the ambassadors could decide nothing, and that, however urgent the issue, the French

Government must have time to consider any question not covered by precise instructions. He was rightly determined to keep all decisions in his own hands."⁴⁹

Hanotaux, Poincaré, and Paul Cambon

Poincaré made use of Hanotaux's articles to put pressure on Paul Cambon and through Cambon to pressure the British to clarify and extend their commitment to France.

On February 26, 1912, Poincaré wrote a letter to Cambon that he, Poincaré, was about to face an interpellation on Anglo-French relations and that British behavior regarding Germany was giving the adversaries of the Entente Cordiale something to work with. The British government had better clarify matters:

The recent visit of Lord Haldane in Berlin has furnished to the adversaries of the Entente Cordiale an argument too easy to develop (an article published in the Revue hebdomadaire under the signature of M. Hanotaux and which I am mailing to you will make you cognizant of the outcome to which I will without doubt be obliged to respond).

Hence I pray that you will examine urgently with Sir Edward Grey declarations which will interpret most exactly the real trend in the Anglo-French entente. While affirming the peaceful intentions which inspire the two governments, I would want to attest that they are equally in accord in the will to cooperate, should the need arise, to maintain the European equilibrium.⁵⁰

The next day in a letter to his brother, Jules, Cambon fumed about Poincaré's timidity. He acknowledged the existence of widespread fear: "All France cries out: England is dropping us! Hanotaux has proclaimed the defeat of the Entente Cordiale." But Cambon was sure, "that will change nothing at the bottom of things."⁵¹

He seems much less certain on this point two months later in a note written from Paris to de Feuriau, his chargé d'affaires at London. In this note, Cambon expressed fear that Anglo-German negotiations will lead to some written agreement which the adversaries of the Entente Cordiale would make use of. "Impotent up to now they could exercise on opinion a disastrous influence, for they have the the talent and the notoriety. that is, at the academy, Hanotaux and Frédéric Masson, in the press, the Correspondent and the white papers."⁵²

But, as Poincaré hoped, Cambon made use of the adversaries of the entente in his conversations with Arthur Nicholson:

There is a cause of weakness in the situation of M. Poincaré. He is more than anyone partisan of the Entente with England; but to politicians of importance, to his colleagues in the cabinet, to the directors of French opinion who question him, he cannot let it be understood that there exists between us any other than the lines of sympathy. This is enough for two governments sure of their reciprocal intentions; it is not enough for opinion; and the adversaries of England in France (there are few, but there are some) proclaim that our relations with you offer no security⁵³

By the late fall of 1912, Cambon felt that the adversaries of the Entente Cordiale were having a dangerous influence on France's relationship with England and were in effect, working to the benefit of the Germans.⁵³

The adversaries of the Entente Cordiale are running the risk of upsetting Sir Edward Grey by accusing him of assuming "responsibility for the war [in the Balkans] and its consequences. M. Hanotaux searches in the past for griefs which do not appear to me to be any more real. . . . I will content myself by recalling that in the matter of arrangements for the Sultan, M. Hanotaux has taken on Sir Edward Grey an advantage difficult to recover. It is truly regrettable to report the competition which our press . . . has

brought into being to the natural benefit of all dissidence between France and England: I mean to say, to the benefit of the Germans.⁵⁴

By January 17, 1914, Cambon was placing Hanotaux in what was virtually a decisive position in international affairs. German policy was based, in part, on his writings.

With their sense of realities the directors of policy at Berlin are counting on the anti-English attitude of M. Hanotaux and the colonial appetites of M. Chamberlain. They see France and England approaching each other on the same rail, and when they believe that the moment of the encounter is quite near, they will make a quick about face and try to take sides with the English Government.⁵⁵

CHAPTER IX: FOOTNOTES

¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "M. Poincaré en Russia," Août 16, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 91.

²Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre ou la paix?" Octobre 12, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 124.

³Gabriel Hanotaux, "La paix balkaniques," Août 16, 1913, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 378.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "La guerre des Balkans," Octobre 12, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 124.

⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Vers l'entente," Novembre 10, 1912, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1914), p. 160.

⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, Raymond Poincaré (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1934), p. 32.

⁷Gordon Wright, Raymond Poincaré and the French Presidency, The Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace, Publication No. 19 (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University, 1942), pp. 47-49.

⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Carnet," Mars 30, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," ed. Georges Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Janvier-Juin 1977), p. 130.

⁹Hanotaux, "M. Poincaré en Russia," p. 85.

¹⁰"Carnet," Mars 12, 1912. See "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," p. 109. Also see in the same source the cordial exchange of letters (Mai 29 and Mai 30, 1912) between Poincaré and Hanotaux, pp. 110-111.

¹¹Ibid., p. 109.

¹²Raymond Poincaré, Au service de la France, Vol. 1: Le Lendemain d'Agadir (1912) (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1926), pp. 207-208; 384-385.

¹³Ibid., pp. 207-208.

¹⁴Raymond Poincaré, The Memoires of Raymond Poincare (1913-1914), trans. and adapted Sir George Arthur, 2 vols. (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1928), II:66-67.

¹⁵Georges Dethan, Note de l'éditeur, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," p. 26.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷"Carnet," Mars 30, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914), p. 129.

¹⁸Wright, Raymond Poincaré and the French Presidency, p. 65.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 102.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 80, 99-104, 106-107.

²¹Ibid., p. 107.

²²Ibid., p. 102.

²³Ibid., p. 126.

²⁴"Carnet," Mars 30, 1914, p. 130.

²⁵"Carnet," Février 12, 1912, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," pp. 106-107.

²⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "En vue des élections," Revue hebdomadaire (Avril 4, 1914), p. 5.

²⁷Ibid., p. 17.

²⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Et la sanction? . . ." Figaro (Avril 10, 1914).

²⁹Hanotaux, "En vue des élections," pp. 17-18.

³⁰"Carnet," May 11, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," p. 131. See also Wright, Raymond Poincaré and the French Presidency, p. 111.

³¹Poincaré to Hanotaux, May 9, 1914, see "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907-1914)," pp. 131-132.

³²"Carnet," May 11, 1914, pp. 130-131.

³³Gabriel Hanotaux, "Après les élections," May 23, 1914, Revue hebdomadaire p. 443.

³⁴"Carnet," May 11, 1914, p. 131.

³⁵Wright, Raymond Poincaré and the French Presidency, p. 111.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Samuel R. Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 256.

³⁸Paul Cambon, Correspondance, 1870-1914, ed. Henri Cambon, 3 vols. (Paris: Grasset, 1940-1946), III:14-15.

³⁹Poincaré, Le lendemain d'Agadir (1912), p. 153.

⁴⁰Raymond Poincaré, Au service de la France, Vol. 2: Les Balkans en feu (1912) (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1926), pp. 359-363.

⁴¹Cambon, Correspondance, III:30.

⁴²Ibid., Cambon to Poincaré, p. 137. A typical example of the inflated reputation of Cambon among English historians can be found in Christopher Andrews' Theophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale: A Reappraisal of French Foreign Policy, 1848-1905 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 75. Andrews sees Paul Cambon as one of the "ablest diplomats in the history of French diplomacy."

Keith Eubank, in his Paul Cambon: Master Diplomatist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), takes, as his title indicates, a positive view of Cambon's talents and achievements. A scrupulous historian, he does not hesitate to show the reader certain negative views of Cambon which others have held. In his final "evaluation" of Cambon he reported along with more laudatory views, Lord Esher's estimate that Cambon was "shrewd and pliant," "courteous and cunning," but imparted "an impression of possessing powers of mind that are in truth lacking" (p. 201). In his two brief appendices Eubank discusses "Cambon's Inability to Speak English" (p. 209) ("As far as is known, he never spoke English, even after living for twenty-two years in London" [p. 209]), and the exceptionally controversial historiographical issue emanating from "Cambon's discussion with Lansdowne on May 17, 1905" (pp. 207-208). The issue is whether or not Cambon misunderstood the conversation with Lord Lansdowne (in the midst of the First Moroccan Crisis) as containing an offer of alliance from the English statesman. Such a misunderstanding, if it occurred, would be a grave error for a "master diplomatist" to make.

I am inclined to see in this controversy (which perhaps originated in Cambon's linguistic limitations) additional support for my contention that Cambon was not especially competent and sometimes made truly serious mistakes. Eubank, however, tries to resolve the controversy to Cambon's advantage in his "Appendix A," pp. 207-208.

⁴³Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy . . . , pp. 227-228.

⁴⁴Pierre Miquel, Poincaré (Paris: Librairie Arthene, 1961), p. 264.

⁴⁵G. P. Gooch, Before the War: Studies in Diplomacy, Vol. 2: The Coming of the Storm (London: Longmans Green, 1938), p. 155.

⁴⁶E. T. S. Dugdale, ed., German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, Vol. 4: The Descent to the Abyss, 1911-1914 (New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1931), p. 148. From Die Grosse Politik, XXXIV:42.

⁴⁷Miquel, Poincaré, p. 274.

⁴⁸Cambon, Correspondance, III:30.

⁴⁹Gooch, Before the War . . . , p. 196

⁵⁰Poincaré to Cambon, February 26, 1912, Documents diplomatiques français 3E Serie (1911-1914), Tome II (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1931), No. 105, pp. 102-103.

⁵¹Cambon, Correspondance, III:14-15.

⁵²Cambon to Fleuriau, April 3, 1912, DDF, 3E serie, II, No. 295, pp. 379-371.

⁵³Cambon to Poincaré, April 18, 1912, DDF, 3E serie, II, No. 363, pp. 370-371.

⁵⁴Cambon to Poincaré, October 12, 1912, DDF, 3E serie, IV, 1932, No. 136, p. 135.

⁵⁵Cambon to Doumergue, January 27, 1914, DDF, 3E serie, IX, No. 171, p. 200.

CHAPTER X

POINCARÉ'S POLICIES IN 1912: A PERSPECTIVE DERIVED FROM THE STUDY OF HANOTAUX

Chapter Rationale

For a statesman who established a reputation for irreproachable integrity, Raymond Poincaré was strikingly devious. His memoirs, Au service de France, contain abundant and generally accurate information on his experiences from 1912 through 1914, first as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and then as President of the Republic. But they were also a tour de force in concealment. They confirm most of our superficial knowledge from the wider record of those crucial years. They show that Poincaré sought to strengthen the security of France vis-à-vis Germany by tightening the Triple Entente, by promoting the pride and integrity of the French nation, and by enlarging the army. But they do not tell as much as we would like to know about his ultimate aims. Was he, for example, after Alsace-Lorraine as his enemies have always claimed? Did he seek the diplomatic ascendancy of France in Europe? Was he really trying to contain and perhaps ultimately reach a settlement with Imperial Germany or did he seek her destruction? Further, the memoirs do not satisfactorily explain his reasons for leaving a position of real power as head of the cabinet to become President of the Republic; and they do not reveal his behind-the-scenes activities to strengthen that notoriously

impotent office after he had attained it.¹ It is not surprising that most of his private papers were burned either by himself or by his widow, including the notes he used in preparing his memoirs.²

Poincaré built his personal fortune as an exceptionally successful lawyer. Gordon Wright points out that he defended his political career by never admitting anything negative until forced by cross examination.³ Frequent petty omissions in his memoirs "leave the impression that Poincaré wished to conceal any evidence of his personal activity [as President] however harmless it may have been."⁴

For the historian, Poincaré is paradoxical both as a subject and a source. He was an accomplished writer. He produced a flood of public documents. He was in the limelight for many years--observed, described, and interpreted. On the other hand, he was an aloof, secretive, personality, clever enough to operate behind the scenes without committing himself to paper.⁵ In perfect control of what he wanted to express, he used his gifts as a writer and speaker to make certain that he expressed only what he wanted to have heard. Poincaré has left the historian with an uncomfortable sense of trying to see an indistinct and shadowy figure through a blizzard of documentary information.

This study suggests certain questions which may be asked of Poincaré, of the record of what he said and did. These questions have authenticity because they are derived from Poincaré's milieu; because they are extrapolated, so to speak, from his friend Gabriel Hanotaux; and because Poincaré was directly confronted both in

Hanotaux's articles and in conversations with his friend with the views which have prompted them:

- Did Poincare fear the isolation of France?
- Did he seek to revive the Concert of Europe?
- Did he fear the subordination of French policy to the policy of others?
- Was he uncertain of the reliability of the Entente Cordiale?
- Did he seek the ascendancy of France? Did he seek the pivotal role for France as the manager of the equilibrium among the powers?
- Did he seek to become the leading European statesman?

Any fresh light which may be cast upon Poincaré through the pursuit of the answers to these questions is intended as a subsidiary result to this study of Hanotaux. Again, he is the subject of this dissertation. But if one should discover in Poincaré, concerns, ideas, and aims held in common with Hanotaux, it would considerably enhance the significance of Hanotaux as the subject of a microcosmic study in the coming of the First World War. It would show that an understanding of Hanotaux contributes to an understanding of French policy.

Poincaré, after all, was the French statesman who, more than any other, expressed the positions identified with France herself throughout the last two and one-half years before the war. This was still true even after he became president. The macrohistorians have concentrated their attention on President Poincaré, not on the principal ministers, Barthou, Briand, Doumergue or Viviani.

This approach is perilous. Poincaré must not be confused with Hanotaux by a forced reading of Hanotaux into Poincaré. The reader will have to judge whether or not this pitfall is avoided. Only limited space can be devoted to this "interrogation" of Poincaré. Only the most obvious questions have been derived from Hanotaux. The answers will remain relatively incomplete. A more thorough interrogation might yield richer results, but would require a detailed study of Poincaré which would reach far beyond the range of this dissertation.

The Isolation of France

When Poincaré took office as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in January 1912, in the aftermath of the Second Moroccan Crisis, he had his work cut out for him. Most of all he needed to shore up the Triple Entente which he promised the Chambers he would do.⁶ Gordon Wright points out that "among his greatest worries were Russian and English flirtations with Germany, which he feared might leave France without dependable support, a prey to blackmail or attack."⁷ Among his greatest fears was his country's isolation. To pull the Triple Entente together was not solely a defensive move against the Triple Alliance; it was also an effort to guarantee France against diplomatic and military isolation. The Potsdam agreement between Germany and Russia in late 1910 and Russia's feeble support during the Moroccan Crisis in the summer and fall of 1911⁸ gave Poincaré solid reasons to be uncertain of Russia. Aside from Lloyd George's "Mansion House" speech, which the French press

accepted as "an impressive reaffirmation of the strength and vigor of the entente," English caution throughout the crisis "disturbed French leaders."⁹ The French feared an Anglo-German naval agreement in 1910-1911.¹⁰ This fear persisted through Lord Haldane's visit to Berlin in February 1912.

Poincaré was upset, several months after taking office, when, on June 6, 1912, Izvolsky, the Russian Ambassador at Paris, told him about a meeting between the German Emperor and the Emperor of Russia scheduled for July 3 in Finnish waters. The Russian ambassador was himself embarrassed and assured Poincaré that this rendezvous of the imperial cousins would be without political significance and further that no ministers would be present. But the next day, he changed his story (possibly because he had not been well informed by his own government). He indicated that because the German Emperor was bringing his Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, Sazanov, the Russian Foreign Minister, must necessarily sit in.

This meant that the meeting would in fact be a major political event, and in Poincaré's view, gravely dangerous. He feared that Emperor William would make use of the occasion to take the initiative in arbitrating the Italo-Turkish conflict and that to await passively for this to happen would put a great strain on the Triple Entente. The parallel warnings of the German and Austrian governments and of the Russian government to the Italians in respect to the occupation of Mitylene and Chios implied possible Russian acquiescence to such a German initiative. Therefore, Poincaré felt that the Triple Entente powers must establish a "conformity of views" on the "re-establishment

of peace" between Italy and Turkey to which the Russian Emperor could refer in rejecting German advances for a separate understanding.¹¹ Poincaré feared that without such an agreement the meeting would have, in the words of the British Ambassador, Sir Francis Bertie, "a very evil effect on the general political situations and on relations between Russia and France."¹²

Between 1912 and 1914 Poincaré's principal success in international relations was in doing more than any British or Russian statesman to tighten the Triple Entente. All that can be said in evaluating his success is that the existence of the loosely knit group was preserved through the 1914 crisis and into the war. Although Poincaré's public statements on the Triple Entente are full of the language of mutual confidence, it is unlikely that he ever considered the relationship completely reliable. Even after the exchange of notes between Sir Edward Grey and Paul Cambon in November 1912, confirming the Anglo-French military conversations, he had to protest when the English Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, "assured the House of Commons in March 1913 that England was in no way committed to support France, and when both the Prime Minister and Grey made friendly references to Germany in speeches."¹³

As late as April 1914, Poincaré was still at work trying to tighten the Triple Entente. He may have been behind an article by Ernest Lavisse, a distinguished historian and president of the prestigious École Normale, which was published in both Le Temps and the London Times and created a sensation on both sides of the channel right at the time the English royal family was visiting

France. The article was, in effect, a trial balloon to see if British public opinion was ready for an alliance. While the royal family was visiting Paris, Poincaré encouraged Doumergue to press the British to sign a naval agreement with Russia by making use of the threat that if they did not Russia might defect to the German camp.¹⁴

The Triple Entente and the Concert of Europe

In 1912 Poincaré sought peace and the diplomatic leadership of France in Europe by tightening and clarifying the Triple Entente and by seeking to re-establish the European Concert.

In his macrohistoric study of the Origins of the World War, Sidney Fay viewed Poincaré's policy of strengthening the Triple Entente and seeking the Concert of Europe as both contradictory and hypocritical. He quoted a despatch from Poincaré to his ambassador at Vienna telling him to express as his "personal opinion that the French Government, firmly attached to the Triple Entente, does not aim at any exclusive interests in the East, and that the cooperation of all the powers seems to it necessary for the solution of the Balkan Problem."¹⁵ Fay followed by suggesting that "it is seldom that M. Poincaré ventures to put in one sentence two such essentially contradictory phrases as 'firmly attached to the Triple Entente' and the words which he now italicizes in his apologia, but which he did not italicize in 1912."¹⁶

Fay may have been inherently right. "Triple Entente" and "cooperation of all the powers" did prove, if the outbreak of the First World War is taken as definitive proof, to be incompatible.

Nevertheless, this was the policy Poincaré pursued in 1912 and the policy which Hanotaux himself expressed: "the interest of France is known; she is favorable to the equilibrium and the peace, with the cooperation and for the greater honor and profit of herself, of her ally, Russia, of the group in which she figures and of the European Concert of which she is a part."¹⁷

Hanotaux would certainly have denied that either his own statement or Poincaré's was internally contradictory. He would have seen neither statement as self-contradictory because of what he perceived to be the historical role of France in Europe as the balancer and mediator, because he perceived French interests to be limited and of no threat to the peace, and because he believed that it was possible to reach generally satisfactory solutions for all the powers: that for France to profit, Russia to profit, the Triple Entente to profit, did not mean that Germany, Austria, and the Triple Alliance could not profit, and profit equally. He believed in negotiation. He believed that solutions were inherent in the facts. He believed in the possibility of the Concert.

In September 1912, Hanotaux reiterated his views and tied them to Poincaré's trip to Russia:

In thus manifesting the sentiments of cordiality truly intimate which animates it, the Triple Entente will have reconquered all its authority. The European Concert reconstituted, with the balance of international forces exactly equivalent, it will bring to the peoples that which they desire above all, peace and the certainty of tomorrow. Then world opinion will understand the real import and happy influence of M. Poincaré's trip to St. Petersburg.¹⁸

During the Balkan Crisis, Izvolsky, the Russian ambassador in Paris, had trouble understanding Poincaré's insistence that the Triple Entente must be in agreement on an approach to the resolution of the crisis before taking the problem up with the powers of the Triple Alliance. He told Poincaré that he did not think that Sazanov or the English would approve, "because it would underline the division of Europe into groups." Poincaré responded: "The double grouping is a fact known to all and the public cooperation of the two groups has only advantages."¹⁹

Both Poincaré and Hanotaux advocated a policy which saw a stabilization of the alliance system and revival of the Concert as mutually complementary. The logic of this policy suggested that if the Concert successfully transcended the groups, if it brought the powers together to defuse the international crisis and settle international differences, then the alliances might be transformed from hostile groups often close to the edge of war into a community of mutually friendly powers for whom the groupings would represent no more than a method for guaranteeing the balance of power in Europe.

Avoiding Subordination to Russia

Poincaré had to assure Russia of France's loyalty to the Dual Alliance, and at the same time, to keep his country from being subordinated to Russia's aims. To preserve French freedom of action, he had to remind the Russians of exactly where matters stood. He insisted to Izvolsky on March 13, 1912, that with the exception of "a riposte to an attack or threat from Germany" Russia could not

count on French support without prior consultation. He corrected a declaration by Sazanov to the French Ambassador, George Louis, that Russia "would take no step in the East without giving us notice" by insisting that "it is not enough that you give us notice: we must give our consent."²⁰ In August 1912, while visiting in Russia, he "told Sazanov that French public opinion would not permit France to undertake military action for purely Balkan questions if Germany did not take part and if she did not 'provoke on her own initiative the application of the causus foederis.'"²¹

In the autumn of 1912, Poincaré "reiterated to Izvolsky his position on French obligations to Russia and insisted on previous consultation over Russian policy in the Balkans. He refused, moreover, to take the responsibility of suggesting policy, because Russia as the directly interested power should take the initiative. He reserved the right to examine proposed measures but would not agree with them or discuss them until he knew what they were."²²

Much as Hanotaux had sought as Foreign Minister to restrain Russia, Poincaré also sought to confine the causus foederis of the Russian Alliance to its terms and to avoid French subordination to Russian policy. On November 9, 1912, Hanotaux stated that there were certain duties in regard to Russia, "but these duties are exactly delimited in the pacts which unite the two powers. If a mutual confidence is to reign between the two diplomacies, it is on the condition that they take account respectively of their positions and of their risks."²³

Hanotaux's views that France was free to decide last in an Eastern Crisis would have been meaningless if Russia were successful in expanding the alliance to include automatic support if she should choose to make war on Austria over the Balkans. He wrote on September 7, 1912, following Poincaré's return from Russia:

Either to appease or to direct the events it is important that her [Russia's] friends are not held in ignorance of her intentions and her designs. Consequently, no conversation was more urgent, nor more delicate than that which has been engaged on this subject. All the perspectives of European politics revolve around this point of view: the two governments should place themselves together in order to study the approaching developments.²⁴

Like Poincaré he felt that Russia should lead the way in her own Balkan policies. On November 9, 1912, he wrote: "No one would admit that we have been, in effect, the principal protagonist for claims which are not our own."²⁵

The Entente Cordiale

England presented Poincaré with a different problem than did Russia. In the latter relationship the terms of alliance were reasonably clear, while the dangers were, on the one hand, that Russia and Germany would draw together and that the alliance would either be rendered inoperative or abrogated altogether, leaving France isolated; or, on the other, that France would find herself dragged into a war provoked by Russia. With England the terms of the relationship were loose and uncertain with little likelihood that England would drag France into war. The dangers were that England and Germany would reach a naval agreement which would sharply reduce England's motivation for supporting France on the continent or that,

even if an Anglo-German rapprochement did not occur, England would, in a showdown, either elect to stand clear of a continental war or delay for so long that her help would be worthless.

Although Poincaré was by no means successful in guaranteeing that England would support France in a continental war or that the Anglo-French Entente would remain a permanent factor in the European equilibrium, he did succeed in moving forward shrewdly and with tactical skill to press the English into tightening the Anglo-French relationship. He established an excellent working relationship with the English Ambassador, Sir Francis Bertie. He expressed thoughts and concerns about the Anglo-French relationship to Bertie, which were, of course, passed on in the latter's communications to his government. Bertie, as we have seen, warned Poincaré of Paul Cambon's failure to assess accurately an Anglo-German conversation.

Poincaré applied pressure on the English through Cambon. He did not hesitate to push Cambon by directing his attention to an article by Hanotaux which was publicly sceptical of English support. There can be no question where the initiative lay. So long as Poincaré was Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, that is, throughout 1912, it was Poincaré who was working on England through Paul Cambon. The initiative was Poincaré's.

He approved the concentration of the French battlefleet in the Mediterranean in 1912 which had the effect of putting moral pressure on England to defend the unprotected northern coasts of France against the German Navy. France made this decision unilaterally and in her own strategic interests. She sought to

strengthen the Mediterranean balance vis-à-vis Austria and Italy and to protect the transport of colonial soldiers from North Africa to metropolitan France in event of a continental war. In any case, the French Navy was not strong enough to meet the Germans alone in the Channel.

Although Poincaré admitted (July 1912) that the French had concentrated in the Mediterranean on their own volition, he insisted that "if the Entente did not mean that England would come to France's aid in the case the Germans attacked French ports, its value to France was not great."²⁶ At a minimum, the palatability of the risk to the French coasts was enhanced by the increased moral pressure which France's predicament would place on England if the German Navy bombarded the unprotected ports and coastal communities of Northern France.

Poincaré sought to orchestrate Russian pressure on England along with French pressure. For example, in letters exchanged August 15 and 16, 1912,

formally approving the naval conventions of previous months, Poincaré urged that Russia seek agreement with England concerning cooperation in the Baltic as a complement to French naval assistance to Russia in the Mediterranean, where France would contain the Austrian navy and prevent its entry into the Black Sea.²⁷

In the summer and fall of 1912 Grey felt pressure from both Russia, which wanted help in the Baltic, and France, which wanted a tighter formula for cooperation in event of war. He "could clearly have had few doubts . . . that Britain would have to give France something tangible or else risk disruption of the entente and the

and the possibility of isolation against Germany."²⁸ Anxieties over isolation could run both ways.

In the Grey/Cambon letters of November 22-23, 1912, the British Cabinet gave France the absolute minimum, an official acknowledgment of the talks between the French and English General Staffs, and not, as Poincaré had sought, a commitment of the British Cabinet "to a continental strategy should it decide to help France."²⁹

The Principle of Clarity

In his efforts to strengthen the Triple Entente and to promote the spirit of Concert among the Great Powers, Poincaré pursued "clarity" as an unstated objective. He sought to promote clarity in the understanding which the Great Powers had of their mutual relationships because this kind of understanding would contribute to stability and peace. He sought to make it clear to Russia that France was a friend, but not a subordinate. He tried to make it clear throughout Europe that France, while looking to her alliances and defenses, was prepared to seek solutions through the European Concert. Above all, he tried to persuade England that it was in her interests to make clear her commitment to her entente partners, that this kind of clarity was in the interests of peace.

Grey implicitly rejected the principle of "clarity" as fundamental to maintaining peace. Lowe and Dockrill state that when Bertie

suggested that Germany might be restrained from going to war by the knowledge of closer ties between members of the Triple Entente Grey demurred, "We are on good terms with Germany now," he replied, "and we desire to avoid a

revival of friction with her, and we wish to discourage the French from provoking Germany.³⁰

During the July 1914 crisis Poincaré wrote King George V that "if Germany had the certainty that the Entente Cordiale would be affirmed, should the need arise, on the field of battle, there would be the greatest chance that peace would not be troubled."³¹ But, of course, Poincaré's last minute efforts to achieve this kind of clarity failed.

If French policy under Poincaré was not exactly subordinated to that of England it was frustrated and even defeated by it. Of all the Great Powers, England did the best job of keeping her options open. And Grey, who sought the role of mediator between the groups,³² came the closest to attaining the position of leadership and diplomatic ascendancy that both Poincaré and Hanotaux hoped to attain for France.

In retrospect, Poincaré's approach may appear more promising than Grey's. The former sought the Concert from the base of a strong Triple Entente which would present no doubt to the Triple Alliance that it would fight in unity in event of war. The latter's approach was to minimize England's commitment to the Triple Entente and to act as a bridge or mediator between the groups (as at the London Ambassador's Conference). It is not merely a subtle distinction to point out that mediating between the groups, one of which is weakened by the ambivalent position of the mediator, is not necessarily the same thing as promoting the creation of a concert which transcends both.

Absolute Disinterestedness and the Balkans
for the Balkan Peoples

No statesman in Europe worked harder for the peace in the fall of 1912 than Poincaré.³³ Even Kiderlen-Wachter praised Poincaré's efforts to preserve peace in the Balkans.³⁴ He tried to prevent war by bringing the Concert into action.

After sounding out his entente partners and gaining the approval of Kiderlen-Wachter . . . Poincaré issued a call for the joint action of Russia and Austria-Hungary, who were to speak for all [that is, for the Concert of the Great Powers]. They were to warn the Balkan states to keep the peace, etc. . . . Early in October both Berthold and Sazanov agreed to the proposal . . . and on 8 October presented Europe's note to the Balkan states. . . . This time the concert that had been established was helpless [that is, the war began in spite of it].³⁵

Poincaré did not succeed in preventing the outbreak of the First Balkan War, but he sought to manage its consequences in a manner which would offer the best opportunity for maintaining a spirit of concert among the Great Powers and for pacifying the Balkan peninsula. On October 30, 1912 he proposed to the powers the following formula:

The Powers, recognizing that the hour is approaching in which they will be able to exercise their mediation between the belligerents in the Balkan peninsula, and continuing to place in the front line of their concern the maintenance of European peace, declare that they will apply themselves to the common endeavor in a spirit of complete disinterestedness.³⁶

This proposal for the Great Powers to mediate in complete or absolute disinterestedness was similar in its implications of Great Power self-denial to Hanotaux's "Balkans to the Balkan peoples."

Although Poincaré implied that the mediation of the Great Powers would be necessary, he wanted them to mediate in the completely disinterested spirit which would give reality to the Concert.

He did not want the direct intervention of the Great Powers in the peninsula, the policy that Hanotaux deplored, but into which Poincaré was inexorably pushed. Hanotaux himself had recognized, two weeks earlier (October 19) that eventually the Balkan question would "have to come before the areopagus of the powers."³⁷

Poincaré was forced rather rapidly by Austria to back away from "complete disinterestedness." Berchtold rejected Poincaré's proposal because he felt that Austria-Hungary had very important interests in the Balkans.³⁸ Moreover, according to Sir Fairfax L. Cartwright, the English Ambassador to Austria, Austria felt that France had "allowed herself to become the mere 'cats-paw' of Izvolsky."³⁹

Poincaré tried to mitigate the apparently negative effect of absolute disinterestedness by "instructing the French Ambassador . . . to declare verbally that the 'desinteressement' alluded to in the French note had merely territorial meaning." This did not help because the Austrians felt that all the powers had an interest even in the territorial settlement.⁴⁰

In a famous speech delivered at Nantes on October 26, 1912, Poincaré publicly defended his policy of disinterestedness in the Balkans against criticism that it had been intended to set the Triple Entente and Triple Alliance against each other and he defended it in terms which suggests the close affinity of his thinking to Hanotaux's:

The idea [disinterestedness] which united the English, Russian, and French governments had, in regard to the belligerent states, the merit of generosity without reserve, and in regard to the world, the merit of clarity. It did not have for its object and it could not have as its result the opposing of the one to the other of the groups of powers.⁴¹

Hanotaux certainly perceived the "Balkans to the Balkan peoples" as a "generosity without reserve" of the Great Powers and as a policy of clarity and simplicity which would be understood by all. Furthermore, he saw in it an essential step toward a triumph of the Concert in reaching a general settlement in the East, not as a way of opposing the groups of powers to one another.

Not only did Austria reject Poincaré's suggestion that all the Great Powers approach a Balkan mediation in a spirit of absolute disinterestedness, but Russia put unwelcome pressure on him to limit the successes of the Bulgarians at Adrianople and Constantinople. According to Bertie, the Russian Government proposed to France that the French and British Governments warn the "Bulgarian Government that Bulgaria would not be allowed permanently to retain Adrianople." Not wanting to alienate the Bulgarians and wondering how this would be enforced, Poincaré rejected the idea.⁴²

Sir George Buchanan, the English Ambassador in Russia, reported to Grey that Russia was taking the position that Constantinople and the Straits "must either remain Turkish [or] become Russian and that Russia would regard any attempt made by another Power to take permanent possession of them as a causus belli."⁴³ But Buchanan also informed Grey that Sazanov had indicated that "Russia would in any case join other Powers in sending ships of war to Constantinople, and that we must make the Bulgarians clearly to understand that if they occupied Constantinople their occupation must be of short duration."⁴⁴ Poincaré was "much put out at Sazanov."⁴⁵

To summarize this section, Poincaré pushed in the same direction as Hanotaux, toward the disinterestedness and restraint of the Great Powers in responding to the victory of the Balkan League, toward an attitude and approach which would offer an optimal chance for a successful manifestation of the Concert. He confronted obstacles, however, which he could not surmount in the unwillingness of Austria and Russia to fall in line.

A Conference of the Great Powers

In the late fall of 1912, as Poincaré was being forced to abandon the principle of complete disinterestedness and to accept intervention at Constantinople, he sought to bring the Great Powers together in a conference to deal with the Balkan crisis and hoped that it would be held in Paris under French leadership. On November 28, 1912, Paul Cambon wrote his brother Jules that Poincaré had been "dominated since the beginning of the crisis by his desire to create for himself claims to the presidency of the Republic, and for that purpose had sought to gather at Paris a European Congress under his Presidency."⁴⁶ On December 10, 1912, Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador in London, wrote Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg that a "well-informed journalist" had told him that Poincaré had been violently ruffled at the idea of accepting London as the place for the Ambassador's Conference, because he could not make up his mind to renounce his pet idea of increasing the brilliancy of his term in office at the Quai d'Orsay by means of an International Conference.⁴⁷

Although both Cambon and Lichnowsky were excessively critical of Poincaré's egotism they were both right in the sense that he sought a conference in Paris and was very disappointed that it was necessary to accept London. Bertie understood that Poincaré had more sober motives than personal ambition. He knew that Poincaré had sought to avoid an approach to the Balkan Crisis which would have the effect of dividing "the Powers into two camps, viz, into Triple Entente versus Triple Alliance." Poincaré had told Bertie that "as the Treaty of Berlin, 1878, will be upset as a consequence of the war it will be necessary for the Great Powers to take some action such as a conference for substituting for it some other general arrangement."⁴⁸

In the event, the Conference was held in London because of the objections of Austria against having to negotiate at Paris with Izvolsky. Izvolsky, of course, now the Russian ambassador to France, had been, in the minds of the Austrians, the villain of the Bosnian Crisis of 1908.

Conclusion

In 1912 Poincaré sought the diplomatic leadership of Europe. He sought to strengthen, clarify, and stabilize the Triple Entente, while seeking, at the same time, the revival of the Concert of Europe. He took the lead vis-à-vis both England and Russia in the effort to strengthen the Triple Entente. He took the lead in Europe in the effort to revive the Concert. First, he tried to prevent war in the Balkans by initiating the concerted action of the Great Powers.

After this failed, he proposed a pledge among the Great Powers to approach mediation between the belligerents in a spirit of complete or absolute disinterestedness. Finally, after this also failed, he proposed and was prepared to oversee an international conference in Paris to effect a Balkan settlement. But in this also he was disappointed. Although he avoided the isolation of France and the subordination of French to Russian policy, he failed in his best efforts to attain peace by transcending and defusing the enmity between the Triple Entente and Triple Alliance through the revival of the Concert of Europe.

In his fears, his goals, his strategies and his understanding of international realities, Raymond Poincaré possessed a mind strikingly similar to Gabriel Hanotaux's. Behind his personal reticence, behind his concessions to political necessity, behind the often misleading pages of his memoirs, a mind was at work which was not only analogous to Hanotaux's in its nationalist faith and its hopes and fears for France, but which was engaged in the pre-war crisis in a profoundly parallel manner.

The true nature of Poincaré's policies in 1912 is blurred by his failures. In 1912, Poincaré stood for peace through the European Concert, a spirit of openness and cooperation among all the powers, and for a clarification in the interests of peace and stability of international relationships, including the tightening of the Triple Entente. By failing to achieve peace through the Concert of Europe and by failing to stimulate a new spirit of cooperation among the powers, by failing to achieve those goals that Hanotaux also sought

in 1912, Poincaré ended up looking very much like Delcassé, that is, a leader whose net effect was to tighten the noose of encirclement around the necks of the Germans.

The symbolic watershed in this apparent narrowing of French policy appears in early 1913 after Poincaré's election to the presidency. He immediately appointed Delcassé, who had been the naval minister in his cabinet, Ambassador to St. Petersburg. This was a message to the Germans which stated unmistakably that France was placing highest priority on strengthening Russia, encouraging a tightening of the Russian ties not only with France, but with England, and, generally, was prepared to take risks to contain the Germanic powers.

In 1912 Poincaré had pursued policies very close to those advocated by Hanotaux in the press. He had, so to speak, burned his fingers on "the Balkans to the Balkan peoples" and the resurrection of the Concert. In early 1913 he had taken on the presidency, a move in which Hanotaux had seen great possibilities for constructive leadership. But by 1914, as his influence was waning, he was paying a price in frustration for that decision, too. In the spring of 1914, he was embarrassed by Hanotaux's articles advocating a stronger presidency. He may have become by then more apprehensive than before about listening to his friend or taking his advice. In any case, in the spring of 1914 he was unwilling to take the risks involved in trying to implement a rather elaborate scene of salvation for France and Europe which Hanotaux was advancing.

CHAPTER X: FOOTNOTES

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⁴⁸Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, November 19, 1912, British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, IX, II, No. 234, p. 176.

CHAPTER XI

THE COMING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

ON THE EVE OF THE WAR: A PATHWAY TO SALVATION?

This combination [a Russo-German rapprochement] would bring together, almost inevitably, Austria and England, England having the greatest interest in not letting Germany and Russia become the mistresses of the great Mediterranean routes. It is consequently possible that England would group around her all the liberal and Mediterranean powers and would march to the defense of Austria-Hungary. The choice of France, depending whether she attached herself to the one or the other group, would consequently be decisive. But, if she enters into the "Potsdam" combination [for there is the real point of departure] what will they [Germany and Russia] give her for that?¹

- Gabriel Hanotaux
"Carnet," February 20, 1914

The final months before the war were difficult for Hanotaux. He continued to be disturbed by what he perceived to be the dangerous and unstable conditions in the relations among the European powers and by the reprehensible moral atmosphere pervading international relations.

In his preface to the French translation of a book on international law by the President of Columbia University, Nicholas Murray Butler, he wrote:

We have come to authorize and even praise, in international relations, a fanfare of cynicism which would horrify us in private life. Ambitions loudly proclaimed, obscure combinations, vulgar particularisms, the habit of deceit and dissimulation are extolled as equal to the rarest virtues. Violence and perfidy are justified because they have succeeded.²

Soberly and stoutly he reaffirmed his vocation as historian and man of action:

Through history man learns the beauty of his effort and the grandeur of his impotence; for he is forever beginning a task he cannot achieve. The validity of the work and the tragic nobility of failure, the just hesitation of reason between optimism and pessimism, is the true demonstration of history; it exposes to man the causes of his continual hope among those of his perpetual discouragement. Man cannot know if progress is made in a straight line, a spiral or a circle; there are different and indifferent solutions to the problem which the centuries have not clarified; but man knows that he lives to act and ought to act well. Here, history finds its whole efficacy.³

Throughout these difficult months Hanotaux persisted in his efforts to strengthen France, to improve the prospects for peace, to prepare his countrymen for whatever seismic shocks might occur within the European order, and to find a pathway to de-fuse international tensions and to establish peace and stability through a realignment of the powers.

Weathering the present difficulties and achieving peace and the ascendancy of France would require considerable courage, strength, and foresight on the part of France's leaders. Would they have the requisite sang froid? Hanotaux was not sure. On March 30, 1914, he confided in his "Carnets" that perhaps only Alexandre Millerand would take the risks necessary to save France.⁴ Apparently Poincaré was not prepared for any risky departures which might affect the present alignment of the powers and threaten to upset the tenuous security which had been achieved through tightening the Triple Entente. France might find herself dangerously alone vis-à-vis Germany.

The pathway to salvation which Hanotaux hoped his country would travel is discernible through his writings and activities on the eve of the war. His desire to risk the transition to this pathway was no doubt in part a reflection of his disappointment with the Poincaré presidency and French diplomacy for failing to achieve what he had hoped could be achieved: an ascendant France in a peaceful Europe.

He could not and did not baldly and publicly state what he had in mind. That would have been impolitic and extremely dangerous. It would, for instance, have inevitably been interpreted in the prevailing atmosphere as a suggestion that the Franco-Russian Alliance be abandoned, a heresy of the first magnitude. Nevertheless, the principal features of his plan of salvation emerge clearly against the background of his views over the years on the position of France in Europe, on the interrelations of the powers, and on the possibilities inherent in the European, Mediterranean, and even world situations to resolve through statesmanlike leadership the tensions and conflicting ambitions of the powers and to establish peace.

During the fall of 1913 Hanotaux published several articles advocating closer relations between the French state and the Vatican. He recommended that the Law of Separation of December 9, 1905, be transformed into a "Concordat of Separation." He contended that it would be to the advantage of both France and the Church to close the rift between them.⁵ In making this suggestion, Hanotaux's motives were more political than religious. As Peter Grupp has suggested, he was not "an orthodox Catholic. . . . His religiosity and his relations

with Catholicism always remain marked by strong patriotic, that is to say, political elements."⁶

These political motives were easy to see. Reconciliation with the Vatican would strengthen the French religious establishment in the East, which Hanotaux saw as an "agent of civilization."⁷ It would also symbolize the healing of the wounds of the struggle between the Church and State in France, the political manifestation of the spiritual reconciliation that Hanotaux sought through Joan of Arc. It would tend to draw many Italians closer to France at a time when the Italian government was less than totally committed to the Triple Alliance. It would appeal to many Spaniards.⁸ It would help to pacify the Mediterranean. It would prepare the ground for an enlargement of French influence in Austria, and in the predominantly Catholic Rhenish and South German states which were subordinate entities in the German Empire of the Protestant Hohenzollerns. It would, over the long run, improve the possibilities for the Burgundian settlement that Hanotaux had long desired.

An article published in the midst of the 1914 Crisis, "L'Autriche-Hongrie et les Slaves du Sud" (July 25, 1914), shows that Hanotaux was moderately optimistic about Austria-Hungary, and discerned a pathway to her salvation, which, in the wider context of his own thinking, was the lynchpin for his own program for the salvation of France and of Europe. In that article, Hanotaux expressed sympathy with Austria's plight, reaffirmed his belief that an Austro-Hungarian Empire, drawn together and perpetually reconciled within itself under the leadership of the Hapsburg dynasty, was necessary to

Europe. He also complimented Berchtold on doing rather well up to the time of the Sarajevo murders at skirting the precipice of war; and he reasserted his confidence that Franz Joseph would "probably not abandon a line of conduct which had always been his: to make use of his supreme authority, in order to try to arrange things, to work out a "compromise.'"⁹

The multi-national empire represented an ongoing effort on the part of diverse peoples to live together without losing their identities, in a context of shared loyalties, security, and historical experience, while, above all, it represented a living example of Hanotaux's fundamental principle, the management of the equilibrium. Hanotaux regarded the "existence of Austria-Hungary as a tour de force of equilibrium."¹⁰

He recognized, however, that Austria-Hungary was in a difficult predicament and that this was largely her own doing. Bismarck had encouraged the ambitions of the Empire in the Balkans, but it was Aerenthal's policy which had "put the peoples of the Balkans, Austria, itself, and finally Europe in an impasse."¹¹ It was the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina which had stirred up the hornet's nest of Slavism both inside and outside the imperial frontiers and prepared the dilemma in which the Empire was now caught: "To advance would be to brave mortal dangers, to retreat would be to risk losing face and prestige among subjects and among adversaries."¹² Moreover, Austria-Hungary must choose between "a rupture with Slavism" and a search for "the conditions of a friendly settlement." Further, the only real choice was the latter: "The fact of Serbia exists: they cannot

suppress it . . . [to do so] it would be necessary to destroy a whole people."¹³ Peace between Austria-Hungary and the South Slavs was possible: "An Austro-Hungarian diplomacy which was more flexible could become before Europe and before history, the tutor and patron of the South Slavic nationalities, grouped under diverse headings around her. It would be a noble initiative and an immense benefit."¹⁴

In April 1914, King George and Queen Mary of England visited France. The French exploited the situation to try to further consolidate Anglo-French ties. Ernest Lavisse, historian, academician, and director of the prestigious École Normale, published an article, probably at Poincaré's instigation,¹⁵ first in Temps (April 8) and then in the London Times (April 16), advocating a formal Anglo-French alliance.

Lavisse bypassed Paul Cambon and the French embassy in England. In fact, according to Lichnowsky, the German ambassador at London, the French embassy found Lavisse's article an "inconvenient adjunct to the visit of the King and Queen to the French capital."¹⁶ In any case, the English were unmoved by the Lavisse proposal. In fact, the reaction in the English press was very negative.

The best the French could do when their royal guests arrived amidst great public enthusiasm on April 21 was to perform as cordial hosts in public, but press the English cabinet leaders in private to tighten their naval understanding with Russia under the threat of a Russian defection.¹⁷

After the English royalty departed, Hanotaux followed with an article in Figaro which asserted the value of the status quo in

Anglo-French relations,¹⁸ an article which may be viewed as both a gesture of good will, and an unofficial statement of acquiescence in the French press to the current nature of the Triple Entente.

Hanotaux's apparent enthusiasm for the current spirit, condition and usefulness of the Triple Entente made him a much more muted critic than on previous occasions:

The Triple Entente covers, all together, the entire planet. And its extent is only one of the elements of its grandeur; military strength, pecuniary riches, the prestige of opinion of the three powers, all that is immense. With numerous states gravitating already into the orbit of that constellation¹⁹

It is very easy to understand in what way this group differs from the other: the Triple Alliance is above all European and political, it is dynamic if I dare say it; the Triple Entente is above all world-wide and friendly, it is static.²⁰

As to the Entente Cordiale, Hanotaux echoed the sentiments of Raymond Poincaré that it was "the most certain guarantee of the European equilibrium," more certain, implicitly, than the Franco-Russian Alliance. But it remained after ten years "in nearly the same terms, except for certain consolidations belonging to usage and to time" and it was "important that France have no illusions on this subject."²¹ At the moment the Triple Entente was rendering "to the peace of the world the true service" expected of it. It was exercising "in the sense of the ideas, views, and interests of the three powers a conservative and preponderant influence." If the time should come for "lining up the bayonets and dreadnoughts we shall see"²²

In spite of current rumors Hanotaux did not think that the transformation of the Triple Entente into a Triple Alliance was

probable. England would not want "to engage herself in a policy which would constrain her to modify her military institutions, and her social system." France herself had serious reasons for abstaining. She would alienate some of her freedom of movement and would have to commit herself to the defense of British imperial interests even though her own vital interests narrowed to a particular frontier where she would, in any case, have to parry a surprise attack herself. It would be very difficult to "reach a formula which would assure equivalent advantages . . . to the three countries." Finally, an alliance would be dangerous: "the world divided more sharply into two camps would be exposed to immediate danger."²³

Hanotaux feared any further polarization of the European alliances. His hope was for a realignment of the powers which would depolarize them, de-fuse the crisis, and prepare the way to a general settlement. The pathway to peace and to the ascendancy of France which Hanotaux discerned depended on the realignment of the Great Powers which would occur if Austria-Hungary broke with Germany, re-establishing in the same motion her own equilibrium and stability through a reconciliation with the South Slavs. This movement by Austria would either be precipitated by a Russo-German rapprochement or would result in one. The new Russo-German combination would force Austria and England together. Austria would need support vis-à-vis Russia which would resent her influence in the Balkans. England, potentially menaced on land and sea by the Russo-German combination, would group together not only with Austria, but with the other

Mediterranean powers to establish a new balance of power resting in the Mediterranean.²⁴

This realignment of the powers would position France to occupy the middle ground between the new groups, to further her own interests, and to manage the equilibrium to the benefit of international stability and peace. On the one hand, France could assert considerable leadership in the Mediterranean because of her natural pre-eminence among her Latin sisters, her special relationship with Islam, her friendly ties with England, her friendly encouragement of Austria in her new relationships, and the constructive accommodation with the Roman Catholic Church which Hanotaux hoped for. Behind England would be the British Empire. At a distance would be the New World, friendly to the France of the Franco-American Committee. France could cooperate with the Mediterranean group without subordination and without losing her freedom of action. Her influence in the region would be too great and her ties with the Mediterranean group would be too strong for her to run a serious risk of isolation.

On the other hand, France would be nicely positioned to participate in the Russo-German combination without subordination to the principal parties. Her influence with this group would also be great. This would come in part because Germany and Russia would recognize her natural ties with the Mediterranean group and in part because Germany and Russia, largely cut off from the Mediterranean world, would need France to attain their ends. Further, France would strive to maintain friendly relations with both Germany and Russia. Whether the narrow terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance would remain

in effect or not, Russia, with her insatiable need for French capital investment, and her remaining need for a friendly counterweight to Germany, would exercise a restraining influence on Germany in respect to Germany's relations with France.

The realignment of the powers would ameliorate the armed peace. With France in an independent role as manager of the equilibrium and arbiter of peace, Europe would be depolarized. For several reasons, the grip of Prussian militarism on Germany would probably weaken. The threat of encirclement would be lifted from Germany. The Russo-German combination would de-fuse the conflict between the Germans and the Slavs. The rapprochement between Austria-Hungary and the South Slavs would also contribute to this reduction of tension. The Slavic peril as a traditional justification for Prussian militarism would erode. Both Austria and a France reconciled with the Catholic Church would gain an influence favoring civilization and peace in the South German States. A healthier balance of forces would be established within Germany herself. Germany would be swayed away from her ambiguous stand on war and peace, and would be persuaded to give up her policy of armed peace as both futile and unnecessary.

If a direct confrontation should occur between the new groups, France could, if she wished, throw in her lot with the highest bidder.²⁵ But Hanotaux's system argued that France would make this choice only if forced by circumstances or massively bribed. To Hanotaux the power to choose was at least as valuable as the choice itself. His preferred course would probably have been to stay in the middle ground between the groups and to manage the equilibrium in the interests of

peace and the ascendancy of France. To choose would be to give up the advantages of the middle ground and to risk subordination to the victors. France would be of immense value both to the Mediterranean group and the Russo-German combination and, consequently, would be positioned to arbitrate between them, to lead the way to a definitive settlement in the East, to a resolution of Europe's quarrels, to a reassertion of the European Concert under the leadership of France.

A Burgundian settlement could be part of a larger settlement. Russia could achieve access for her warships through the Straits. Not only the Germano-Slavic, but the Franco-German and Anglo-Russian quarrels could be amicably concluded. France could achieve the preponderant role in establishing the Mediterranean peace, the European peace, and the peace of the world. A benign and ascendant France would at last have recovered her grandeur.

These were the essential features of the pathway to salvation which Hanotaux discerned. It was his old dream of ascendancy, the dream he had dreamed for so long in subtly evolving incarnations. It was a desperate last minute dream against a looming catastrophe. In the spring of 1914 the French government continued to seek peace and security through a tightening of the Triple Entente. It used the threat of a Russian defection to try to draw England more tightly in. Hanotaux saw in the same threat and in Austria's situation the hope and the possibility for something better.

In 1914 Hanotaux's dream of ascendancy was not radically different from the plan of 1892. Now it was no longer necessary to destroy the power of England, which was no longer the hegemonic

power she had appeared to be in 1892. Now Germany was standing armed to the teeth on the French frontier showing expansionistic tendencies, and an intrinsic ambiguity on the issue of war and peace. Germany had to be pacified and drawn more clearly into the positive and peaceful currents of European civilization. And, as in the 1892 Plan, the agenda of European ambitions had to be addressed in a manner which would settle Europe's quarrels.

This latter day version of Hanotaux's dream of the ascendancy of France was more decidedly peaceful than the version of 1892. War was no longer an intrinsic feature of the dream, an instrument necessary to its realization. War was no longer the evident temptation which it had been to Hanotaux in 1892, when he had contemplated an across-channel invasion of England. In the last year before the First World War, Hanotaux was passionately committed to seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis. But his search for peace remained as always part and parcel of his life-long quest for the ascendancy of France.

The Outbreak of War

During the 1914 Crisis, Hanotaux hoped up to the last moment that peace could be maintained. On July 31, 1914, he published an article in Figaro, "La crise européenne et la France," in which he was still hopeful, but in which he was thoroughly aware that unless something were done quickly to avert the catastrophe it would be too late.²⁶ In this article, which he appears to have written before the Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on Serbia (July 28) and the

shelling of Belgrade (July 29), he expressed the view that the outcome of the Austro-Serb crisis would be determined by the behavior of the other powers. Recognizing that Austria-Hungary had been "gravely offended," he went no further in condemning her than to suggest that she had "pushed her demands too far." On the other hand, he had become deeply suspicious of German intentions. A few days earlier, he had hoped that France might cooperate with a German effort to restrain Austria-Hungary, but he had now begun "to doubt the sincerity of these ambiguous [German] moves." He suspected that Germany was submitting "to the pressure of the military party" and intending to wage a preventive war before Russia's military preparedness could be completed. But he did not regard this as proved.²⁷

Hanotaux suspected that the proposition of Sir Edward Grey for an ambassadorial conference had been defeated because of the fear of the Germanic powers of leaving the upper hand to England. But its defeat meant that "classic" diplomacy had lost its most precious card. All that was left were direct conversations between Germany and Russia. Hanotaux felt that Germany and Russia ought to be able to reach an understanding on the basis of the Austrian commitment not to annex Serbian territory but only to administer Serbia a rude lesson, and, on the basis of the further assumption that Austria's silence regarding the independence of the Serbian government had left open the possibility that Austria would be willing to engage herself in respect to that as well.²⁸

If the war could not be avoided, Hanotaux was satisfied that France would be ready to fight. The conditions, he said, could hardly be more favorable:

We were exposed to finding ourselves, one day or another, all alone confronted by Germany; today, we are three; and, on the other hand, one of the powers of the Triple Alliance, Italy, appears to march only with hesitation; and that is understandable since she would march against her own interests.²⁹

Nevertheless, Hanotaux insisted that because France was prepared to fight, that she was in an excellent position to defend the peace "passionately and up to the last moment."³⁰ As to England, Hanotaux had no doubt that she would take "a position on the side of world independence."³¹

The outbreak of the First World War was the supreme moment of European nationalism. When the orders for mobilization came, men everywhere not only did their duty by joining their regiments and marching off to their deaths, but each nation was soon caught up in an exalted spirit of common purpose, which lasted for several weeks and which then tempered down into the resigned and relentless determination with which the slaughter was generally endured.

As an historian, Hanotaux was conscious of such impressive expressions of national unity and determination in the past and valued them highly. In commenting on the English reaction in 1877 to the peace preliminaries at San Stefano, he suggested that

one of those sudden movements was awakened in which anger joins the national sang-froid, and in which the nation shows itself resolved to act. . . . Such movements, spontaneous yet disciplined, are among the finest phenomenon of history and explain England's greatness.³²

Hanotaux shared the determination of his countrymen and expressed it in the articles which he published almost daily throughout the first weeks of the war. Later he would proclaim, in the preface to these collected articles that they were "an echo of the feelings which were those of the whole country."³³ France's patriotic fervor, embodied in the "Union Sacrée," the emerging wartime cabinet, was the expression of the reconciliation in French society which Hanotaux had worked for all his life.

The outbreak of the war was also a release from frustration, which helps in turn to explain the exaltation with which Hanotaux and so many others entered it. It brought an end to the series of crises, the grinding tension and uncertainty, of the preceding years. It meant that the armaments competition which Hanotaux had felt was unbearably expensive but which had been going nowhere and resolving nothing had reached a showdown. When it became apparent immediately that France would fight united, it meant that any underlying fears that Hanotaux and others may have had of revolution were swept away. Fears that the Triple Entente might give way to an adverse realignment of the powers and to the isolation of France were also dissipated.

The time had come to worry no longer, but to act; and Hanotaux acted with energy. He offered his services at the Foreign Ministry, but these were refused.³⁴ He spoke with Raymond Poincaré at the Elysée.³⁵ He began immediately to appeal to the neutrals, especially the United States, to come to the aid of the Allies. He assumed leadership in organizing the relief of refugees. He quickly took up the task of writing the history of the war.

Having written about Thucydides just before the war, he would like Thucydides, write about the greatest of wars while it unfolded.³⁶ This effort would bring him into regular contact with the military leaders, among whom he appears to have been universally welcomed. It would lead initially to numerous articles in the Revue des deux mondes and to a multi-volumed Histoire illustre de la guerre de 1914.³⁷ After the war he would write "hommages" to Joffre, Mangin, and Foch.³⁸

The outbreak of war transformed Hanotaux's attitude toward war itself. It marked a sudden and brutal psychological revolution. He had never been a chauvinist, but he had always understood the role of war in the creation of France and had felt that a nation must be willing to fight to protect its life. He had shown himself willing, in 1892, to consider initiating a war if the stakes were high enough. He did not rule war out as an instrument of policy. But now, for the first time, he wrote in exalted tones of the tribe rising to defend itself; for the first time he payed explicit homage to the morality of war. He was conscious of an abrupt transformation within himself and within his countrymen, which he understood as a reawakening of fundamental instincts. He deftly expressed this emergence of war to the dominance of consciousness in a contradiction which could not have been accidental. On July 25, 1914, he had written:

But the error of the diplomats of the old school consists-- I will never repeat it enough--of seeing solely the case of war, which is the exception, and not the time of peace which is quite fortunately, the normal state.³⁹

A few weeks later in mid-August 1914, he conceded:

The state of war is the normal state of humanity; peace is the exception.

And this is why the thinkers, the historians, have pointed to the beneficent virtues of war. It returns man to the reality of his perishable life: it restores the principle of all society, the spirit of sacrifice.⁴⁰

Hanotaux believed from the beginning that the war might be long and difficult. On August 12, 1914 he wrote that Paris and France were "taking their dispositions for a struggle which could be long and bloody." France was in a conflict which should "be uncertain for many weeks and many months." Moreover, the war would become a war of famine for the Germans.⁴¹ On the eve of the First Battle of the Marne, with the Germans approaching Paris, Hanotaux perceived that the war was becoming a war of exhaustion. If the French would keep up their courage and stand firm, they would win.⁴²

He had begun immediately to appeal to the neutral powers. On August 7 he published a letter which he had already written and sent, by virtue of his position as the President of the Franco-American Committee, to government leaders and other influential personalities throughout the Americas. This letter was an appeal to the commonality of civilization which he believed the Germans had forgotten. He reminded the notables of the Americas that they had supported the Hague agreements on the "humane regulation of war" which he believed the Germans were violating, and he invoked the words of Nicholas Murray Butler that "we are the guardians of our brothers." He insisted that the "destiny of civilization" was "in the hands of the neutral powers, of the American powers. . . ."⁴³ A few days earlier he had said in Figaro in regard to England's entry into the war:

"that makes five powers: Russia, France, Serbia, Belgium, and England . . . while waiting for the others."⁴⁴

Hanotaux was immensely pleased by England's entry into the war. He entitled his article of August 4, 1914: "Hurrah for England!" But he insisted that England had come in because of her interests, not because of the entente. He believed that the decisive sentence had been spoken by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons: "If a Great Power, like England, disinterests herself in such a crisis, do you believe, that she would find herself, in the end, in a position to protect her interests?"⁴⁵

In mid-August Hanotaux referred to the Anglo-French "general staff convention" which he understood had been signed on November 22, 1912:

It was from that time in effect that the Entente, which could have been for us an immense deception, was defined by an exchange of letters coordinating the plans of the general staffs in case of an European War. England had pronounced herself on that eventuality.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, he believed that in the present circumstances it was the violation of Belgium which had forced England's hand: "Germany forced England to declare herself."⁴⁷ A few months later Hanotaux summarized his views on England's entry into the war:

The problem which remained posed was this: what degree of alliance did the Entente admit and what security would the sympathetic declarations of the London cabinet bring in case of armed conflict? On this capital point, uncertainty reigned up to the day war was declared. The diplomatic errors of Germany decided, in the final analysis, the vigorous part adopted by England.⁴⁸

Anti-German Propagandist

In the years before the First World War, Hanotaux displayed considerable forbearance toward the Germans. He did not take the view that they were incorrigible barbarians, but with the coming of the war the view emerged that barbarism had gained the upper hand in Germany. Immediately after the Franco-Prussian War, young Hanotaux had studied the work of Fustel de Coulanges,⁴⁹ who provided the intellectual foundations for viewing the Germans as barbarians. Before the First World War this way of understanding the Germans was a latent feature of Hanotaux's intellectual equipment and was expressed in his perceptions of German expansionism and German ambiguity on the issue of war and peace. But he remained hopeful until the war that in Germany peace and civilization would win out. In the 1920s he would devote a lengthy laudatory article to Fustel apparently as a defense against "revisionism."⁵⁰

Hanotaux's transformation into an anti-German propagandist is worth considering. In a sense he had always been a propagandist; that is, he had always been an advocate for France. As a nationalist historian, he had consciously and explicitly sought out the grandeur of France and as an essayist on contemporary issues he had sought to encourage Frenchmen to comprehend and live up to the greatness of their country. But he had not been a propagandist in the sense of being a writer who cynically distorted truth to manipulate the attitudes of others. He sought truth for himself in a context of faith and history and he proselytized.

In becoming an anti-German propagandist at the beginning of the war, Hanotaux sought to come to intellectual terms with the war and with what he sincerely believed to be Germany's responsibility for starting it. He evolved an interpretation of events and of German acts and German motives which was consistent with his past understandings and with what he saw happening before his eyes. He did, however, realize that the climate was a poor one for historical objectivity and that the fundamental reason for even attempting to write history under such unfavorable circumstances and so close to the events was that were it not written "by us then it would be written against us." He aspired to teach the truth, but he asked his readers to forgive him insofar as he departed under the pressure of the moment from a spirit of equity.⁵¹

As the war continued to grind on, his criticism of the Germans grew more bitter and elaborate. His expanding arsenal of propaganda weapons represented a widening and deepening of his perceptions of German acts and German motives. Insofar as he may have been intellectually dishonest (to be intellectually honest is not necessarily to be right), it was not, on the whole, in what he said about the Germans, but in his failure to draw conclusions from his previous writings which tended to implicate France in the more distant causes of the war.

The Germans had done most of those things which Hanotaux said they had done. They had declared war. They had violated the neutrality of Belgium. They had shot civilians in Belgium. They had

shelled the cathedral at Reims. They had burned the great medieval library at the University of Louvain. It may be added here that this latter act seemed particularly depressing and barbarous to a bibliophile with Hanotaux's passion for the source materials of history. The partial destruction of Hanotaux's home and library in the Aisnes in the early weeks of the war and the burning of Ernest Lavisse's home at Noyon at the same time may not have been the least consequential of German mistakes.⁵²

On August 11, 1914 Hanotaux wrote of Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, "the most elevated person in the German Empire . . . the most moderate, a consummate jurist, a philosopher," then he used the Chancellor's own words to condemn him:

Necessity knows no point of law. Our troops have occupied Luxembourg and perhaps already Belgium. That is contrary to the Law of Nations . . . we had to pass over the justified protests of Luxembourg and of Belgium. . . . When one is menaced as we are, and when one fights for the supreme good, one does what one must.⁵³

In insisting that the war was a German assault against civilization Hanotaux was not merely trying to rally France and the world to propaganda's ultimate charge against the Germans, but he believed this charge himself, and he believed it, not merely because of specific instances of German destructiveness or inhumanity, or even because an attack on France was seen as an attack on civilization itself, but because of a cluster of specific and interrelated reasons.

He had always perceived an ambiguity in the Germans. On the one hand, they had seemed to desire peace. But beneath the surface they had retained a barbarian spirit of expansionism which had been

manifested in the pre-war years in the "dynamism" of the Triple Alliance. The war now signified the triumph of this spirit.

Over the years Hanotaux had remained open to the constructive capabilities and successes of the Germans and to what he believed to be their commitment to rationality as a fundamental principle of their methodical and scientific civilization and as a standard for their relations with the other powers. This is not to say that the Germans had always behaved with rational clarity or that his confidence in them went unshaken. They sometimes manifested rather astonishing shifts in specific policies as they did several times in the duel with France over Morocco. At the time of Second Morocco, they had surprised him by abruptly shifting attention from East to West, from the Balkans and Turkey to Africa, and by acting in a manner which Hanotaux saw as contrary to their own interests. Kiderlen-Wachter, surely, had been unscrupulous, heavy-handed and not very skillful, but even he had been prudent enough in the crunch to avoid war.

But, to Hanotaux, the German declaration of war and the attack through Belgium were not only manifestations of the barbarian spirit of expansionism, they were repudiations of international law and affirmations of the principle of anarchy, which he believed was the essence of barbarism. They were also repudiations of reason. Not only had the Germans deliberately eschewed opportunities for a settlement of the crisis, but in choosing war were acting contrary to a rational understanding of their own interests. They were acting irrationally and once again like barbarians. Hanotaux perceived certain motives in their behavior, "reasons," if you wish, and he

perceived immense arrogance, but he felt that the Germans had abandoned good sense, the principles of law, and the rational calculations of interests and situations which could be expected from a civilized country operating within the international system.⁵⁴

On August 5 Hanotaux expressed his view that Germany had acted with incomprehensible stupidity, that she was "no longer exercising upon herself that famous rational discipline of which she was so proud." To support this contention he quoted the German ambassador to France, von Schoen, as having said that a war with France, Russia, and England, would be suicidal for Germany. He concluded that the German Government was divided, that the rational men had been pushed aside, and that the militarists under the leadership of the Crown Prince forced matters at Berlin and on the frontiers. He did not believe that Emperor William had taken the lead in the decisions to go to war, but had acquiesced to pressures of the military party.⁵⁵ On August 9, Hanotaux reiterated the view that the war party was in the saddle under the leadership of the Crown Prince and that key decisions may have been taken out of William's hands.⁵⁶

Hanotaux suspected that "the dilemma which pushed the weakening sovereign into the corner" was that of "revolution or war." Although he did not adduce much evidence to support the premise that the German leaders feared revolution, he did point to the recent elections (in which the Social Democrats had won considerable success) as being "menacing to the dynasty" and suggested that the German people were restless under the heavy burden of armaments. He also

suggested that the "hobereaux" of the military party had become over-excited to violence because they sensed that "they had played their last card."⁵⁷

Hanotaux combined these suspicions with his suspicion that Germany had elected to wage a preventive war, something he had feared they might have in mind as early as July 31. On December 1, he summarized his suspicions as to why Germany had gone to war:

Because her interior and exterior situation presented it to her as a necessary issue; because in the presence of the military precautions taken by France and Russia, put on guard by her own military laws, she was afraid to lose her advantage and that later would be too late.⁵⁸

Although he believed that the Germans were free to choose between war and peace, he felt that in choosing war they had blundered diplomatically. They had failed to assure the "diplomatic cooperation which could be transformed, at the time of conflict, into military cooperation." They had chosen "for motivating the rupture the only question which could break the Triple Alliance: The Adriatic question." Italy would "never consent to work for a German victory which would block both her expansion and her independence." At a time when England ought to have been "the supreme objective of German diplomatic effort" the Germans had approached Grey with "grossly cynical propositions without caring that they were furnishing him with the means of dishonoring forever German policy before the world and before history." If Germany had an opportunity "it was to force the adverse powers to declare war. The maneuver had been tried and was highly successful for Bismarck in 1870."⁵⁹ If Germany had not wanted the war and wanted it immediately she would not have

"run the risk of engaging England in the conflict and disengaging Italy from the Triple Alliance."⁶⁰

Hanotaux's interpretation of the outbreak of the war tended to exonerate both Austria-Hungary and Russia and to place the blame squarely on Germany. He felt that the Russian Orange Book confirmed Germany's responsibility for wrecking Grey's proposition and that Russia had made an important last minute peace initiative which had offered Austria an honorable outcome, which had caused Austria to hesitate, but which had come to nothing because of German indifference and Germany's hard line with Russia.⁶¹

Hanotaux believed that he had personal proof of Austria-Hungary's hesitation. On July 31 he had encountered the Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Sainte-Clothilde. The ambassador spontaneously told Hanotaux a number of things on which he took notes and which he subsequently reported to the government.

1. If Russia gives Serbia the advice to ask what are the Austrian conditions, Austria will suspend her mobilization, if Russia suspends hers.
2. Austria has no intentions of territorial acquisitions in Serbia and intends to inflict no damage on the territorial sovereignty of that power.
3. That the opportunity could not last and that Germany, obliged to take her own precautions, was going to drag Austria along unless Russia acted immediately on the Austro-Hungarian resolutions⁶²

Hanotaux, of course, knew very little about what actually happened in the chancelleries of Europe in the last days of the 1914 Crisis. To compare his very limited knowledge with what happened (insofar as what happened has been revealed in the macrocosmic

histories) would not be especially fruitful. But there still remains a question as to the essential validity of his general impressions, or at the very least, of their plausibility.

Some important recent German historiography has delineated a Germany of 1914 which is not at all unlike the Germany which Hanotaux perceived. Fritz Fischer, whose ideas are admittedly controversial, depicts a Germany to which "the idea of 'preventive war' was acquiring an increasing appeal, especially in military circles;"⁶³ which contained groups "which looked to war to bring about an improvement, in the conservative sense, of internal conditions in Germany;"⁶⁴ which was willing to gamble on British neutrality because it believed that Anglo-German relations had recently improved enough that the British would not be directly hostile;⁶⁵ which curiously, was "increasingly forced to take precautions to prevent Austria-Hungary from slipping over into the Entente camp,"⁶⁶ and which "actually sabotaged the proposals put forward by Britain between July 24 and the declaration of war."⁶⁷

French Public Opinion in 1914: Hanotaux and
the Views of Jean-Jacques Becker

Jean-Jacques Becker has recently published a formidable, thorough, and meticulous study, 1914: Comment les Français sont éntres dans la guerre. René Rémond, eminent historian of the French Right, states conclusively in the book's preface: "It will henceforth be impossible to write about the year 1914 without referring to this book."⁶⁹

Becker makes little use of Hanotaux as a source and does not seem to know much about him. He refers to Gabriel Hanotaux as "Gustave" and cites him twice, both times briefly and through secondary sources.⁶⁹ Figaro is cited only once, although the trial of Madame Caillaux is given considerable attention. Revue hebdomadaire is not cited at all. Not one of Hanotaux's books is cited. Revue des deux mondes is cited a few times.

Either Becker considered Hanotaux as unimportant to an understanding of the French when they entered the war in 1914 or he simply overlooked or neglected him. Give the scope of Becker's study, which is intended to comprehend the experience of the French people throughout the critical months (July-September) of 1914, and its imaginative and diverse documentation of the popular reaction throughout the country to events, the latter is probably the better explanation. During the defense of the thesis which preceded the book, Becker was criticized for minimizing the role of the press in shaping opinion in 1914 and gently reproached "for not having shown the opinions of the university and intellectual elites."⁷⁰ Even René Rémond in his highly laudatory preface to Becker's 1914 mildly reprimands the author: "though he may have given too much emphasis to the working class, it is clearly all France that is the object of his study."⁷¹

Hanotaux believed that he had accurately captured the opinion of his countrymen during the summer and fall of 1914.⁷² Reading Becker largely confirms this self-evaluation of Hanotaux. His personal and written reactions to events tend to confirm and exemplify Becker's interpretations.

Becker argues convincingly that the French in 1914 were firmly committed to peace, that the war took them by surprise, and that mobilization was greeted with consternation. The French were dismayed by the news that they must leave loved ones, vocations, and familiar surroundings to face the dreadful prospects of war. But the French were convinced of the innocence of France and of having the right on their side. They were thoroughly indignant about what was perceived as German aggression. They recovered quickly from the initial shock and despair and were determined to do their duty and to defend the independence of their country, the liberty of peoples, and peace.

Opinion fluctuated in the first few weeks. Early reverses brought near panic, but confidence was recovered on the Marne. The Union Sacrée became a reality, not in any mystical sense, not because ideological and party positions simply disappeared, swallowed up in spiritual unity, but because Frenchmen of all persuasions joined together to achieve the single common goal of winning the war. This common goal was supported by virtually everyone, including the "forces most hostile to the regime and the social order."⁷³

At first, a short war was expected, but the odyssey of the French and of French opinion which created the Union Sacrée and culminated in the victory on the Marne stimulated a solidarity in the French nation which gave to France the endurance required for the long war which actually occurred.

Hanotaux's reaction to his son's mobilization is consistent with Becker's findings. After delivering young Gabriel Hanotaux to

the railroad station, the father confided to his notebook the feeling which accompanied his son's departure. "Poor dear child," he wrote.⁷⁴

As has been shown, Hanotaux had sought the recovery of Alsace Lorraine, not through a war of revanche, but through an eventual "Burgundian" settlement with Germany. He had hoped up to the last minute that war could be avoided, and had acted on a personal contact with the Austrian ambassador to do what he could to prevent the war. But unlike most of the French, he had not been surprised when it occurred; he had been disappointed and very angry. He was indignant with Germany and convinced that France was innocent. He believed that Germany initiated the war and that her acts constituted a barbarous assault against reason, law, and civilization. He threw himself into the war, like a good soldier, determined to do his duty in every possible way. His attachment to peace was suddenly denied and transformed by the war. War itself abruptly emerged for him as the normal state of society. Lives, previously so precious, became, he perceived, perishable, as dispensable in sacrifice to the common cause as the leaves of the trees of autumn.

Becker devotes considerable attention to exposing the anatomy and limits of French nationalism and of the national "renewal" which most historians have thought preceded the First World War. What he does not do, however, is analyze and assess the intellectual and imaginative content of French patriotism, not, at least, as it was represented in the conservative, bourgeois republican, non-chauvinistic, non-strident, patriotism of Gabriel Hanotaux. If he had, he might have given himself some additional support for his major

contentions and, if he had, he might have corrected omissions or distortions in his work arising from the neglect of an important writer, an important newspaper, and several important books and reviews.

Becker shows that neither revanche or Alsace-Lorraine were noticeably in the "air" of French nationalism in 1914, but he does not show what was in the universally shared atmosphere of French patriotism (surely the patriotisms of the various classes were not entirely discrete) and what a nationalist writer such as Hanotaux may have contributed over many years to its composition.

Hanotaux was a significant nationalist writer. He was influential among his countrymen, but his influence on French patriotism nationwide has not been studied and assessed. Nevertheless, certain observations can be made which are pertinent to Becker, which a reader of Becker ought to take into account.

1. To the extent to which, in the years before 1914, Hanotaux's elaborate vision of France penetrated the minds of the French, to the extent his particular "gestalt" of the nature of France came to dominate the atmosphere of French patriotism, to that extent Hanotaux helped to shape public opinion to react precisely as Becker says it reacted in 1914: with dismay at the war and at mobilization, with a conviction of France's innocence, with indignation toward Germany; with a sense of justice in the French cause; with a spontaneous willingness to transcend intellectual, political and social animosities in the Union Sacrée for the sake of victory.

2. Hanotaux taught tha France was feminine. She was innocent, vulnerable, but courageous. She was to be discovered in her

history. She was to be apprehended symbolically through Joan of Arc. She would fight for her independence. She was proud of her splendid civilization and of her contributions to the whole world. She was animated by a spirit of harmony, measure, and peace. She was reasonable. She was a natural leader. She sought a benign influence over others. She had a duty to point the way, both for herself and others, to a peaceful, just, and prosperous world. Anyone who absorbed this vision of France, consciously or subconsciously, would tend to presume her innocence and perceive an attack upon her as a barbarous act, an attempted rape by the barbarian.

This vision of a nation implied a people which did not conceive of itself in terms of "blood and iron." It was a feminine vision of a people of hearth, family, and vocation. It was a vision of a people who would fight not out of a love for fighting but out of the necessity of defending what they love. It was a vision of a people who would greet mobilization with dismay at the prospect of being torn from home and family and the pursuit of peace, but who would fight for their vision. There was a profound intellectual, imaginative and psychological consistency between Hanotaux's vision of France and his own reaction to the war and Becker's interpretation of the responses of the French in 1914.

Revanche was not in the air. Alsace-Lorraine was not in the air, but France as Joan of Arc was in the air, and Becker's work would be stronger if he had directly determined the significance of this vision and of its relationship to the responses of the French in 1914. Implicitly, he denies its importance and leans too heavily on pure

indignation. But did not this indignation "mobilize" a patriotism which had been shaped in a particular way, and does the way it had been shaped not explain the reactions of the French as they entered the war?

3. Others, of course, shared a vision of France similar to Hanotaux's. Poincaré, for instance, shared Hanotaux's vision of Joan of Arc as the symbol around whom all the French could rally, and it was Poincaré who invented the formula of national defense, the "Union Sacrée," which is suggestive of the unifying uses and of the spirit of Joan. The leaders of France, whatever their social class, were, one may suppose, not speaking only to each other. They were being heard by people, whatever their class.

4. Until the war, Hanotaux's attitude toward Germany was one of forbearance and hope, mixed with uncertainty. He recognized an ambiguity in the German character. Germany was capable of barbarism, of giving the militaristic and expansionistic side of her nature a free reign. Her methods were often heavy handed. But she had a potential for living peacefully within the family of nations and of being dealt with rationally like other powers. In respect to Hanotaux's acceptance, however, Germany was forever on probation. A conditional acceptance of Germany informed his writing. Probation at a minimum was necessary to his system. By attacking France, Germany opted for her warlike nature, which was then proven to be her predominant characteristic. Forbearance and hope had been misplaced. Germany had become an outlaw.

Frenchmen who absorbed and shared Hanotaux's prewar attitudes toward Germany would believe that France had been patient, that she had done her best, in spite of German heavy-handedness and German initiation of the armaments race, to encourage the Germans to a peaceful role in the family of nations. These Frenchmen would believe (given the actual fact of the German declaration of war) that France was innocent, because she had actively tried to influence affairs in the direction of peace. They would believe that German barbarism, having achieved the upper hand, had arbitrarily and unnecessarily attacked France.

The First World War and the Ascendancy of France

The war did not deflect Hanotaux from his perennial quest for the ascendancy of France, even though he saw the war itself as a defensive struggle of attrition and survival. The pathway to ascendancy which he saw lay in France's role as the moral leader of the cause against the barbarian. Fighting on her own soil and making great sacrifices, she was locked in a struggle to protect the law of nations, justice, freedom, democracy, and world peace against every contrary evil. France, ascendant, would emerge from the victory, positioned both morally and politically, for a role as a manager of the equilibrium among the powers both in Europe and the world.

The German menace would be dealt with in a way which would be consistent with Hanotaux's understanding of the German character and German history.⁷⁵ The "whole problem" of the peace would be to make a European Germany. Germany must be reintegrated into Europe. In

order to solve the German problem the German Empire must be dissolved and the sovereignty of the principal German states within the Empire must be recognized and they must be negotiated with directly.⁷⁶

In developing this position, Hanotaux drew upon his understanding of German history, especially his knowledge of the Treaty of Westphalia,⁷⁷ which he had long seen as opening the way to the finest manifestations of civilization in Germany. Removing the smaller German states from Prussian domination would implicitly constitute the Burgundian settlement (Alsace and Lorraine would, of course, be returned to France with the victory), would open the way for a resurgence of French cultural influence in Germany, and would contribute to French ascendancy in Europe.

CHAPTER XI: FOOTNOTES

¹Gabriel Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 20, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux," ed. Georges Dethan, Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Janvier-Juin 1977), p. 127.

²Gabriel Hanotaux, "Préface" to Nicholas Murray Butler, L'esprit international: considerations sur le règlement juridique des différends internationaux (Paris: Georges Crès, 1914), pp. XIII-XIV.

³Gabriel Hanotaux, "De l'histoire et des historiens," Revue des deux mondes (Septembre 15, 1913), pp. 324-325. Also republished in a separate volume by Louis Conard, Paris, 1919.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, "Carnet," March 30, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux" (1907-1914), p. 130. (Note: Millerand was Poincaré's Minister of War in 1912 until Poincaré was forced to ask for his resignation because of the adverse public reaction to his reinstatement of Colonel Paty de Clam [a principal in the Dreyfus Affair] in the army.)

⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, "Protectorate de la France," Revue hebdomadaire (Octobre 4, 1913), p. 26.

⁶Peter Grupp, "G. Hanotaux, le personnage, et ses idées sur l'expansion colonial," Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer, Vol. 55, No. 213, (1971), pp. 390-391.

⁷Hanotaux, "Protectorate de la France," p. 26.

⁸Hanotaux was to have a significant role as a private citizen on mission to both Italy and Spain during the war.

During 1915, Hanotaux saw Poincaré virtually every Sunday afternoon at 2:30. See George Dethan, ed., Introduction to "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1915-1916): L'Italie et la guerre," Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Juillet-Décembre 1977), pp. 282-283. Poincaré, however, continued to keep a public distance from Hanotaux. When, in November 1915, Hanotaux gave an important address at the French Academy he returned home and confided in his carnets that "one would think that Poincaré would have attended, but, fearing as always

to compromise himself, he stayed away." See "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1915-1916)," p. 283. In his "Carnet" of April 10, 1915, he shows that he had been fully briefed by Poincaré ("as if you were a minister") for his mission to Italy to improve relations with the Vatican. See "Carnet," April 10, 1915 in "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1915-1916)," pp. 288-289.

Louis Gillet reported that Hanotaux received a positive indication from King Alphonse XIII of Spain that if the allies would respect the Austrian crown that Spain would be willing to join their cause, but that the overture was rejected by Clemenceau: "Do you want us to make a papal Europe." See Louis Gillet, Gabriel Hanotaux (Plon, 1933), p. 104.

⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, "L'Autriche-Hongrie et les Slaves du Sud," Revue hebdomadaire (Juillet 25, 1914), pp. 450-463.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 450.

¹¹Ibid, p. 460.

¹²Ibid, pp. 450-451.

¹³Ibid, p. 455.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 457.

¹⁵Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 336.

¹⁶Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, April 18, 1914. See E. T. S. Dugdale, German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, Vol. 4: The Descent to the Abyss, 1911-1914 (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 362.

¹⁷Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy, pp. 336-337.

¹⁸Gabriel Hanotaux, "Entente ou Alliance," Le Figaro (Avril 24, 1914).

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Hanotaux, "Carnet," Février 20, 1914, 127.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Gabriel Hanotaux, "La crise européenne et la France,"
Juillet 31, 1914, Études diplomatiques et historiques: Pendant la
grande guerre (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1916), pp. 1-6.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 3-4.

²⁹Ibid., p. 5.

³⁰Ibid., p. 6.

³¹Ibid., p. 3.

³²Gabriel Hanotaux, Contemporary France, trans. E. Sparvel-
Bayly (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 4:332.

³³Hanotaux, "Préface," Pendant la grande guerre, p. II.

³⁴Louis Gillet, Gabriel Hanotaux (Paris: Librairie Plon,
1933), p. 99.

³⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, Raymond Poincaré (Librairie Plon, 1934),
pp. 37-38.

³⁶In his Revue des deux mondes article of September 1913,
"De l'histoire et des historiens," Hanotaux called Thucydides "the
historian/statesman," his History of the Peloponnesian War, an
impressive "act," identified every other conception of history as
"inferior," and foreshadowed his own "act" and his own motivation in
writing the history of the World War "in the tissue of events," by
lauding Thucydides for rendering "an account of one of the more con-
siderable events of human history" because "he did not want the future
to ignore the origins and causes of it." See pp. 486-488.

³⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, Histoire illustrée de la guerre de 1914 (Paris and Bordeaux: Gounouihou, 1915). Georges Dethan points out how fast Hanotaux developed these materials: "At the beginning of May 1915, there had already appeared fifteen parts of the Histoire illustrée de la guerre de 1914." See Georges Dethan, Introduction to "Les Carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1915-1916)," p. 281.

³⁸Gabriel Hanotaux and Joseph Fabry, Joffre (Paris: Plon, 1921); Le général Mangin (Paris: Plon, 1921); Le maréchal Foch ou l'homme de guerre (Paris: Plon, 1928).

³⁹Hanotaux, "L'Autriche-Hongrie et les Slaves de Sud," p. 445.

⁴⁰Hanotaux, "L'état de guerre," Août 15, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p. 35.

⁴¹Hanotaux, "Ce sera dur," Août 12, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 27-31.

⁴²Hanotaux, "L'usure," Août 30, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 98-100.

⁴³Hanotaux, "Appel aux puissances neutres--Appel à l'Amérique," Août 7, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 10-12.

⁴⁴Hanotaux, "Hurrah pour l'Angleterre!" Août 4, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁶Hanotaux, "La première semaine," Août 8, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p. 39.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁸Hanotaux, Histoire illustrée de la guerre de 1914, p. 27.

⁴⁹Gabriel Hanotaux, Mon temps, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1933-1947), Vol. 1: De l'empire à la république, p. 216.

⁵⁰Gabriel Hanotaux, "Fustel de Coulanges et le temps présent," Revue des deux mondes, Mars 1, 1923.

⁵¹Hanotaux, Histoire illustrée de la guerre de 1914, p. VI.

⁵²Figaro indicated on October 11, 1914 that Hanotaux was busy working in the Aisnes bringing aid to refugees on behalf of his newly formed national committee: "He has found the family home, where he has kept a library slowly assembled, half destroyed."

⁵³Hanotaux, "Second avis aux neutres," Août 11, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁴Hanotaux, "La 'cause' universale," Septembre 28, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p. 133.

⁵⁵Hanotaux, "Quel vent de folie," Août 5, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁶Hanotaux, "Et leur empereur!" Août 9, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁸Hanotaux, "Le 'Livre jaune,'" Décembre 1, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p. 332.

⁵⁹Hanotaux, "Et leur diplomatie!" Août 8, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁰Hanotaux, "Les responsabilités allemandes," Septembre 26, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p. 132.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 130-131.

⁶²Hanotaux, "Une précision sur les origines de la guerre," Octobre 5, 1914, Pendant la grande guerre, p.

⁶³Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967, c. 1961), p. 50. Bethmann-Hollweg had returned from Russia in 1912 fearing that she would be strong enough to crush Germany in the future. See Fisher, p. 28.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 51.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 58.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 42.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 65.

⁶⁸René Rémond, "Préface" to Jean-Jacques Becker, 1914: Comment les Français sont entres dans la guerre (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des science-politiques, 1977), p. 4.

⁶⁹Jean-Jacques Becker, 1914: Comment les Français sont entres dans la guerre (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977), pp. 138, 566.

⁷⁰See Becker's defense of thesis on February 6, 1976 in Revue historique, No. 530 (Octobre-Décembre 1976), p. 549.

⁷¹Rémond, "Préface" to Becker, 1914 . . ., p. 1.

⁷²Hanotaux, "Préface," Pendant la grande guerre, , p. II.

⁷³Rémond, "Préface" to Becker, 1914 . . ., p. 8.

⁷⁴Hanotaux, "Carnet," Août 4, 1914, "Les carnets de Gabriel Hanotaux (1907- 1914)," p. 142.

⁷⁵In 1916, Hanotaux published two articles in the Revue des deux mondes presenting his views on the problem of the war and on the problem of the peace which would follow victory. See "L'ere nouvelle: problems de la guerre et de la paix: I. Le problem de la paix" (Novembre 1, 1916). In these articles he insisted that the views expressed were exclusively his own. (See "Le Problem de la paix," p. 10.) According to the historian Walter A. McDougall, Hanotaux's recommendation that the German Empire be dissolved following an allied victory "found support in Le Matin, Figaro, and other mass circulation newspapers." See Walter McDougall, France's Rhineland Diplomacy, 1914-1924: The Last Bid for the Balance of Power in Europe (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 20.

⁷⁶Hanotaux, "Le problem de la paix," pp. 11, 19-46.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 19-46. Also see McDougall, France's Rhineland Diplomacy; pp. 37, 118.

CHAPTER XII

SEARCHING FOR RICHELIEU: GABRIEL HANOTAUX'S QUEST FOR THE ASCENDANCY OF FRANCE--A MICROCOSMIC STUDY IN THE COMING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Searching for Richelieu

Gabriel Hanotaux's search for Richelieu was not merely the vocational commitment of the historian. It was a search for the grandeur of France in the past, and, more than that, it was an effort to make France great, to recover her ascendancy in the present.

Paradoxically, in searching for Richelieu, Hanotaux, the historian, was diverted from what promised to be the great professional achievement of his life, a multi-volumed study of Richelieu. Little was accomplished on the Richelieu volumes during the years as Foreign Minister, when Hanotaux was doing his best to recover for France the greatness that Richelieu had achieved. In the years after he left the Foreign Office, most of his energies were expended in producing the more transient works of a publicist who sought to defend and strengthen France in the present. Although he continued to gather materials, the complete "Richelieu" remained unfinished business in Hanotaux's life until the interwar years¹ when the work was completed with the help of a collaborator, the duc de la Force, who could recall his excitement one Christmas as a child when his parents had

presented him with the first two volumes of Hanotaux's L'histoire du cardinal de Richelieu.²

In the last two years before the First World War Hanotaux's hopes of finding Richelieu and the grandeur of France in the present were centered mainly in his friend, Raymond Poincaré, whom he admired for his immense abilities, but who often frustrated and disappointed him. Poincaré seemed too concerned for his own reputation, too ready to compromise and too timid before the prospects of risk. But, at bottom, Hanotaux understood his difficulties, forgave his failures, and never really gave up on him.

Gabriel Hanotaux's Quest for the Ascendancy of France

Although Hanotaux never achieved the ascendancy of France in the present, he did make progress as Foreign Minister in moving the diplomatic center of gravity in the direction of Paris and in achieving a relatively promising position for France and for himself vis-à-vis each of the Great Powers. Germany learned to respect and even to fear him and at the end of his tenure gave a sign (the Münster Note) of being prepared for closer cooperation. Russia had been shown that Hanotaux would strongly resist the subordination of French to Russian policy and had agreed to cooperate with France in playing the middle ground between Germany and England. With England he had come a long way in removing the sources of conflict. If he had remained in office a year or two longer and had managed the impending confrontation with England on the Upper Nile with skill (and with considerable good fortune), he may well have made further

progress in attaining the diplomatic ascendancy of France. If, on the other hand, he had remained in office and the Fashoda Crisis had happened as it in fact happened, then he could more justly be presented with the lion's share of the blame which, as history stands, should be attributed to Delcassé. Hanotaux left office with a record of positive achievement and at a time when events were presenting him with possibilities for either far greater success or for spectacular failure. But his experience in office appears to have confirmed his faith that the ascendancy of France was a possibility.

Right down to the war he was looking for the road to the ascendancy of France, first through leadership towards the "Latin Peace" and, finally, through the elaborate scheme of salvation which he was seeking to prepare on the eve of the war. The goal of ascendancy, of course, was never achieved, nor was it, it appears, ever even in the cards.

Managing the Equilibrium Among the Powers

In a not unfriendly review of La politique d'équilibre, Édouard Driault, a Napoleonic scholar, expressed reservations about the meaning and implications of Hanotaux's concept of equilibrium. Driault suggested that he "would like a tighter definition of this policy of equilibrium which, it seems, could easily risk becoming the policy of isolation"³

Driault's concerns are more than understandable. In the first place, Hanotaux did not define his policy precisely. Indeed, he could not define his policy with the same degree of precision as

could those who conceived the balance in more simplistic terms, as a matter of assuring the unity of the Triple Entente and sufficient military strength to contain the powers of the Triple Alliance.

Hanotaux's "equilibrium" was not some static arrangement, but a flexible principle which must be constantly applied to managing the relations among the powers. It was not amenable to definitive formulations of France's position vis-à-vis each and every other power. It was opportunistic, flexible, and implied a more or less continuous application of an informed and discriminating intellect to the tasks of analysis, negotiation, and decision making. To apply it at any given time and in any given situation must necessarily have been a matter of accurately assessing the situation, of recognizing the pertinent interests of the powers, their hopes and fears, their relative strengths, their long range and momentary relations with one another, and of putting France's weight in at the point and to the degree which would protect and further her own interests and help to maintain a workable equilibrium.

In the second place, Hanotaux's equilibrium carried with it not only the risk of isolation, but of the diplomatic impotence isolation could bring. His view called for a good deal of faith in the strength and moral stature of France and the skill of her statesmen at a time when Europeans were measuring their security by the tightness of their alliances and by statistical comparisons of armies and dreadnoughts. In this situation, any hint at going it alone could appear as an invitation to national suicide. To seek to break the dangerous impasse among the powers by casting loose from the moorings

of present relationships would have appeared risky indeed. That Poincaré, who would have the principal responsibility for taking such a risk, and Hanotaux who would not, should take different positions in the face of such a prospect is easy to understand.

Hanotaux's approach to the equilibrium would be more convincing if France had been a more formidable military power than she in fact was, and if she had had less need of alliances and could have acted diplomatically both in a spirit of equity toward all the other powers and as a restraining influence in every dangerous situation and toward every other power. Hanotaux believed that France could act in these ways. But it could surely be argued against him that only a very powerful and highly respected France could be certain of avoiding most of the pitfalls of a simple but terrible formula: an independent diplomatic position, unencumbered by alliances, threatened isolation; isolation threatened impotence; impotence could encourage other powers to exploit their diplomatic advantages and to hostile decisions.

Hanotaux does not appear to have had an exaggerated idea of French military and naval power. In a book addressed to French youth which he published in 1912, he wrote that France is "less strong and less great than the very strong and the very great," but "better balanced." "She is not the first of the continental powers, she is not the first of the maritime powers, but she follows them closely."⁴

Although Hanotaux believed in the necessity of military power, that a Great Power must be strong enough to command respect, and that the history of France had been marked by an almost continuous struggle

against invaders (France "must always stand an armed watch on the wall;" Paris is the "tent of the centurion"),⁵ he also believed in the power of diplomacy, and this is the best reply to the criticism that France was not strong enough to fulfill his high expectations. He believed in what well conceived, skillfully executed, diplomatic undertakings could accomplish; even those of statesmen representing less than predominant military powers.

In this connection it should be remembered what Hanotaux knew very well, that the nineteenth century had been an age of gifted statesmen and of some remarkable diplomatic "tours de force." Standing on the relatively weak power base of Sardinia-Piedmont, Cavour had played the shrewd political game at home and diplomatic game abroad which had brought about the unification of Italy. Bismarck's success in creating the German Empire had depended on the employment of Prussia's incomparable army. But it was his diplomacy (and Napoleon III's lack of diplomacy)⁶ which had guaranteed the effective utilization of that army against one enemy at a time. The hegemony which Germany enjoyed on the continent for twenty years after the Treaty of Frankfurt was as personal and diplomatic as it was military. Indeed, in the years before the First World War, when French diplomacy seemed ineffective to Hanotaux, when it seemed to be failing to take advantage of its opportunities, he looked with envy at the diplomatic successes of such insignificant powers as Turkey and Italy which appeared to be gaining their ends by shrewdly playing the combinations of European powers off against one another.⁷

Although he never fully summarized his position, what Hanotaux was saying again and again in the last years before the war was that what France needed was statesmanship of a quality and authority which would know how to make full use of her many assets: her unique geopolitical position among the powers which made it possible for her to manage the equilibrium and to be the arbiter of peace; her alliances and friendships with many countries; her fine army and respectable navy; her empire, especially "her lovely African Colonies which . . . would be, in case of world conflict, a help, not a burden;"⁸ her natural preeminence in the Mediterranean, her natural preponderance among the Latin sisters; her special history and cultural role in the Ottoman Empire, and her potential for mutually satisfactory accommodations with Islam; her position as eldest daughter of the Church and, if the rift with the Church could be healed, the influence this implied in Spain, Italy, Austria, and the valleys of the Rhine and Meuse; her position as the eldest of nations and the champion of nationalities; her well-balanced economy, her industrious, prosperous, and thrifty people, and the capital they accumulated for export; and, finally, France's intellectual influence on, and cultural attraction to the whole world.

An intriguing but unanswerable line of questions concerns what might have happened if Hanotaux's policy of playing the middle ground between Germany and England had been continued. Would France have maintained significantly greater freedom of action? Would Germany have been less heavy handed, more cooperative and friendly toward France? Could Morocco have been sidestepped as a serious bone of

contention between Germany and France? Would have France, with a more viable German option, been able to exact commitments of greater clarity on specific eventualities from England? Would Germany have been less agitated by the fear of encirclement? Would the First World War have been avoided?

A Microcosmic Study of the Coming of the War:
The Alliance System

Hanotaux's interpretation of the responsibility of Germany for the war is virtually identical in its main points with the interpretations of Fritz Fischer and his controversial but influential school of German historians. At a minimum this suggests that Hanotaux's views on German responsibility should not be dismissed as mere propaganda or as the counterfeit coin of an anti-German intellectual position. Rather, his interpretations (whether we agree with them or not) should be credited with being what they were, the serious conclusions of an emotionally involved but experienced and in many respects knowledgeable observer.

In 1914 Hanotaux blamed the war on Germany's cynicism and ambition. But what do his prewar writings suggest about the coming of the war? Do they suggest any special perspectives or emphases which deserve more attention and study than they have generally received from the writers of the macrohistories? They do--at least in this respect. Hanotaux's writings strongly suggest that a thoroughgoing re-examination of the alliance system in prewar Europe from the perspective of its instability, real or imagined, might be a fruitful project. Hanotaux confronts his readers

with the possibility that it was not so much the alliance system, the sharp division of Europe into Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, which made the war probable as it was the unstable and precarious condition of that system, which confronted, not only France, but each of the other powers with a threat that one ally or another might prove less than enthusiastic about its commitments, might resolve the issues at stake with a potential common enemy, and might even change camps. The threat of desertions and of a reshuffling of the system which could leave one nation or another isolated and impotent appears in Hanotaux's pages.

For Hanotaux the positive side of what he perceived to be the instability of the alliance system was the opportunity which it offered to France to bring about a radical realignment which would break the impasse of hostility and fear, assure peace, and achieve for France an ascendancy among the powers.

Paradoxically, if Hanotaux was correct in his perception of underlying stability within the system, then the fears of statesmen (the largely unvoiced fears, of desertions, realignments) and the resulting dangers, may have contributed as much to holding the alliances together up to the frightful moment when they became operative as the common interests which are generally taken to have been their glue.

It would be difficult to assess conclusively the degree to which Hanotaux's perceptions regarding the instability of the pre-1914 alliance system reflected European realities. But there is sufficient evidence lying virtually unnoticed in the record to

indicate that he was not alone in foreseeing the possibility of dramatic change, that his perceptions were not purely private inventions or even the gross exaggerations of his fertile mind. In 1912 Grey was concerned that England might end up in isolation if something were not done to give France greater assurance. France was concerned about English flirtations with Germany and about the Russo-German conversations. As late as April 1914 the French government tried to use the fear of a Russian defection to press the English to reach a naval agreement with Russia. Fritz Fischer cited the German fear of an Austrian defection (which Hanotaux saw as an enticing possibility) as a reason for Germany's decision in 1914 to fight a preventive war.

This microcosmic study of the coming of the war suggests that the alliance system failed to preserve the peace because it did not accomplish what it was, at least ostensibly, intended to accomplish, a stable and durable balance of power. The system failed and the war occurred because the system itself was never really stabilized. It failed not merely because the groups distrusted each other, but because the partners distrusted each other, each sensing possible defections. When the crisis came each of the powers was faced with the excruciating dilemma of standing behind relationships which were tenuous and uncertain or of aborting its whole system of relationships by refusing to back an ally. In aborting its system of relationships, it would run the risk of proving to everyone that it could not be trusted as an ally and, consequently, of leaving itself, when the dust settled, isolated and exposed.

It will be forever impossible to determine the exact extent to which these fears influenced the thoughts and actions of Europe's statesmen in 1914. That they would have left these fears largely unvoiced is, I suppose, self-evident. During the crisis it would have been dangerous and impolitic to express doubts about the reliability of alliance partners. After the war began no one was likely to admit that he had gone to war to support allies perceived to be untrustworthy and to defend a shaky system. But this microcosmic study of the coming of the war through Gabriel Hanotaux underlines the question of the role of the instability of the alliance system in the coming of the war.

Some other, additional, not unrelated and equally plausible reasons why Europe went to war in 1914 emerge from this microcosmic study of the coming of the war through Gabriel Hanotaux. They are that Europe, stirred by fear, frustration, and uncertainty, went to war not only because of the instability of the alliance system, but because this system had become so complicated and confused that Europe's statesmen could no longer manage it and, further, had little confidence they could manage it, and that a fundamental reason why they could not manage it, and did not believe they could manage it, was the confusion and uncertainty created by the ententes.

Hanotaux regarded alliances as precise agreements to guarantee security and the balance of power. The Austro-German and Franco-Russian Alliances were not inevitably disruptive of the peace. Prior to 1904-1905 they had represented a balance of forces on the continent without embittering the relations among the powers. The precedent

for the ententes, Hanotaux thought, went back earlier to Bismarck's counter-assurances and counter-guarantees (i.e., the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia). It was in the origins of the First Moroccan Crisis that the ententes really began to muddy the waters, create serious difficulties, and make the task of statemanship more difficult. The most important of these ententes were the Entente Cordiale, which led to the First Moroccan Crisis, and which, Hanotaux felt, had tied the hands of France, and the Italo-French Entente which, as Hanotaux perceived, permitted Italy to maneuver between the groups in the Mediterranean. The Triple Entente itself, which he distinguished from the Franco-Russian Alliance, was a weak, uncertain, and confusing entity which seemed to invite various testings by Germany and Austria both by confrontation and by attempts to woo away one or another of the partners.

A Microcosmic Study of the Coming of the War:
The Responsibility of France

Although the historian, Joachim Remak, concedes that Poincaré did not urge restraint on the Russians in the crisis of 1914, he insists that "last of all, there is the responsibility of France-- last of all, and least of all. Had the ultimate decision been that of France, the lamps would have remained lit."⁹

From the beginning of the war Hanotaux shared in the conviction that France was innocent. He blamed Germany for the war. He believed that Germany had initiated a preventive war. His analysis of German responsibility was perfectly consistent with his prewar understanding of Germany, of the dangerous ambiguity of Germany.

This is why it is misleading to dismiss his accusations of Germany as mere anti-German propaganda, as a surrender of intellectual honesty to the anti-German passions of the moment. But there is an issue that Hanotaux does not directly face and that is the issue of the long range responsibilities of France in the origins of the war.

There is, however, even here, a subtlety which extends an insistence on Hanotaux's intellectual honesty to cover the issue of long range responsibility. In perceiving that Germany acted irrationally and against her own interests in initiating a preventive war, Hanotaux was also saying that Germany acted beyond and outside any past or present French policies or actions. Consequently, Hanotaux, in effect, sealed off the issue of the long range responsibility of France from discussion or from any need for discussion. But then, again, his psychological need to preserve the absolute innocence of France, of the France of Joan of Arc, of the France in whom innocence is an intrinsic quality, may have encouraged him to seize so ferociously on German irrationality.

To Hanotaux, the prewar event which had not only put France on the wrong track, but which had, more generally, put the relations among the powers on the wrong track, was the Entente Cordiale. This had not only surrendered French diplomatic leadership to England and tied the hands of France, it had antagonized and alienated Germany. Much that happened afterward to increase tension and deepen confusion in Europe, appears, in Hanotaux's pages, to have followed from the Entente Cordiale.

On the one hand, Germany (and/or her ally Austria) tested the Anglo-French relationship and the Triple Entente into which it was soon transformed: First Morocco (1905); Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908); Second Morocco (1911). On the other, Germany sought rather ambiguously to weaken or break up the Triple Entente by wooing one or another of France's partners: the rapprochement with Russia at Potsdam (1910); the naval negotiations with England culminating in the visit of Lord Haldane (1912). Both types of developments disturbed Hanotaux, but followed from a French policy which, by his own admission, alienated Germany.

If Germany initiated a preventive war, it was a preventive war against the triumph of "encirclement." France helped to plant the fear of encirclement in the German mind. We have seen that Hanotaux was sharply critical of talk of encircling Germany. Even if Germany consciously opted for a preventive war in 1914, even if this decision was irrational and the war could have been otherwise avoided, France was enmeshed in responsibility for helping to create and feed the German phobia against encirclement.

A Microcosmic Study in the Coming of the War:
The Responsibility of Poincaré

The war may have occurred because of Poincaré's success in tightening the Triple Entente, tightening it sufficiently in the estimation of German leaders, that they believed themselves impotent to disrupt it diplomatically, and fearing the growth of Russian armaments and that a possible Austrian defection or collapse would

leave them isolated, decided to take up the opportunity offered by the 1914 Crisis to act immediately and militarily.

Even if one were to accept the interpretations of those macro-historians who do not conclude that Germany started a preventive war, but distribute responsibilities among the powers, then Poincaré's success in strengthening the Triple Entente contributed to keeping the powers in place for that chain of events and shared responsibilities which according to those macrohistorians brought on the war.

Poincaré acquired responsibility in another direction which paradoxically tends both to condemn him and to exonerate him, a direction which this microcosmic study has brought out. This responsibility was not in his successes but in his failures. In 1912, Poincaré followed a policy of seeking, on the one hand, to strengthen the Triple Entente, while, on the other, to reestablish the Concert of Europe. The latter surely ought to be viewed as an initiative toward peace and toward putting the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente into less frightening postures, to relegate the alliance groups to mutually acceptable guarantees of security and the balance of power and to keep them from becoming hopelessly polarized, two sides of an unbridgeable chasm into which Europe must have inevitably tumbled.

Poincaré failed in his efforts to draw Europe together. When the final crisis came, all that remained was the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, opposed to one another, without the moderating and possibly saving influence of a concert which had enjoyed a recent success which would remind the Great Powers that the divisions in Europe could be transcended.

During July 1914, when Europe was overtaken by the crisis, President Poincaré and the French Prime Minister, Viviani, were visiting in Russia with the Tsar and his ministers. No one knows exactly what Poincaré said to Suzanov in July 1914, but at a minimum he reaffirmed the loyalty of France to the alliance and he is generally thought to have gone a step further and encouraged a strong Russian stand.

Even if Poincaré took the latter position and encouraged Russia to stand firm against an Austrian attack on Serbia, this would not mean that he intended to precipitate a war. It would probably mean, however, that he felt he had no choice but to take a position which would persuade the Russians that France would not flinch from its commitments, and, as a result, would avert the collapse of the Triple Entente in the face of Germanic pressure. Poincaré would have believed that a collapse of the Triple Entente was a catastrophe both for France and for himself. It would be tantamount to handing Germany both diplomatic and military supremacy on the continent and would invite and compel a rearrangement of the relationships among the powers. Russo-German and Anglo-German rapprochements might take place which would leave France (which would have proven itself to be an unreliable ally) in diplomatic isolation, a vassal of a hegemonic Germany.

President Poincaré's position at home was tenuous and would probably have been destroyed by a major diplomatic defeat. At any rate, his influence over policy, though still substantial, had been seriously undermined by political events and changes in parliamentary

leadership, and he faced the real possibility that he might become like other French presidents, little more than a figurehead. Poincaré would not have risked leading France into an European war merely to save his personal influence over policy, but, as he himself well knew, he was needed to bolster the national revival in France which was waning in 1914 and to defend the continuation of the Three Year Law, vital, he thought, to the defense of his country.

Although historians generally feel that they must come down on one side or another of these issues, the extent of Poincaré's immediate complicity, remain uncertain. If Poincaré's assurances did, in fact, make Russia more bellicose; if, for instance, his assurances encouraged the Russian decision to mobilize, then he did have a heavy responsibility in triggering the general war.

Returning from Russia in the midst of the crisis, Poincaré disembarked at Dunkirk on July 29, 1914, poorly informed as to recent developments. Immediately after his return he expressed contradictory attitudes toward the events which were now moving rapidly to their denouement and, in so doing, revealed both his own uncertainty as to what attitude to take and his ambivalence on the issue of war or peace. The impression is of a statesman who was upset by the turn of events, not of one who had coldly decided that the time was ripe for war. When he disembarked at Dunkirk, "neither he nor Viviani wanted to believe in the war."¹⁰ But he is reported to have declared to Senator Jean Trystram that it would be a misfortune to avoid war in circumstances so favorable. This is probably a distortion of what Poincaré actually said. He certainly denied it altogether in his

memoirs.¹¹ But that he felt that the circumstances were more favorable for war than they would be later is probable, particularly if he were secretly worried about the long term reliability of the Russian relationship and if he were concerned about maintaining France's present state of military preparedness in a time of opposition to the Three Year Law. Hanotaux also sought to maintain the peace up to the outbreak of the war, but felt that conditions for a showdown could hardly be more favorable.¹² Jean-Jacques Becker suggests that

it is necessary to deduce from [the evidence] that Poincaré's attitude even in the short interval of time covered by his landing at Dunkirk and his return to Paris was more uncertain than he has wanted to admit because it has been so susceptible to contradictory interpretations.¹³

A Microcosmic Study of the Coming of the War: The Entente Cordiale

Hanotaux was not an Anglophobe, but he was sharply critical of the Entente Cordiale, of the price France had paid for it in her Egyptian claims and in her freedom of diplomatic maneuver, and of the tendency of many Frenchmen to place too much confidence in the relationship. Although his concerns were somewhat reduced, or at any rate muted, after the Second Moroccan Crisis in 1911, he was never convinced that England and Germany would not one day reach an understanding or that England could be fully and immediately relied on in a showdown with the Triple Alliance.

Hanotaux did not doubt that England would resist a German attempt at continental hegemony. What he questioned was the firmness of the English commitment to France. Would England enter into a war soon enough and with an army powerful enough to make a difference?

As far as Hanotaux could see, the only thing France could rely on was that England would consult her interests and act accordingly.

These basic questions should be asked about Anglo-French relations from 1904-1914: which policy was the most realistic for France, which was most in France's interests, the policy of the Entente Cordiale or the Hanotaux policy of playing the middle ground between Germany and England, of seeking good relations with both, but leaning one way or the other depending on situations and on the interests of France? These questions are, in a sense, ahistorical. Historians prefer not to speculate on "might-have-beens." To most historians speculations are more abhorrent than a vacuum is to nature. Dealing as they do with what actually happened, historians implicitly decided for the entente policy and vindicated Paul Cambon, who is considered one of France's great ambassadors. On the other hand, Hanotaux's relentless objections to relying on England have been relegated to the dustbin of wrongheadedness and have seldom merited much more than a passing reference from historians.

This much may be said and ought to be said if the differences between Cambon and Hanotaux are to be placed in fair perspective.

First, British intervention on the French side did not come quickly and automatically in August 1914. In fact, the British government was deeply mired in indecision all through the terrible days from July 31 through August 4. Had the Germans not proceeded in an insensitive manner and violated the neutrality of Belgium a considerable delay might have occurred before the reluctant members of the cabinet and parliament would have accepted intervention. Sir

Francis Bertie was painfully aware that his country might disappoint French hopes. On August 1, he closed the gates of his embassy and wrote in his diary: "though it is 'Vive l'Angleterre' today, it may be 'perfide Albion' tomorrow."¹⁴ If the French had been disappointed and such a delay had occurred, the British might have arrived with too little too late. If that had happened Cambon and the policy he fought for would have been discredited.

Secondly, the legitimacy of Hanotaux's concern is illustrated vividly in the terrible personal trial through which Cambon passed during the days of British indecision in late July and early August. On July 31, with war imminent, Cambon asked Sir Edward Grey if England was prepared to meet her commitments. Grey responded that "the dispute between Russia, Austria, and Germany concerned a matter of 'no interest' to Great Britain," and that "'new developments' must be awaited."¹⁵ On August 1, Grey "saw Cambon and told him

'France must take her own decisions at this moment without relying on any assistance we are not now in a position to give.' . . . Cambon, white and shaky, sank into a chair in the room of his old friend Sir Arthur Nicolson, the Permanent Under-Secretary, "ils vont nous lâcher" [They are going to desert us], he said.¹⁶

About all Cambon could do during this dark period was invoke English "honor": "I am going to wait to learn if the word 'honor' should be erased from the English dictionary."¹⁷ He could not appeal to the clear and unambiguous clauses of a treaty of alliance because there was no such treaty. He could and did claim that it was a matter of "honor" for the British to defend the French coasts, the French having moved their fleet into the Mediterranean in 1912 at about the

same time that the British had stationed theirs in the North Sea and the Channel. And possibly this was in some sense a matter of honor, for the first glimmer of hope came to Cambon on August 2, when Sir Edward Grey promised him that the English fleet would, in fact, protect the French coasts and French shipping. "Grey added, however, that the pledge 'does not bind us to go to war with Germany unless the German fleet took the action indicated.'"¹⁸ England had made a partial commitment and Cambon now "believed that it would lead to full belligerency, for, as he later put it, nations do not wage war 'by halves.'"¹⁹ But as late as August 4, Cambon was nervously awaiting a decision. The British had not yet decided to send the B.E.F. to the continent, a decision which was not finally reached until August 5.²⁰

Further, honor probably had very little to do with British entry into the war. Samuel Williamson, who has written a most thorough analysis of the working of strategic considerations in the development of the Anglo-French entente, argued that the decision to defend the French coast was the only aspect of the British decision to go to war which was even so much as influenced by the pre-war military talks with the French and that, in fact, the British government would have arrived at the same decision because of British strategic considerations even if those staff talks had never taken place.²¹ Where Williamson is concerned, "the entente and the staff talks played influential but not decisive roles in the British decision to go to war."²² The slide into intervention was precipitated "not from any inherent strength in the entente but rather from

Britain's mounting concern about Belgian neutrality and German sea-power."²³ It seems to me that Cambon's nightmare and Williamson's analysis support the contention that there was at least as much intrinsic wisdom in Hanotaux's position as in Cambon's, whatever the verdict of history.

Finally, Hanotaux's objection that France was being used and was paying too dearly in freedom and flexibility for the tie with England is supported by Grey's rationale for pursuing the entente policy. According to Williamson,

the fundamental premise of Grey's policy was that Britain not allow itself to become isolated against Germany. Thus he steadfastly sought to maintain friendship with France without at the same time losing his ability to influence Paris. The entente was the perfect instrument for his purposes, for by its uncertainty it exercised a greater restraint upon French policy than an alliance would have. On several occasions, most notably in 1911, misgivings about British dependability helped to moderate French action. . . . The Entente . . . was perhaps the ideal way to protect British interests with a minimum of obligation and risk.²⁴

Williamson confirmed fears which Hanotaux expressed regarding England's tendency to manage the affairs of others.

Gabriel Hanotaux's Significance

Hanotaux has been seriously misunderstood and this misunderstanding has tended to obscure his success as Foreign Minister and his significance later on. As fine an historian as Samuel Williamson dismisses him as a vicious Anglophobe. British historians have viewed him much too narrowly through sources hostile to him, especially through Felix Faure and Paul Cambon. His role in the Fashoda Crisis has been generally misunderstood and he has been

arbitrarily allotted much too much of the blame. The reductio ad absurdum of the British historiography of Hanotaux is to be found in Christopher Andrew and Sydney Kanya-Forstner's contention that Hanotaux was unfit to be Foreign Minister. French historians such as Renouvin and Chastenet have been far more positive.

Hanotaux was an able and effective Foreign Minister. He moved forward against great difficulties to extend the French overseas empire, to preserve but limit the Russian alliance, to resolve several of the areas of conflict with England, to work the middle ground diplomatically between Germany and England, and to avoid both subordination of French policy to the policy of others and diplomatic isolation.

Historians have not paid much attention to Hanotaux after he left the Foreign Office in 1898. He has been slighted because he was a private citizen who remained outside the decision making processes of the French Government and because the focus of historical attention has naturally been on the events that happened and the policies that prevailed, not on alternative approaches which were advanced as events unfolded, or on those might-have-beens that appeared to a contemporary writer.

The fact that Hanotaux failed to attain political office after 1898 has, without doubt, contributed to his neglect. His failure as a politician was somewhat paradoxical because he was a nationalist writer of recognized stature. He was a spokesman for moderate Republicans who lost position to the anti-clerical radicals in 1898, and he remained down to the war a spokesman for the

conservative republican nationalist right. But as a spokesman he was his own man and delivered his own message. He was an independent intellectual whose thinking reveals considerable continuity over many years. He did not use or invent ideas merely to build a party line.

Hanotaux was a Republican who was never wholly satisfied with the Third Republic, but who wanted to strengthen the power of the executive within Republican institutions. He wanted strong leadership for France. In spirit, really, if a double anachronism may be forgiven, he was a crypto-Bonapartist and a proto-Gaullist whose natural sympathies pointed back and forward to the strong popularly elected presidencies of the Second and Fifth Republics. As true as this is, it is also true that he was sincerely opposed to monarchical, imperial, or dictatorial governments for France. He was a sincere Republican who craved a strong Republic.

Although it is not possible to establish the precise extent and degree of Hanotaux's impact on the national vision of his countrymen, it was certainly considerable. Part of the evidence is merely quantitative. For the fifteen years down to 1914 he published an immense opus of nationalist material: historical works, books on contemporary subjects, innumerable articles. The important nature of his principal outlets supports an impression of influence; Revue des deux mondes; Revue hebdomadaire; Figaro; for the books, the publishing houses of Flammarion; Hachette; Plon, Nourrit, et Cie. What he wrote appears to have sold well. Some books went rapidly through multiple printings. He prospered personally from the sales. His articles were given top billing in Revue hebdomadaire and Figaro.

His prefaces were in demand as endorsements to the important works of others.

More impressive is the qualitative evidence which can be seen in the movement and comprehensiveness of his nationalist message. The first volumes of the Richelieu biography established the historical foundations of the grandeur of France. D'Histoire de la France contemporaine established the "heroic" origins of the Third Republic. L'Energie française, with its defense of France against charges of decadence, and La Paix latine, with its message that the destiny both of French greatness and world peace lay along the Mediterranean, defended the contemporary vitality of France as well as her present and natural prospects for grandeur. Jeanne d'Arc, both historical and symbolic, called for the unity of all Frenchmen, religious and secular. Over many years the Études diplomatiques reiterated the message that France is the natural agent of the equilibrium among the powers, that given unity, leadership, and patience she would find her hour; her supreme moment of ascendancy would come when she would lead the way to peace through an equitable settlement of Europe's quarrels. Hanotaux taught Frenchmen the grandeur of France, the importance of her place in Europe and the world, the greatness of her civilization. He helped to prepare French attitudes for the task and the sacrifice of a great war. But he also taught the reasonableness, moderation, and commitment to justice of France. He helped prepare the ground for the belief of Frenchmen in the innocence of France in the coming of the First World War. On the eve of the war he undertook his largest project as a nationalist historian. With the help of many

collaborators he sought to produce a complete nationalist synthesis of the history of France. After the war began he moved naturally into the role of historian of the war in progress, publishing article after article in the Revue des deux mondes.

Hanotaux, of course, was not alone among nationalist writers. Many of the leading figures of the day in politics, journalism, literature and academia may be considered nationalist writers. Some of these, Barres, Clemenceau, Poincaré, and Péguy have received more attention from historians, and enjoyed far greater personal visibility and notoriety. But no one else, at least not as an historian-publicist, seems to have so prolifically and tenaciously occupied the middle ground of French nationalism or to have made such a comprehensive and wide-ranging appeal to the French public as did Gabriel Hanotaux. He must be considered among the most important of the nationalist writers.

Hanotaux is significant because a study of him tends to raise questions regarding some of the more common generalizations and assumptions regarding the pre-1914 period.

Late nineteenth century European imperialism is often interpreted mainly in economic terms. French imperialism is sometimes interpreted as a mere quest for prestige. Neither interpretation fits Hanotaux, who was dedicated to building the French Empire for reasons much broader than the first and more serious and sophisticated than the second. French civilization was much more important both as a goal and a lever than economic factors, and real issues of national position and power more important than prestige.

By 1909 Hanotaux had come to recognize that economic competition among nations had become more important than territorial competition and that French capital was an extremely important tool and weapon in world affairs. But to interpret his imperialism or other domestic or foreign policy positions in purely economic terms, to see economic considerations as the central motivating factor in his thinking, would be utterly wrong. French culture and the role of France as the agent of equilibrium and the arbiter of peace were more important and potent to Hanotaux than wealth and credit.

Nationalist that he was, Hanotaux did not represent, not nearly as much as one would expect, the provincialism and chauvinism of France and of Europe. On the contrary, he revealed an anxious recognition of the littleness of Europe within the greater world which Europe had discovered and opened up. This contributed to his surprising awareness of the tenuousness of colonialism. His awareness of the precariousness of the relations among the European Great Powers encouraged him to found the Franco-American Committee and to perceive, well ahead of the First World War, America's potential intervention in Europe.

The study of Hanotaux brings to the surface and illustrates one of the problems presented to historians who try to assess responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War. Like most, if not all, of those who were actually in the decision making positions in Europe in the summer of 1914, he preferred peace and believed that he had worked for peace, but he was psychologically prepared to accept the war when it came. He threw himself into the struggle with

remarkable energy. He immediately totally reversed a position he had taken only a short time before and declared war to be the normal state of mankind. This does not mean that he suddenly emerged as a lover of war. He was sincerely incensed with the Germans and believed that they had forced war on France. But his whole experience, intellectually and psychologically, prepared him to accept the reality of the war and to engage all his talents in the fight. He had deplored German ambiguity on the issue of war and peace, but a similar ambiguity had been present in his own soul. Whether one looks at his psychological readiness as a quasi-Christian manifestation of the spirit of sacrifice for the common good (which I have already suggested is the most plausible interpretation of Hanotaux) or as a manifestation of a Darwinian acceptance of a struggle for survival in the natural order, Hanotaux was at one with much of Europe in his readiness to fight in 1914.

Hanotaux did not achieve greatness. He was able, talented, well-educated, widely experienced, widely read, generally effective, and immensely productive. He was always close to important men and events even when he did not participate in the exercise of power. To approach his times through him is to look at them through an individual and microcosmic perspective, but it is also to survey them from a wide window through which much that was happening in France and in Europe over twenty years can be seen.

Hanotaux is a reminder that life is ambiguous and tragic, that ideas are seldom fully realized, and that the good intentions of good men often contribute to the most appalling disasters.

CHAPTER XII: FOOTNOTES

¹Thirty-seven years elapsed between the publications of volume two and volume three of L'histoire du cardinal de Richelieu.

²August de Caumont, Duc de La Force, La fin de la douceur de vivre souvenirs (1878-1914) (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1961), pp. 140-141.

³Edouard Driault, Review of Gabriel Hanotaux's Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, 1970-1911, Revue historique, Tome III (Septembre-Décembre 1912), pp. 389-390.

⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, La fleur des histoires françaises (Paris: Hachette, 1912), pp. 310-311.

⁵Gabriel Hanotaux, L'énergie française (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1902), pp. 24-25.

⁶Napoleon III literally did not have a "diplomacy" in Hanotaux's estimation. Gabriel Hanotaux, Contemporary France, trans. John Charles Tarver, 4 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903-1909), I:8.

⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques: La guerre des Balkans et l'Europe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie., 1914), p. 218; Études diplomatiques: La politique de l'équilibre, p. 400.

⁸Hanotaux, La fleur des histoires françaises, p. 310.

⁹Joachim Remak, The Origins of World War I, 1871-1914, Berkshire Studies in European History, eds. Richard A. Newhall and Sidney R. Packard (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.,) 1967), pp. 141-142.

¹⁰Abel Ferry, Les carnets secrets (1914-1918) (Paris: Grasset, 1937), p. 24. In Jean-Jacques Becker, 1914: Comment les français sont entrés dans la guerre (Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977), p. 138.

¹¹Raymond Poincaré, Au service de France, Vol. 4: L'union sacrée (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1927), p. 363 and following.

¹²Gabriel Hanotaux, Études diplomatiques et historiques: Pendant la grande guerre (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1916), p. 5.

¹³Becker, p. 139.

¹⁴Barbara W. Tuchman, The Guns of August (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 90.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132; 194.

²¹Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 355.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 361.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 353.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 368.

HANOTAUX AND DeGAULLE: A POSTSCRIPT

Hanotaux may be taken as a significant transitional figure in modern French history on the road to DeGaulle. He was a "crypto-Bonapartist" and a "proto-Gaullist" as his search for Richelieu suggests. He saw himself as an advocate of a traditional policy reaching back at least to Richelieu. He was at heart a democrat and a republican, but a plebescitarian democrat and a believer in a strong republic with strong leaders possessing enough authority and room to maneuver to be able to lead effectively.

There are enough commonalities between Hanotaux and the DeGaulle of the Fifth Republic to lend considerable weight either to Hanotaux's belief in a traditional policy (which DeGaulle would also represent) or alternatively to the idea that Hanotaux represents a transitional figure to DeGaulle in the sense that he helped to transmute French historical experience into a cluster of ideas which DeGaulle appears to exemplify whatever the influence of Hanotaux on DeGaulle may have been.

Hanotaux's views resonate in DeGaulle, in DeGaulle's commitment to the grandeur of France; in his belief in moderation and restraint as a key to the greatness of France past and present; in his vision of France as Joan of Arc; in his insistence on an independent French policy; in his desire to play a diplomatic role between the Super Powers in order to influence events and to shape a world in which France would have an important voice; in his belief that

world peace must be found in a worldwide concert of the Great Powers and in his hope that France would have a role in bringing this concert into being; in this and other visionary geopolitical dreams, for instance, of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals;" in his view that history is the history of nations and that nations are the driving force in history; in his apparent effort to grasp the ways the world was moving and to weigh all his options as a French statesman; in his determination not to permit France to become subordinate to the United States either directly or through the British "Trojan Horse" while, at the same time, protecting France from isolation by maintaining a commitment to the Atlantic Alliance (in spite of withdrawing France from the military entanglement represented by NATO); in his insistence that the Atlantic Alliance did not obligate France or restrict his diplomatic independence beyond its narrow and explicit terms; in his insistence that France must have credible military strength to support her independent policy (i.e., the force de frappe) and his belief that this power need not be overwhelming for it to provide sufficient backing for maintaining French influence; in his commitment to a democratic Republic which would accommodate a strong and active executive authority, which would empower and support great statesmanship; in his apparent faith in what great statesmanship might accomplish; and, finally, his faith in the persuasive power of French civilization which was reflected in his surprising confidence and equanimity in surrendering the Colonial Empire under the pressure of necessity and the immediately adopted counter-policy of offering massive foreign aid to the abandoned areas.

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North American Review

Revue des deux mondes

Revue d'histoire diplomatique

Revue historique

Revue hebdomadaire

La renaissance latine

Revue de Paris

B. Other

Journal of Modern History

Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine

Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer

Temps