

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF SIR EDWARD GREY

A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of the extent and nature of the influence of the late Sir Edward Grey in the shaping of foreign policy during the decisive years 1906 and 1914, is one which has tended to become obscured amid the accumulated mass of material, documentary and biographical, dealing with this period. To those investigators who have undertaken a study of the origins of the World War with the object of clearing their respective nations of war-guilt the man in whose hands was placed the direction of British foreign policy during these years appears in three distinct characters--that of the blunderer, that of the plotter, and that of the immaculate statesman.

To some German writers, such as Lutz¹, he appears merely as a blunderer unfitted by training and temperament for his task of controlling the Foreign Office. To others Grey appears as a sinister figure whose fondness for birds and sojourns in the country concealed a cunning brain which busied itself with plots against the growing power and legitimate ambitions of Germany. Many German critics, indeed, regard Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy as inspired by jealousy of the nation whose rapid growth in commerce and industry, and whose increase in naval and military strength seemed to constitute a menace to British supremacy which must be crushed at all cost. This policy was considered to be more to the liking of the British Foreign Secretary, in that, like his sovereign Edward VII, he was regarded as the inveterate enemy of Germany, who saw in France the ideal ally to aid in the encirclement and strangling of a the rival power. The third conception of Sir Edward Grey's character and its influence on British policy is that of the immaculate statesman innocent of

1. Lutz "Lord Grey and the World War" pp. 71-73.

guile and personal rancour, who did everything in his power to promote the cause of peace but whose efforts were defeated by a chain of circumstances whose origins may be traced to a period prior to his taking office, and whose later development he found it impossible to check.

While the examination of Sir Edward Grey's personal character can hardly be said to come within the scope of this study, these three conceptions of his personality are of interest because of the light which they throw upon his policy. It would therefore be desirable, if possible, to determine which of these three characters attributed to Sir Edward Grey comes nearest to the true one, or rather, in what proportion the three are blended in the one man, and to what extent they may be said to have influenced the course of events during his tenure of office. Sir Edward Grey's own book, "Twenty-five Years" would seem to be the normal source for such an investigation, but there is an illusive quality about his style, a smoothness and a pleasant flow, which by its very charm and candor lulls the reader into a state of acquiescence fatal to any attempt to dissect motives or to detect discrepancies between his statements of his aims and intentions and his course of conduct. One is also struck by a certain academic quality in Sir Edward Grey's mind which enabled him to draw fine distinctions in his handling of British Foreign Policy, which, while they were perfectly clear and understandable to himself were incomprehensible to his critics. The result of this has been to expose Sir Edward Grey, quite unjustly, to accusations of hypocrisy. The general impression left by Grey's book is that of a charmingly candid gentleman, whose whole course of action is perfectly simple and straightforward to himself and should be just as much so to any intelligent reader. It is this quality which makes the book unsatisfactory as conclusive evidence in a study of this kind.

There remains the theory of Sir Edward Grey as the sincere and honourable man called upon to take up a task too heavy for him and for which he was unfitted¹. A reading of Nicholson's work² creates a definite impression of Grey, not as formulating his own policy but of being in leading strings to his permanent advisors in the Foreign Office, principally Arthur Nicholson, Sir Eyre Crowe, and Sir William Tyrrel. These men, Nicholson seems to suggest, were the real authors of the foreign policy attributed to Sir Edward Grey. An echo of this opinion may be found in an article by Professor R.J. Sontag, of Princeton University,³ who is inclined to doubt whether Sir Edward Grey fully understood the details of the policy of the Foreign Office, or realized the extent. He gives as a reason for this suspicion the fact that the initials of the Foreign Secretary seldom appear on documents which do not bear the previously appended comments of his permanent advisors. It was manifestly impossible for Grey to deal personally with every document which passed through the hands of his Office. This being so, Professor Sontag inquires upon what principle a selection was effected, and here he seems inclined to suggest that the permanent officials exercised a species of discriminating censorship in deciding what papers should, or should not, be submitted to the Foreign Secretary. In support of his belief, he cites the question of Swiss neutrality which arose in 1909-10⁴, in which the documents representing one side of the case are initialed by officials of the Foreign Office, as well as by Grey and Mr. Asquith, while the documents which present the opposite view bear no initials. The significance of such evidence

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1. Such a view is implicit in Harold Nicholson's study of Lord Carnock.
 2. Lutz, op.cit. pp. 145-147 confirms this view.
 3. Sontag Journal of Modern History Chicago, Sept. 1933, p. 410.
 4. G. & T. British Documents on the Origins of the War Vol VIII. 413-451.

is minimized, however, when one considers that it was the policy of the Foreign Office to encourage its junior members to express their views upon the documents which passed through their hands, in the form of marginal notes or minutes. These, while they often throw interesting side-light upon the problem in hand, cannot be taken as having had any great influence in shaping the opinions or directing the policy of the Foreign Secretary.

The accusation has sometimes been made against Sir Edward Grey that he allowed personal prejudice to influence his decisions¹. Certain of his critics attribute the rejection by Great Britain of the old policy of isolation and of friendship with the Tripple Alliance, for the new one of an entente with France and Russia, to Sir Edward Grey's personal liking for France in contrast to his deep-rooted distrust of Germany, which made him sensitive to alarms and led him to regard the legitimate aims of Germany as constituting a menace to British prosperity and security.

1. Lutz co. cit. p. 62.

THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE
OF 1904.

British foreign policy under Sir Edward Grey is so interwoven with the politics and problems of Europe and the Near East as to make it almost impossible to treat it as an isolated subject. On the other hand, a discussion of this type does not give sufficient scope for investigation over so large a field. This thesis will, therefore, be confined to an investigation of Sir Edward Grey's attitude to, and influence on, one particular aspect of British foreign policy, namely: Anglo-French relations during Sir Edward Grey's tenure of office. In order still further to narrow the field so as to enable a more thorough study of this aspect of his policy our investigations will be confined to the period from 1906-1912, and will be divided into three main sections. The first of these will deal with the first Moroccan crisis arising out of the Algeiras Conference. The second section will deal with the Agadir Crisis, while the third will be taken up with the Military and Naval Conversations from 1906 -1912.

In order to arrive at a correct estimate of Sir Edward Grey's course of action it is advisable to examine the events prior to his assuming office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Such an examination confirms the view that the policy which he pursued during the succeeding years was not of his own shaping, but was a heritage from his immediate predecessor. This policy of the cultivation of an Anglo-French understanding with its corollary of increasing estrangement between England and Germany, the new Foreign Secretary adopted as his own, defended and developed. The fact that this policy was entirely in accordance with his own convictions cannot therefore, be said to imply any responsibility on the part of Sir Edward Grey for its inception. On his entering Office Sir Edward Grey had been confronted with a ready-made foreign policy, having within it the elements of those developments which were to take place during the following

decade. This unbroken continuity of British foreign policy from the signing of the Moroccan agreement of April 1904, during Lansdowne's tenure of office, and throughout the period which ended in the outbreak of the World War, may be regarded as exonerating Sir Edward Grey from the charge of wresting British foreign policy from its ancient channel and diverting it into one better suited to his alleged personal hatred of Germany.

Thus Sir Edward Grey received from his predecessor, Lord Lansdowne, both a positive and a negative inheritance. The positive heritage was that of the cultivation of friendship between England and France, together with Anglo-French co-operation in Morocco. The negative inheritance was that of an ever-increasing antagonism between England and Germany. This second feature of British foreign policy grew out of the first as a result of Germany's refusal of British overtures for an Anglo-German alliance, made on three separate occasions, before Britain turned in desperation to France, to seek the security which Germany would not offer to them. This increasing coldness was also augmented by Germany's policy of challenging France in the very field in which England had entered into any pledge to support French interests, i.e. in Morocco. The initial turning away from Germany came, therefore, during Lansdowne's tenure of office, and the widening of the breach during Grey's régime was the inevitable result of Germany's continued active hostility to French claims in Morocco, and of her hostile designs against Anglo-French Entente.

British foreign policy in its relation to France is bound up with the Moroccan agreement of 1904, the terms of which determined Great Britain's attitude in supporting French claims in Morocco and laid the foundation for the Anglo-French Entente. Like the Entente itself, the Moroccan policy had been inaugurated by Lord Lansdowne, and in adhering to the terms of the Moroccan agreement in giving diplomatic support to France against German aggression, Sir Edward Grey was actually in harmony with his determination to adopt the policy of his predecessor and to carry it on unaltered. The events of the

succeeding years which will be dealt with in the sections devoted to them, arise, therefore, out of the obligations entered into by the British Government under the aforementioned agreement made during the regime of Sir Edward Grey's predecessor.

The Moroccan agreement of 1904 had rescued Great Britain from ~~the~~ dangerous position in which she found herself at the beginning of the century. At the close of the Boer War which had aroused so much hostility against her among the nations of Europe, Great Britain was surrounded by unfriendly powers who at any time might join in a continental coalition against her. Thus her position of isolation had ceased to be "splendid" and was no longer even safe. Her only support was the dubious good-will of Germany who used England's need of support against France and Russia as a lever to extract from her, concessions, colonial and otherwise. Great Britain's only chance to escape from this unhappy condition was by making an alliance with Germany, or failing that, by coming to an agreement with France which would relax the tension between the two countries arising from those sources of friction provided by the clashing interests of the two powers in many parts of the world. In seeking to escape from the dangerous isolation in which she found herself, Great Britain had in accordance with her old attitude of friendship with the Triple Alliance, turned first to Germany in her search for an ally. It was only when the German Foreign Office refused Mr. Chamberlain's offer of an alliance in 1901¹ that Great Britain, thoroughly alarmed, turned to France and later to Russia. Bulow and Holstein were deluded by their conviction that the ancient hostility between England on the one hand and France and Russia on the other, would defeat any attempt at an alliance of this nature. For this reason Chamberlain's warning that in the event of a refusal on the part of Germany, England would be forced to seek elsewhere, possibly in France or Russia,

Grey op. cit. vol. 1. pp. 96-98.

for the support refused her by Germany, was regarded as mere bluff on the part of the British statesman.

It is of the first importance for an appreciation of Grey's attitude toward the ^{Anglo-French} British Entente to realize that what he intended was not a definite Anglo-French alliance but only a friendship based upon a recent settlement of outstanding difficulties. This policy of a flexible agreement rather than a formal alliance was the policy inherited by Grey from the previous administration, and under his guidance it was developed, while at the same time he never ceased to stress the informal nature of the association and the absence of definite commitments on either side. If during his period of office the informal agreement between the two countries ripened until it came to have the force if not the form of an alliance, this change took place in spite of Sir Edward Grey's clearly worded statements which aimed at defining the original character of the Entente, and at preventing it from being metamorphosed into a formal alliance. Any charge of vagueness on the part of Sir Edward Grey in this respect, is refuted by his own letters to M. Cambon in 1906¹, and also by the fact that his position was thoroughly understood and accepted by the French statesmen of the period.² The Morocco agreement of 1904 paved the way for an Anglo-French accord by removing those sources of friction which were repeatedly bringing the two nations to the verge of war. By its terms³ France relinquished her claims in Egypt and Great Britain did the like in Morocco, leaving France a free hand in that country, although according to article 2 of the agreement the political status of Morocco was to remain unchanged. Article 4 of the treaty provided for full commercial liberty for all nations for the space of thirty years. It was article 9, however, inserted at the request of the British Government, which was to determine British policy with regard to Morocco and shape the course of events for the next ten years. According to article 9 "the two governments agreed⁴ to afford one another their diplomatic support in order to obtain the execution of the clauses of the present declaration." The position

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1. Grey. op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 133-136.

2. Poincaré "Memoires". Vol. 1. p. 92

3. "The First Moroccan Crisis 1904-1906". pp. 102-104

taken by Sir Edward Grey and maintained by him repeatedly during his period of office was, therefore, in accordance with engagements which had been entered into before he had taken over the control of the foreign policy. Sir Edward Grey has been criticized for his attitude of apparent acquiescence in the implied dishonesty of those secret clauses which accompanied the Moroccan agreement. According to hostile critics these secret clauses contradicted the terms of the agreement itself providing, in that way for the partition of Morocco whose integrity was guaranteed by article four. This proceeding was, however, not so cynical as might appear, for although the agreement undertook to guarantee the integrity of Morocco, it was clear that that country was in such a state of anarchy as to make the fulfilment of this guarantee almost impossible. The secret clauses were inserted in order to provide a safeguard for human life and property and to deal with any situation arising from a sudden collapse of the Moroccan government. To have made these terms public would have demonstrated to the world at large the condition of the state whose integrity was being guaranteed, an action which might have precipitated a catastrophe of the downfall of the Moroccan government.

Not only may the origin of the Entente be traced to Sir Edward Grey's predecessor, but the process of the strengthening of the bonds between the two countries also had its beginning under Lord Lansdowne. Its growth and development under the guidance of Grey, while conspicuous, is merely the continuation of what had been set in motion at an earlier period. If under the new Foreign Secretary, the Entente took on the character of an alliance directed against Germany and inimical to her interests, this development was the result, not of any plots on the part of England to "encircle" Germany nor of personal hostility on the part of Sir Edward Grey, but of the uneasiness caused by Germany's growing strength on land and sea, coupled ^{with} by the arrogant tone which she adopted in dealing with other nations. Proof of this statement may be gathered by tracing the course of events during this period of the growth of the Entente. In each case the link between England and France became stronger as the result of some acts of aggression on the

part of Germany which forced the two nations to unite against the power which was aiming some interest which was vital to one or both. The

The Algeciras Conference is the first example of this aggression on the part of Germany. The sending of the "Panther" to Agadir is another. During both of these ~~affairs~~ Grey gave France the diplomatic support which had been promised by his predecessor, and in both cases the Entente emerged from the struggle stronger and more clear cut. Even during Lansdowne's tenure of office, before the Entente to take on an anti-German bias, the occasion of the Tangier Visit¹ with its clumsy demonstration of the German policy of ignoring the existence of the Moroccan agreement and of the special position of France in Morocco, gave rise to an instinctive drawing together of the two countries to resist German pressure. This instinctive reaction of the two powers to resist German aggression had its effect, even at this early date, in that it gave a new strength and meaning to the Entente in the eyes of both England and France. From this date it began to lose its merely negative significance as a means for clearing the way for an understanding based on mutual accommodation. Henceforth there is found an increasing tendency on the part of both nations to look to each other for diplomatic support as guaranteed in the Moroccan agreement. With regard to Morocco, the Entente even in the time of Lansdowne had begun to be used as an instrument to check German ambition.² It may be seen therefore that although in Lansdowne's time the Entente had not yet become a weapon to be used for checking Germany already there was growing up a tendency in this direction.

1. G. & T. Vol. 3 pp. 74-75. Bertie to Lansdowne Apr. 25th, 1905.

2. G. & T. Vol. 3 p. 72. Lansdowne to Bertie Apr. 22 1905. Lansdowne in this despatch mentions the possibility of Germany's demanding a court in Morocco in the course of the coming Conference and offers England's support in thwarting her.

ALGERIRAS CONFERENCE

The Algeriras Conference of 1906 was Germany's first major attempt to break up the Entente in accordance with her new policy which aimed at the ruin of this Anglo-French understanding which at first had seemed so feeble but which now threatened to become a serious check upon German ambitions. The method by which she intended to accomplish this end was to demonstrate to France that British aid was of little avail in supporting her against German diplomatic pressure and military strength.

When Sir Edward Grey took office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the beginning of 1906, he found himself faced with a crisis which had been brewing during his predecessor's term of office, and with the ramifications of which he was unfamiliar. Having accomplished the initial step in her campaign for the humiliation of France in forcing the dismissal of the hated Delcasse¹ upon a panic-stricken French Government, Germany was preparing for the next stage in the shape of a Conference, the calling of which would constitute a denial of the French claims to a special position in Morocco. The attitude of Grey to the problems to be settled at Algeriras can be briefly stated. It was in all respects a logical consequence of the new policy, the first outlines of which had been sketched by his predecessor. He accepted as a legacy from Lansdowne the settlement of all Anglo-French disputes, which had been the essence of the agreement of 1904 and which had had the effect of putting an end to British isolation. He also accepted as an integral part of that settlement, the limited engagements entered into by Lansdowne, to give France diplomatic support in Morocco. Like Lansdowne, he had no desire to see the new Entente harden into an anti-German alliance. His attitude toward the Algeriras Conference, therefore, was that England was bound to honour her engagements with France under the agreement of 1904 but was committed to nothing.

1. Grey op. cit. vol. 1. p. 110

more far-reaching.

Sir Edward Grey quotes a letter which he wrote to Campbell-Bannerman on January the 9th, 1906¹ and which gives us an insight into his attitude upon taking over the Foreign Office. In it he speaks of his determination to follow in Lansdowne's footsteps and to adhere to the obligations entered into under the terms of the Moroccan agreement. He also speaks of his warning to the German Ambassador that in his personal opinion, British public opinion would render neutrality impossible in the event of a war between Germany and France, arising out of the Anglo-French agreement.

It should be made clear that in thus informing Germany of the probable British reaction to a German attack on France Grey was not actuated by any personal spite towards Germany, in spite of the attitude of distrust which his earlier experience in dealing with Germany while serving as Under-Secretary to Lord Rosebury, had implanted in him². The Foreign Secretary was, indeed, eager to cultivate German friendship and to co-operate with her in any field in which her action did not run counter to specific English commitments under the terms of the Anglo-French agreement. Thus his statement to Battenich that English opinion would compel the Government to honour its obligations to France in Morocco, was accompanied by an equally clear statement that it formed no part of the British intentions to "egg on" France against Germany in the forthcoming Conference.³

Another possible heritage from Sir Edward Grey's period of office under Lord Rosebury has been pointed out by Mr. Headlam Worley⁴ who draws attention

1. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 196-98.

2. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 54-55. e.g. his memory of Germany's brusque methods with Turkey in the matter of railway concessions in Turkey 1892.

3. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 196. The subsequent development of British foreign policy bears witness to Grey's sincerity in this respect. Thus as early as Jan. 9, 1906, he suggested to Campbell-Bannerman the abandonment of the British policy of seeking to prevent the acquisition by Germany of port and coaling stations in Morocco, in return for recognition by Germany of French claims in that country.

4. Headlam Worley "German Diplomatic Documents" p. 131 Quarterly Review 1930.

to the parallel which may be observed with regard to England's attitude to Italy. In both cases there is found a general entente with an understanding that in case of war neither nation should be forced to give armed support to its partner. In both cases also, England stresses her refusal to allow this understanding to be strengthened in such a way as to involve a definite commitment to armed support on the part of either nation.

In his despatch of January 9th, 1906, to the British Ambassador at Berlin¹, Sir Edward Grey reports a conversation with Metternich, in the course of which he delivered a warning that in the case of a war between Germany and France, resulting from the Anglo-French agreement, British public opinion would be aroused on the side of France to such an extent as to make neutrality impossible. This warning he was careful to state as merely his own unofficial opinion. He was speaking officially, however, when he gave the accompanying promise that the Entente should not be used to obstruct German policy or interests. A further indication of Sir Edward Grey's moderate attitude with regard to Germany is found in a minute to a despatch of January 5th, 1906, from Sir A. Nicholson², which refers to Germany's unwillingness to allow the suppression of the contraband activities in Morocco to be placed in French hands, and the demand that Mogador should be placed under German authority. Commenting on the tendency of Spain to rely on Germany in the negotiations, Sir Edward Grey appends the following remark: I admit that any arrangement between Spain and Germany on the west coast is difficult because of the neighborhood of the Canaries, but an equivalent concession elsewhere is not impossible. After taking note of these indications of the Foreign Secretary's attitude toward Germany, we can agree that the German hope, as expressed by Von Richthofen to Lacelles³ that the new Government might prove more friendly to

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3 pp. 209-210, Grey to Lacelles, Jan. 9th, 1906

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3 p. 209, Nicholson to Grey, Jan. 5th, 1906

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3 p. 207, Lacelles to Grey, Jan. 3rd, 1906.

Germany than the former one had been, was not so ill-founded as might appear. Certainly the conception of Grey as an enemy, determined to encircle Germany with hostile Powers appears as most inaccurate in the light of these facts. Sir Edward Grey was an enemy to German interests only in-so-far as they collided with the pledges which England had given to France with regard to Morocco.

Sir Edward Grey's approach to the Moroccan situation was one of extreme caution. He was feeling his way in accordance with his practice of seeking to meet the needs of the moment, without making any definite plan of campaign beyond fulfilling the British engagements to France. This caution was necessary not only because of his unfamiliarity with the more minute details of his new duties, but also because of the limitations imposed on him as a minister holding office under a constitutional system of Government which forbade him to pledge the country to any course of action which would necessarily entail war with Germany. Grey explains his own position¹, in this respect, pointing out that the Conference brought Great Britain face to face with the alternative of proving the value of the Anglo-French Entente by giving France the support promised her, or of allowing the Entente to collapse, thus awarding a diplomatic victory to Germany. He knew, however, that he could not pledge England to give armed support, as France desired, nor did the terms of the Agreement go beyond a guarantee of diplomatic support. Yet he feared that a definite refusal of such support would not represent the true wishes of the nation, and would result in alienating France and thrusting England back into the dangerous isolation from which she had escaped through the Anglo-French Agreement.²

1. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 175-176.

2. G. & T. Vol. 3. p. 162. Grey to Nicholson, Dec. 21st, 1905. In a private dispatch to Nicholson Grey stresses the importance of British support of France in the Conference in order to strengthen the prestige of the Entente.

This dilemma he escaped from by speaking with two voices:- the official voice of the Cabinet Minister speaking on behalf of the Government and the voice of Sir Edward Grey the private individual who drew his own conclusions from a knowledge of the facts. It was in his official capacity that he promised diplomatic support to France in accordance with the Agreement of 1904, while he stated his inability to pledge his country to any more drastic action. It was in his private capacity, however, that he gave it as his opinion that in case of a war between France and Germany, in which France would find herself attacked as a result of the Anglo-French Agreement, British public opinion would react so strongly as to make neutrality impossible. Throughout this and subsequent crises, Grey carefully maintained the difference between his opinion as a private individual and his official attitude with regard to commitments involved in the Moroccan Agreement.

The establishment of a state bank and the policing of the Moroccan ports were the two problems which were paramount at the Conference. The first of these, France was willing to see placed on an international basis, but the second, which involved the eventual control of Morocco, France was determined to reserve for herself, while Germany was equally determined that this task should be carried out under the joint supervision of the minor Powers. During the earlier part of the Conference most of the European Powers taking part were pre-disposed in favour of Germany. The position of the United States was that of a Power whose interest in the out-come was small, but which was disposed to regard the British attitude as the result of personal spite toward Germany. We therefore find the United States acting in the role of go-between for Germany.

In these two most important questions France received loyal support from Great Britain. Nicholson, the British representative at the Conference kept in

constant touch with Grey, and his unwavering support of the French demands reflected the attitude of the Foreign Secretary and was the outward manifestation of Sir Edward Grey's decision to adhere to the Agreement of 1904 and to preserve the Entente from the collapse which would follow any lapse in loyalty to France. This attitude on the part of the Foreign Secretary is exemplified by the reaction of Sir Arthur Nicholson to the offer made by the United States representative¹ on behalf of Germany, which included "large concessions" in financial matters if France could be induced to recede from her demand for the control of the Moroccan police. Nicholson in his reply, promised to refer the offer to his French colleague, but refused to attempt to persuade France to any such course of action. The extent to which Nicholson had anticipated the Foreign Secretary's reaction to such a proposal may be seen in Sir Edward Grey's minute to the despatch of Jan. 15th, 1906,² in which Nicholson had notified him of the alteration suggested by the German Government and communicated by them to the French delegate. In this minute Grey states that the French attitude to the proposals must be thoroughly understood before Great Britain could take any stand in the matter. On this as on other occasions the Foreign Secretary was maintaining his policy of supporting France in any situation which might arise with regard to Morocco.

A further stiffening in Grey's attitude may be noted in his minute to Nicholson's telegram of February 4th, 1906,³ recording the attempt of the German delegate, Tattenbach to separate Great Britain from France by pointing out a possible danger to British commerce in French predominance in Morocco. Grey, in his response to this insinuation, declared that he regarded British interests

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. III. P. 2312232. Nicholson to Grey, Jan. 21, 1906.

2. G. & T. op. cit. p. 235, Nicholson to Grey, Jan. 25th, 1906.

3. G. & T. op. cit. p. 341, Nicholson to Grey, (Tel.) Feb. 4, 1906.

in Morocco to be purely economic in character and that therefore, they were protected under the terms of the Agreement of 1904. Moreover, he added that if, (as had been previously affirmed,) German interests were purely economic in character this same agreement would provide an adequate protection for them, no less than for the British interests.

Germany's policy of working in an atmosphere of mystery, toward some little-understood goal, combined with the blustering tactics of her delegate Tattenbach, was working to her disadvantage and beginning to alienate even her own allies, as in the case of Italy,¹ who was becoming alarmed by her constantly shifting policy. This growing hostility to German methods is shown in the remarks of the French representative concerning the illusive manner of the German delegates,² which he attributed to the fact that the Germans themselves did not know exactly what they were aiming at.

In following the developments arising out of the Algeiras Conference one receives the impression that Sir Edward Grey's attitude hardened rapidly as the conviction grew upon him, during the fourth week of the negotiations, that the aim of Germany was to lose Conference in a fog of controversy,³ rather than to allow France to score a diplomatic triumph. Thus the German policy with regard to the Conference was revealing itself more and more clearly to the nations taking part in the negotiations, as a negative one of doing everything possible to discredit the Entente. This conviction was strengthened in Sir Edward Grey's mind by his belief that Germany's interests in Morocco were purely economic in character, as had been officially stated, she would agree to the policing of Morocco

1. G. & T. op. cit. p. 238 Nicholson to Grey, Jan. 26th, 1906.

2. G. & T. op. cit. pp. 243-244. Nicholson to Grey, Feb. 5th, 1906.

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, pp. 248-249. Nicholson to Grey, Feb. 12, 1906.

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by France and Spain. Such a concession could not possibly interfere with legitimate economic interests which would be safeguarded by Germany's using her influence to have the policy of the "open door" in Morocco extended over a longer period of years than that provided in the Moroccan agreement. Grey's suspicions of the nature of German aims in Morocco received additional support from the reports of her intrigues with Constantinople¹, in trying to persuade the Sultan to interfere on the side of Germany who was represented as a friend of Islam.

By the middle of February the tide had definitely turned against Germany at the Conference, and as a result of her capricious policy which served to alienate the Powers who had at first been favourable to her cause, the advantages which had been on her side at the commencement were steadily diminishing. The Conference which had originated as an instrument for the humiliation of France and the breaking down of the Entente was beginning already to menace the prestige of its authors.

With this decrease of Germany's influence at the Conference there came a corresponding strengthening of the attitude of Sir Edward Grey. The Foreign Secretary had pursued ^{unwillingly} his policy of supporting France in Morocco as a means of preserving the Entente, but now he ceased to act merely on the defensive and his policy took a stronger almost aggressive tone. Grey's letter of February 14, 1906² to Mettarnich shows him beginning to take the offensive. In it he declared that common sense dictated that France and Spain as the only Powers accustomed to handling the Moslem peoples of North Africa should be given the task of organizing a Moroccan police force. Brushing aside Mettarnich's arguments to the contrary he reiterated that French domination in Morocco was no more a menace to German economic interests than it was to those of Great Britain or of any other

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3 p. 248 O'Connor to Grey, Feb. 12th, 1906.

2. G. & T. Vol. op. cit. Vol. 3. p. 254, Grey to Lascelles, Feb. 14, 1906.

Power. It followed, therefore, that since German economic interests in Morocco were not menaced any more than those of Great Britain that any objection on the part of Germany to French domination must be interpreted as proceeding from unconfessed political designs in that country.

Meanwhile, England and France were presenting a united front, France refusing to yield an inch in her demands that the policing of Morocco be placed under her control and that of Spain, while Great Britain on her part, refused to listen to any temptations on the part of Germany to slacken in her support of the French position. A report of a conversation of February 19th, 1906, between Grey and Metternich¹ represents Grey's attitude the more clearly, and demonstrates that the policy pursued by him at this juncture was essentially the same as that which he had enunciated at the beginning of the crisis. The only difference was that of development. In this interview with Metternich the tone was stronger and more decisive than heretofore, and he pursued the argument that French interests, both economic and political, made it necessary that France should predominate in Morocco. He also insisted that the very fact that no other power regarded the possibility of French predominance in Morocco as a menace to its commercial interests, or was making any attempt to prevent the control of Moroccan police being placed in French hands, pointed to an absence of good faith on the part of Germany. Grey's tone was almost threatening when he reminded the German Ambassador that should the Conference fail as a result of Germany's objections, any improvement in Anglo-German relations would be indefinitely postponed. Grey's answer to Metternich's accusations that England was making use of the Entente as an excuse to side with France against German interests, was that the Moroccan problem was the only point of difference which had arisen between France and Germany since the Anglo-French Agreement had been signed, and that Morocco

1. G. & F. op. cit. Vol. 3 p. 263, Grey to Lascelles, Feb. 19, 1906.

was the only area in which Great Britain was pledged to give France her diplomatic support. The knowledge of the probable attitude which would be taken by Great Britain in the event of a war between France and Germany coming as a result of a breakdown of the Conference, was thus of great value to Grey and enabled him to take the bold tone which he used in uttering his warning to Metturnich. Sir Edward Grey also placed the British determination to support French claims in Morocco on a basis of practicality as well as of loyalty, as is shown by his pointing out to the Russian Charge d'Affaires¹ the inefficiency and confusion inherent in the German proposal to place the control of police in the Moroccan ports in the hands of several powers.

The deadlock which had been reached at Algecires inspired Sir Edward Grey with a foreboding that the breakup of the Conference would result in war between France and Germany into which Great Britain would be drawn by force of public opinion. This knowledge acting upon his dread of war, was, no doubt, instrumental in causing him to adopt the strong tone which he did in his warning to Germany. A memorandum of February 20th indicates that in the event of a Franco-German war the Foreign Secretary realized that England would be forced to take part not only because of the reaction of British public opinion, but also because of the hopes which had been raised among the French by the lengths to which England had already gone in supporting their claims. Thus we see that even at this early date, in spite of attempts to avoid any such development, the Entente was beginning to involve England in commitments not mentioned in the Agreement which had given it birth, but whose development was inevitable from the very nature of the circumstances. His eagerness to save the Conference from a breakdown which would result in war, is shown in the above memorandum in which he suggests that if necessary,

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 264, Grey to Spring-Rice, Feb. 20th, 1906.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 266, Memorandum by Grey, Feb. 20th, 1906.

German consent to French demands should be bought at the price of allowing Germany a port of a coaling station on the coast of Morocco although he knew that such a suggestion would be regarded with suspicion and disapproval as a sign of weakening on the part of Great Britain. This very threat of war, such as Grey feared and sought to avert it, nevertheless gave him an opportunity of strengthening Great Britain's position by enlarging the Entente. That he himself was conscious of this opportunity and ready to take advantage of it is shown in the last paragraph of the memorandum previously referred to, in which he mentions the possibility of a rapprochement with Russia and the value of such a recruit in strengthening the Entente and forging it into an instrument for the checking of the aggressive tendencies of Germany.

Thus we see that in the course of the struggle which grew out of the Algeciras Conference the Entente was strengthened by the action of those very forces which had been launched against it to crush it. Not only was the Entente made stronger but it emerged from the crisis with a clearer and more definite mission. As has pointed out this evolution may be traced in the changed attitude of Sir Edward Grey himself. On entering the Foreign Office Grey had been pledged to defend and carry on the policy of friendship to France, together with the obligations to which England was committed by the Agreement of 1904 and by the diplomatic support given by him to France during the crisis this pledge had been fulfilled. Therefore, although at the commencement of the Conference the Entente was valuable in the eyes of Grey only because it had rescued England from her isolation, the crisis revealed it to him as having a more positive value as an instrument for checking the German attempts to dominate the continent of Europe. Germany in trying to break the Anglo-French Entente had merely succeeded in making it realize its own strength and in directing its forces against herself.

THE AGADIR CRISIS

The Agadir crisis of 1911, while it was in harmony with the German policy of trying to break up the Anglo-French Entente by separating the partners, France and England, also took its origin in German colonial ambition. The Active ^{of} Algecirás which had brought to a close the Conference of the same name, had failed to bring about a permanent solution of the Moroccan problem and had left ample opportunity for a revival of old disputes. It was the German expectation that the anarchic state of Morocco would give rise to circumstances which would force France to go beyond the limits of her jurisdiction as specified in the Act, thus giving Germany an opportunity to harass her and make German acquiescence in a further French advance a matter of mutual compensation. This opportunity came in 1911 when ^{the} Moroccan Sultan's appeal for aid in putting down a revolt,¹ coupled with the danger to which the disorders exposed European life and property in Morocco had resulted in the despatch of an armed French expedition to Fez. The Franco-German Agreement of 1909 had resulted in the recognition by Germany of the special position of France in Morocco. More immediately, the possibility of France being forced to send an expedition to Fez had been discussed by Herr Kiderlen Waechter, the German Foreign Secretary and M. Cambot as recently as April 5th, 1911.² After some difficulty Kiderlen had been brought to consent to a French expedition being sent to Fez in case circumstances should render such a course necessary. Thus the position which was later taken by the German Foreign Office with regard to the French expedition to Fez was in direct contradiction to the complacence which it had already shown in unofficial conversations.

1. G. & T. opp. cit. Vol. VII. pp. 196-197, Gray to Bertie April 21, 1911.

2. G. & T. opp. cit. Vol. VII. p. 191, Goshen to Nicholson, April 14th, 1911. Goshen describes the contents of Kiderlen's note of Apr. 7th in answer to that of Cambot on April 5th. In this note the German Foreign Secretary conceded to France the right to send an armed expedition to Fez in case circumstances should make it necessary.

In studying the German reaction to the French expedition it must be remembered that Germany's real aims were not those which she ostensibly avowed. The official and correct attitude taken by the German Foreign Office was, that in marching on the capital of Morocco, France had violated the Act of Algiceres which had limited French police duties to the open ports, and that this violation had reopened the whole question, leaving Germany and all other signatory Powers free to take such action with regard to Morocco as they might see fit. The real object of the German action in sending the "panther" to Agadir must, however, be sought in the intention of Kiderlen Waechter, who hoped to exploit the embarrassing position in which France now found herself in order to extract concessions from her elsewhere. The manner in which Kiderlen intended to levy this blackmail on France was soon indicated by his intimation that France could purchase immunity from German interference in Morocco only at the expense of concessions elsewhere and possibly in the French Congo.

The sending of the "Panther" to Agadir was in harmony with the blustering diplomatic tactics which German statesmen considered to be the most effective method in dealing with other Powers,¹ and was also a gesture expressive of both the ostensible and the real attitudes of the German Foreign Office. Officially the warship was sent as a demonstration that Germany considered herself to be freed from the obligations of the Act of Algiceres which had already been violated by French action. The mission of the "Panther" was ostensibly the same as that of the French expedition to Fez;— namely to safeguard German subjects and commercial interests. An indication of this official attitude may be seen in a minute of July , 1911 by Nicholson.² Actually this entry of the German gunboat into

1. Dugdale "German Diplomatic Documents" Vol. IV. pp. 12-13, Bethmann Hollweg to Emperor William II, July 20th, 1911.

2. Grey op. cit. Vol. 2. pp. 35-36. Nicholson quotes Mettarnich that the advance of the French to Fez had rendered the provisions of the Act of Algiceres illusory thus creating a new situation. It was therefore the duty of the German Government to afford the necessary protection to the lives and properties of German subjects in the South and to continue to do so until such time as a condition of peace and tranquillity had been established.

the closed port of Agadir constituted a sharp reminder to France that she could only purchase security from German interference with her special interests in Morocco by altering large territorial concessions. That the aims of Kiderlen and his colleagues were not clearly defined in their own minds in this period, is shown in Kiderlen's memorandum of May 3rd, 1911.¹ They saw Agadir as a valuable port which might be useful either as a foothold for Germany in Morocco and as a base for German penetration of the interior, or as a means of forcing territorial concessions from France. Kiderlen's pretext of protecting German lives and commercial interests in the territory about Agadir was obviously thin,² and his whole attitude was that of a man who, having made up his mind to a certain course of action seeks to find a plausible reason. An illustration of this may be noticed in the contradictory statements recorded in a despatch of July the 6th, 1911, from Sir Vincent Corbett in Munich³, which recorded a conversation with Count Podwils. The Bavarian Prime Minister while explaining the German action as rendered necessary as a measure to safeguard German commercial interests nevertheless he ^{volunteered} the statement that the "Panther" would leave Agadir only when the French and Spanish troops had been withdrawn.

The Germans had, however, made one serious mistake in repeating their error of 1905 and 1906, in that they had imagined it possible to interfere with France in Morocco without having to reckon with England. Kiderlen saw in his proposed coup an opportunity not only to wring territorial concessions from France, but also to separate her from England. This belief that England could be persuaded to hold aloof while Germany despoiled France was entertained in Berlin in spite of Grey's warning to Metturnich⁴, that in this case, as in 1905-

1. Dugdale op. cit. Vol. 4. pp. 2-4

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. p. 355. Gošhen to Grey, July 12, 1911.

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. pp. 339-340. Corbett to Grey, July 6th, 1911.

4. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 2. p. 37. Grey to Count DeSalis, July 4th, 1911.

For Grey's own attitude see also p. 34 of the same work.

"I informed Count Metturnich today, July 4th on behalf of His Majesty's Government that I must tell him that our attitude could not be a disinterested one with regard to Morocco."

(4)

1906 Great Britain was pledged to give diplomatic support to France in Moroccan affairs. The Germans had also been misled by the friendly reception accorded to the Kaiser upon his recent visit to England¹ into believing that Anglo-German relations were so friendly as to make it impossible that England should take sides against Germany in a matter, which, as they believed, did not vitally concern them. They had miscalculated the strength of British friendship for France and had erroneously thought the time ripe for a coup which would place her in possession of great territorial gain and break up the hated Anglo-French Entente. The attitude of Sir Edward Grey during this preliminary stage of the crisis was one^{of} firmly^{LESS} combined with moderation, but one which nevertheless showed an advance from his attitude during the first Moroccan crisis. He stated, as heretofore the intention of Great Britain to give loyal diplomatic support to France in all matters concerning Morocco but he no longer represented Great Britain as having no interests of her own at stake. By 1911 British Moroccan policy had changed from a negative one of supporting French interests to a positive one of defending interests which she considered vital to herself. In his letter to the Count De Salis mentioned above, he describes himself as having stated to Metturnich that the sending of the "panther" to Agadir had created a new situation which might in future lead to developments having a direct effect upon Great Britain. For this reason England could not recognize any new arrangements which might be come to without consulting her. In view of the later outburst of indignation in Germany over the tenor of Lloyd George's famous Mansion House speech, it is important to notice how at this early date Grey had thus officially warned Berlin that England could not be ignored in any Moroccan settlement. Grey points out that in making this communication to Metturnich he was speaking with the authority of the Cabinet a fact which indicates that this development of Grey's attitude toward Morocco had extended

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 336, Nicholson to Harding of Penchurst, July 5th, 1911.

itself to the Cabinet at large.

Germany's attempts to separate England from France and thus break up the Entente occupied two stages, in both of which she met defeat owing to Grey's determined attitude. The first stage is shown in Bethmann Hollweg's instructions to Mettarnich¹ that in case Grey should be inclined to interfere in the question of the presence of the "Panther" at Agadir, it should be suggested to him that the French march on Fez had freed Great Britain no less than Germany from the conditions of the Act of Algiceras, and therefore^{that} Great Britain was equally free to protect her interests in Morocco. At the same time hints were dropped in Paris that Great Britain had intentions of making claims on her own account². These hints were, however, disregarded by Cambot. Had Grey fallen into this trap thus set for him by taking similar action to that of Germany in order to safeguard British interests under the new conditions, Kiderlen would have succeeded in his plan for driving a wedge between the two powers. Grey, however, although he for a time favoured the sending of a war ship to Agadir, had no intention of acting independently of France and made it clear that such a step would not be taken without consulting Great Britain's partner in the Entente³.

Having failed to tempt England by hinting at the profit which she might reap from adopting the German contention that as a result of the French march on Fez each of the powers was free to resume its liberty of action, Berlin now attempted to ignore England altogether. She proposed at Paris that the Moroccan affair should be settled by direct negotiation between Spain, France and Germany. On the receipt of a communication of this attempt from the British Ambassador at Paris, Grey pointed

1. Dugdale op. cit. Vol. 4 pp. 7-8. Bethmann Hollweg to Mettarnich, July 4/1911.

2. Dugdale op. cit. Vol. 4 p. 10. Memorandum by Kiderlen Waechter, July 9th, 1911. records a conversation with Cambot.

out that British commercial interests in Morocco were much larger than those of Germany and that no such attempts at her exclusion could be tolerated.^{1.}

Throughout the crisis Grey's policy was characterized with a moderation with regard to Germany's claims, which, though it did not abate his determination to fulfil the British pledges to support France in Morocco and to safeguard British interests, was nevertheless in strong contrast to the attitude of his permanent advisors. Grey, whom German critics have regarded as the prime mover in the plot to encircle Germany, appears, therefore, throughout this period as a check upon the more vigorous policy of his permanent advisors in the Foreign Office and notably by Sir Arthur Nicholson² and Sir Eyre Crowe who were supported in their attitude by the British Ambassador at Paris.^{3.} This moderate policy on the part of Sir Edward Grey was in part at least, an expression of his genuine desire to maintain a friendly attitude toward Germany and to co-operate with her in every way which would not be detrimental to British interests or to the safety of the Entente. This same moderation had been a feature of his policy during the first Moroccan crisis, and, indeed, it dated from his first entry into the Foreign Office. This attitude on Grey's part was also dictated by his policy of caution and his determination to consult with France at every step in order that the two nations might present a united front on this matter which so vitally affected them both.

This divergence^{of opinion} on the part of Grey, on the one hand, and those of Bertie, Crowe, and Nicholson, on the other, was particularly exemplified in their reactions to Germany's demands upon France for compensation in the French Congo. Bertie believed that in thus offering France a free hand in Morocco in return for the cession of the better part of the French Congo to Germany, Berlin had revealed her true aims. The Ambassador believed that Germany had deliberately demanded

1. G. & T. op. cit. vol. 7 pp. 330-331. Grey to Bertie, July 3, 1911.

2. G. & T. Vol. 7, p. 354. Bertie to Nicholson, July 12th, 1911.

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, pp. 341-342, Grey to Bertie, July 6th, 1911. Grey states it to be not irreconcilable with British interests for Germany to be allowed to acquire a commercial port in Morocco. See also pp. 352-353, in which Bertie states to Grey his belief that a German Port in Morocco would be fortified,

thus constituting a menace to British trade routes. Note Crowe's agreement with this view.

impossible concessions from France, and had fomented incidents at Agadir in order to provide an excuse for the landing of German forces and justify Germany remaining permanently in possession of the Port¹. On his part Grey agreed that the concessions demanded by Germany in the Congo², were impossible, but he took a more reasonable view of the German colonial ambitions than that of his advisors. He saw no reason why the German desire for more territory in Africa should not be met by a French offer to share with Germany the preemption rights in the Belgian Congo.³ The Foreign Secretary even proposed that if the consent of France could be obtained, Germany might be allowed to obtain a commercial port in Morocco.⁴ On this point also there was a strong difference of opinion between Grey and his colleagues in the Foreign Office., whose view was expressed by Crowe in his statement that to give Germany a commercial port in Morocco would result in her fortifying it and thus endangering the British Trade routes.⁵ In his despatch of July the 6th, 1911⁶ Grey expressed his disagreement with Cambon's assumption that it would be impossible for England to allow Germany to receive any territory in Morocco, and he again stated it as his belief that such a concession would not be detrimental to British interests. The reaction of the British Ambassador at Paris to this proposal was in complete agreement with that of Crowe, while that of Nicholson was shown in his letter of July the 18th, 1911, to Goshen.⁷ In this letter he expressed anxiety lest the Government should be beguiled into thinking that a German Commercial port in Morocco, which could be fortified by them at any time regardless of any agreement to the contrary, would be harmless to British interests.

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 371 Bertie to Grey, July 16th, 1911.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. p. 345, Goshen to Grey, July 10th, 1911.

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. p. 379, Grey to Bertie, July 20th, 1911.

4. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 341, Grey to Bertie, July 6th, 1911.

5. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 353, Minute by Crowe of despatch of Bertie to Grey, July 13th, 1911.

6. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 365, Bertie to Grey, July 6th, 1911.

7. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, pp. 374-375, Nicholson to Goshen, July 18th, 1911.

A salient feature of the Agadir crisis was the manner in which the Cabinet in spite of its internal differences of opinion, united to give support to the attitude taken by Sir Edward Grey. This unity of feeling was due, in part at least, to the general reaction against the cool assumption on the part of Germany that the recent improvement in the relations between the two countries would insure England's inaction in the event of a reopening by Germany of the Moroccan question,¹ and that use could be made of these improved relations to detach England from her friendship with France. Germany's action in allowing the period of seventeen days to elapse without vouchsafing any reply of any kind to Grey's formal communication of the British position made on July 4th, 1911,² had the effect of arousing the indignation of the members of the Cabinet and of drawing them into a closer unanimity. This period of silence on the part of the German Government also seemed to indicate their confident belief that in this dispute Great Britain could be regarded as a negligible quantity. Thus Grey's policy of supporting French interests in Morocco would, in the German opinion, be rendered harmless by the dissension among the various shades of opinion within the Cabinet. Mr. Lloyd George's speech of July 21st, 1911, at the Mansion House³ came, therefore, as a shock to Germany, revealing as it did, that the supposedly pro-German body of opinion in the Cabinet which had been relied upon to hamper Grey's effective handling of the situation, was ranged on the side of the Foreign Secretary. It is this speech which Grey himself regarded as the turning point in the crisis because of the manner in which it completely upset the German calculations.

1. S. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 335, Nicholson to Harding of Peschurat, Jul. 5th, 1911.

2. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 2. pp. 3738 Grey to De Salis, July 4th, 1911. Grey records his warning to Metturnich on July 4th that Great Britain could not be disinterested with regard to Morocco. The shock caused to Germany by the Mansion House speech is, therefore, difficult to understand in the light of this statement made by Grey seventeen days previously. See also Dugdale op. cit. Vol. 4, Metturnich's despatch of Jul. 4/1911.

3. Grey op. cit. Vol 2. pp. 39,40,41.

Situated as he was, with ^athe united Cabinet at his back, Grey was able to define the terms on which alone, England would go to war on the question of Morocco and to exercise a restraining influence on French Chauvinist tendencies. In his despatch of July 20th, 1911,¹ he declared to Bertie in no uncertain tone that England would not set aside the Act of Algeciras and go to war in order to put France in possession of Morocco, although, in accordance with the Agreement of 1904 she could not place any obstacles in the path of France obtaining this for herself. He stated, however, that although England would not go to war over Morocco, except in defence of her own interests, the threatened humiliation of France by Germany would in all probability touch British interests closely enough to warrant her supporting France by force of arms. He added that up to this date there had been no danger of matters taking this turn, and suggested that France should try to persuade Germany to agree to modest colonial concessions.

Sir Edward Grey himself points out that the moderating influence which he sought to exercise on French policy was exactly ~~contrary~~^c to the accusations of German commentators that he was "more French than the French"², and that by his encouragement he stiffened the French to withstand German proposals which they would otherwise have accepted. This unwavering support which he gave France in this, as in the previous Moroccan crisis, was considered by the Foreign Secretary to be a necessary part of this policy of preserving the Anglo-French Entente by proving its practical value. This restraining influence exercised by him upon French policy during the crisis, may be seen in his attitude toward the oft repeated question as to England's willingness to co-operate with France in sending

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 362, Grey to Bertie, July 20th, 1911.

2. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 50-51.

war-ships to Morocco in case Germany should refuse to withdraw the "Panther" from Agadir. In answer to the first French suggestion that the two powers should send ships to the Port of Agadir to lie on either side of the German vessel, Grey pointed out the provocative nature of such a measure and desired that France should await developments before taking any action of this sort. Later he declined a further French proposal that British and French war ships should be sent to the open ports of Saffi and Mogador, basing his objection on the consideration that whereas Germany had been able to offer the thin pretext that in going to Agadir she merely safeguarded the lives and property of hypothetical German subjects in that region. France would not be able to offer ^{even} this excuse for her action.¹ An expedition of this sort on the part of France would thus seem to give foundations to the German accusation that she was deliberately taking possession of Morocco. The fact that these ports were open would rob this act of significance as a reply to the German invasion of ~~the~~ closed port of Agadir, while the act itself would appear to be of such a provocative nature as to precipitate a catastrophe. The Foreign Secretary also pointed out the necessity for calling a Conference before Germany should have time to issue an ultimatum, which once issued, would commit her to the position which she had taken up, and render a retreat almost impossible.²

Thus, Grey's characteristic caution was called into play in his handling of France during the crisis no less than in his dealings with Germany. He knew that at such a time his attempts to persuade France to adopt a moderate policy toward Germany might result in arousing her suspicion and hostility toward Great Britain thus causing the breakdown of the Entente. The Foreign Secretary's own attitude

1. G. & T. op. cit. vol. 7, pp. 482-483, Bertie to Grey, August 22nd, 1911.
 2. G. & T. op. cit. vol. 7. p. 424, Grey to Bertie, July 29th, 1911.

had been one of suspended judgment with regard to German intentions, until the extortionate demands made by her for compensation in the French Congo had revealed the policy which seemed to aim either at the humiliation of France or at the partition of Morocco, with the retention by Germany of a fortified port on the Northwestern coast. Grey considered it imperative to avert the war which seemed to be drawing nearer as the ^{negotiations} ~~negotiations~~ ^{about} seemed to come to a deadlock,¹ but although he regarded the acquisition by France of a free hand in Morocco as worthy of the sacrifice of large concessions in the French Congo, he dared not urge this view too vehemently upon Paris lest the French should feel that the Entente was valueless if it still entailed their yielding in every crisis which arose. This consideration hampered Sir Edward Grey's moderating influence upon France, as is shown in his minute to a despatch of September 22nd from Goschen at Berlin.²

Grey's cautious and moderate method of conducting foreign policy was still further exemplified during the Agadir crisis by his repeated efforts to avert war, the very thought of which he hated. These events which seemed to be leading toward an outbreak between Germany and France ^{caused} led the Foreign Secretary to advocate that in the event of a failure of the two countries to reach an agreement, a conference of all the Powers signatory to the Pact of Algiceras should be called to reconsider the whole question of French claims and their relation to Germany. Grey believed that a conference might be the only hope of averting the war³ which would follow upon the breakdown of the negotiations. If, however, Germany should refuse to agree to the calling of a conference, the onus of future events would rest on her* shoulders and she would be revealed as the aggressor.

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 504 Grey to Bertie, Sept. 5th, 1911.

2. G. & T. op. cit. vol. 7. p. 544-545, 546, Goschen to Nicholson. Minute by Grey. "I daren't press the French mare about the Congo. If I do so the whole Entente may go!"

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, pp. 524, 525, Grey to Bertie, July 31st, 1911.

This attitude on the part of Grey

~~in case of war~~ was in harmony with that tenet of his policy to which he had given utterance on a previous occasion namely, - that in case of a Franco-German war breaking out as a result of the Moroccan affair, British public opinion would only be likely to enable the Government to move to the support of France if it made abundantly clear that Germany was the Aggressor.¹ Sir Edward Grey's attitude in this regard was prompted by his knowledge of the mental attitude of his own countrymen and of the manner in which their support must be won if England was to be allowed to take up arms in defence of her own interests and those of the Entente.

The manner in which all three of the Powers in the crisis looked upon war as almost inevitable may be traced in the documents which reveal the attitude of belligerents in Germany, of defiance in France,² and of uneasiness in England.³ The official attitude prevailing in Germany in the earlier part of negotiations, when Berlin was ready to accord to Great Britain, as one of the Powers signatory to the Pact of Algiceras, the right to send a war ship to a Moroccan port or to take any action which she might see fit, had been replaced during the latter part of the crisis by the attitude that Great Britain was interfering unwarrantedly in a matter which was the exclusive concern of France and Germany. This latter view was exemplified in the attitude of the Pan-German groups.⁴ The bellicose attitude of the German Emperor in this later stage may be deduced from his words to Goschen.⁵ While he reiterated the "correct" position that the "Panther"

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 424, Grey to Bertie, July 31st, 1911.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 459, Corbett to Grey, August 20th, 1911.

3. G. & T. op. cit. vol. 7, p. 634, Lloyd George to Grey, Sept. 1st, 1911. This contains a comment on the increasing possibility of war. See also Churchill "The World Crisis" Vol. 1. pp. 48-64 incl.

4. G. & T. op. cit. Vol 7, pp. 491-492. Goschen to Grey, August 13th, 1911.

5. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, pp. 450-451. Goschen to Grey, August, 16th, 1911.

had been sent to Agadir in the first instance solely to protect German subjects and commercial interests. He betrayed the real motives, however, which lay behind this excuse when he stated that if France was to receive a free hand in Morocco, Germany must be compensated. He then added that if his demands were not complied with, he would "see that every French soldier in the coast towns and in the Shawia district is turned out of Morocco, and if I can't get them out by peaceable means I will turn them out by force." The French attitude, if not bellicose was at least negative. Her defiant refusal either to give up her special position in Morocco or to comply with Germany's excessive demands for compensation elsewhere, was in harmony with the opinion held by French Statesmen that the march on Fez had been merely a temporary extension of the "police duty forced upon them by conditions which endangered the safety of French subjects and their property, and that no permanent occupation of the interior was intended. In their eyes, therefore, the expedition did not constitute a violation of the Act of Algiceras.

Although the policy of Sir Edward Grey, as it manifested itself during the Agadir crisis, was characteristic of his hatred of war in its endeavour to avoid a conflict, the manner in which he faced the possibility of a war becoming inevitable was no less characteristic of the man and of his policy. He was willing to do anything in his power to avert the catastrophe which would follow a breakdown of the Franco-German negotiations, and his sincerity in this respect is amply demonstrated by the fact that he made no conditions on behalf of Great Britain which might hinder the powers arriving at an agreement. He was only concerned that such an agreement should not include a partition of Morocco which would enable Germany to remain in possession of Agadir.¹ That Sir Edward Grey was not

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 483-484, Grey to Bertie, August 23rd, 1911.

blind to the possibility of a sudden outbreak of war is shown by his action of Sept. 17th, in warning the fleet to be prepared in case of a sudden attack from Germany.^{1.}

Thus there were certain interests in Morocco which Grey regarded as definitely British, to be defended as such and to be considered in determining the course of British policy in Morocco. It has been previously noted that Sir Edward Grey had made clear that although Great Britain would honor her pledges of diplomatic support of France in Morocco, she would not use force of arms to put France in possession of that country. He had stated definitely that Great Britain would go to war only in defence of her own special interests in Morocco, and, it is this new positive quality in the Foreign Secretary's Moroccan policy which marks the development from his position as defined by him in the first Moroccan crisis. Previously Great Britain's Moroccan policy had been the negative one of giving diplomatic support to French political aims in Morocco while she regarded her own interests in that country as strictly economic. Thus, during the second Moroccan crisis Grey stressed a new interest of Great Britain in Morocco, an interest which was political rather than economic in character and which must be defended by preventing any agreement for partition which would place in the hands of Germany a fortified port in that country. It was this interest which was menaced by the presence of the "Panther" at Agadir., and it was for this that Sir Edward Grey, the lover of peace was prepared to face a war with Germany.

1. G. & T. Vol. 7, p. 638, Grey to Nicholson, Sept. 17th, 1911.

MILITARY AND NAVAL CONVERSATIONS
1906-1912.

Critics of Sir Edward Grey frequently lay themselves open to a charge of inconsistency by their manner of censoring his foreign policy for two faults which are widely at variance. Thus on the one hand there are those who believe that the Foreign Secretary erred seriously in not making it clear to Germany the certainty that in any attack upon France she would also have to reckon with Great Britain. On the other hand it has been urged that even such noncommittal engagements as those into which he entered with France, exceeded the limits of English co-operation on the continent which would have received the consent of his colleagues in the Cabinet.

At this point it might be advisable to define the exact nature of the Anglo-French Naval and Military Conversations as sanctioned by Grey in 1906. The French Ambassador in a discussion with Grey on January 10th, 1906,¹ opened the negotiations, in the course of which he questioned the Foreign Secretary as to whether in the case of a Franco-German war arising out of the threatened breakdown of the Algiceras Conference, Great Britain could be relied upon to come to the aid of France. At the same time Cambon urged the advisability of discussions being carried on between the Naval and Military Authorities in order to provide for cooperation in case the two nations should find themselves at war with Germany. To give authority to his request Grey was reminded by Cambon that unofficial conversations of this nature had already been inaugurated during Lansdowne's tenure of office. The Foreign Secretary refused to give any decision in the matter of the proposed military co-operation in case of war, owing to the absence of the members of the Cabinet, and stated that the matter must wait until after the elections had taken place. On January 15th, 1906,² Grey gave his sanction to the continuation of the military and naval conversations on condition that the

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 170, 171, Grey to Bertie, Jan. 10th, 1906.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 177, Grey to Bertie, Jan. 15th, 1906

military conversations like those carried on by the naval authorities should take place directly between General Grierson and the French Military Atache at London instead of through an intermediary as heretofore. In giving his sanction, however, Grey did so only on the understanding that these conversations should be recognized by both nations as unofficial and in no way binding upon the action of either power in the event of War.

The Anglo-French Military and Naval Conversations have been used by critics of Grey's policy that the Foreign Secretary was guilty of either duplicity or marked incompetence. The critics who accuse him of duplicity cite these conversations as furnishing proof of his plot for the encirclement of Germany by hostile powers, and point to his having kept them a secret from the Cabinet as conclusive evidence. Those, on the other hand, who prefer to charge him with incompetence, point to his hope that he would be able to carry on these conversations without involving England in war as a typical piece of over-refinement and of self-deception. There is one factor which is sometimes overlooked by critics in forming a judgement of Grey's policy, namely that ^{the Foreign} ~~Sir Ed-~~ ^{Secretary} ~~ward Grey~~ had to take into consideration the international situation not only in terms of its reaction upon the scruples, prejudices and predilections of his associates in the Cabinet and in Parliament but also upon the nation at large. Grey knew that in the final analysis, his policy must depend for approval upon the incalculable force of public opinion. Thus Grey's foreign policy was that of England herself, just as he himself was first and foremost an Englishman, with all the sympathies, and scruples and that everpresent consciousness of rectitude which has made England and Englishmen a mystery to continental observers, and which have given rise to those accusations of hypocrisy and duplicity which have been levelled at Grey himself no less than at the country which he

served. Grey has been accused of allowing his policy to be guided by the motives of temporary expediency rather than of foresight and this accusation he has admitted to be true to a certain degree, not only in his own policy but as a permanent element in the foreign policy of Great Britain.¹

In examining the attitude of Grey to military and naval conversations three facts must be kept in mind. In the first place, as has been seen, these conversations were not inaugurated by Grey but were simply a continuation of similar negotiations which had been carried on unofficially under Lord Lansdowne, and were, therefore, a part of the policy which had come to Grey as a heritage from the previous administration. The origin of these conversations may be traced in Lansdowne's despatch of May 17th, 1905,² and during the remainder of that year they were carried on, directly, in the case of the naval negotiations while the military negotiations were conducted through the agency of Colonel Repington the Military Correspondent for "The Times." On his entering office Grey had been ignorant of these conversations until they had been brought to his notice by Cambon's request that he be informed with regard to the future attitude of the British Government toward the Anglo-French engagements. Whereupon in accordance with his policy of following in the footsteps of his predecessor he gave his consent to the continuation of the conversations.³

The second consideration which must be taken into account is that the conversations themselves were not as secret as one has been frequently led to suppose. It follows, therefore, that the conception of the Military Conversations as instrument for the conversion of the Anglo-French Entente into an Alliance

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 49-50 "I suppose as in most investigations of British policy that the true reason is not to be found in farsighted views or great schemes --- if all secrets were known it would probably be found that British Foreign Ministers have been directed by what seemed to be the immediate needs of their country without making elaborate calculations for the future."

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 76 Lansdowne to Bertie, May 17th, 1905.

3. Grey. op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 198

directed against Germany loses a great deal of its force. It is true that the majority of the Cabinet Ministers did not learn of the conversations until 1911 but at the very outset Sir Edward Grey had confided in at least three members of the Government, namely Campbell-Bannerman^{1.}, Lord Ripen^{2.} and Lord Haldane. This "secret" then, was shared by the Prime Minister, the leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, and the Secretary of State for War. Thus the burden of secrecy may be said to have rested on their shoulders equally with those of Grey himself. Nonetheless it must be admitted that the Prime Minister was himself, from the first, uneasy as to the military conversations and their implications. In his letter of February 2nd, 1906, to Lord Ripen³ the Prime Minister expressed his distrust of the joint preparations provided for by the conversations which, in his opinion came " perilously close to a joint undertaking." Grey himself⁴ attributes his failure to confide in the Cabinet to inexperience on his own part and to the fact that the impending elections had so scattered the Ministers as to make the calling of the Cabinet at this time a difficult matter. He admits, however, that he received a letter from Campbell-Bannerman on January the 21st, 1906, in which the Prime Minister asked whether he, Grey, wished to have a Cabinet meeting called to discuss the matter of the conversations, but adds that the Prime Minister left it entirely to his, Grey's, discretion. In his belief the earliest date suggested for such a meeting would have entailed a dangerous delay in answering the question put to him by Cambon. There is, however, an objection to this excuse when one recalls that it was not until January 31st, 1906 that Grey gave Cambon his answer and that a meeting of the Cabinet was actually held

1. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 135.

2. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 139. J. A. Spender the "Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman" Vol. 2 p. 251. Haldane "Before the War" p. 30. Anderson op. cit. p. 339. There is a curious discrepancy between the authorities cited with regard to the three members of the Cabinet whom Grey took into his confidence. Grey himself agrees with the account given by Spender and Anderson regarding the identity of the third member of the Government as Lord Ripen but Haldane on the other hand makes no mention of Lord Ripen but speaks of Mr. Asquith, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, as the third Minister in whom Grey confided. According to Grey's own account he did not inform Asquith of the conversations until April 16th 1911. See Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 164.

3. Spender op. cit. Vol. 2. p. 257.

4. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 153-154.

on this same day which would have given an opportunity for the question to have been laid before the Ministers.¹ Even if Grey had considered it too late to discuss a matter on which he was to give an answer the same day, the Prime Minister had suggested the 30th of January as the earliest date for a meeting. This date would have enabled Grey to place the matter before the Cabinet and to receive its verdict twenty-four hours before it was necessary to report a decision to Cambon. For the rest, however, Grey seems to regard his failure to inform the Cabinet as an unfortunate blunder, not because his action was unconstitutional, for in his opinion the Conversations did not commit the country, but because it left a loophole for critics to cast a doubt upon his own good-faith. Another reason for Grey's action in keeping the matter from the/Cabinet is suggested in a memorandum by Lord Sanderson in which he records himself as having stated in a conversation with Cambon that it was "not wise to bring before the Cabinet the question of the course to be pursued in any hypothetical case which had not arisen. A discussion on the subject invariably gave rise to divergences of opinion on questions of principle."² This remark was made with reference to the possibility of placing the question of a formal alliance before the Cabinet but it might be said to apply equally to the problem of the Military Conversations. Grey's agreement to this opinion expressed by Lord Sanderson is recorded in a marginal note to the memorandum.

A third circumstance worthy of note is that the conversations did not originate in time of peace as part of a cold-blooded scheme for ringing Germany about with hostile Powers, but were inaugurated during a period of German diplomatic aggression and received new vigor at each recurring outburst of German

1. Fay "The Origins of the World War" p. 209.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 184, Memorandum by Lord Sanderson, Feb. 2, 1906.

hostility toward France in the one portion of the globe where Great Britain was bound by agreement to support French influence, that is in Morocco. Therefore the military conversations constituted in reality the Anglo-French reaction to the German policy of intimidation. Thus each stage in the progress of these negotiations with the resulting tightening of the Entente came as a result of an act of aggression in Morocco on the part of Germany directed against French supremacy and aiming at the destruction of the Entente. When in April of 1905 Germany was demanding the calling of a conference which was to humiliate France and prove the worthlessness of British diplomatic support, Lansdowne took the first step for the co-operation of the two Powers in order to defend the Agreement of 1904 and frustrate German designs.¹ The next stage in the progress of the Conversations as a reaction against German aggression came in 1906 and arose out of the menace of the Algieras Conference and was used by Great Britain and France as a method of preparation against a possible German attack on France. With a new appreciation of the value of the Entente taking shape in his mind, Grey saw the vital necessity for carrying on the Military Conversations in a more direct fashion than heretofore. The Agadir crisis and the ^{German} Novelle of 1912² gave a still greater impetus to the negotiations. This new display of strength and hostility on the part of Germany in her endeavour to break the Entente, increased the desire on the part of England and France to formulate some plan of joint action in case of attack. It is evident, therefore, that in each case, the development of the Military and Naval Conversations came as a result of fear;—fear of war on the part of France and an acceptance ~~on the~~ ^{by} ~~part~~ of Grey of the possibility that in case of war between France and Germany, Great Britain might be expected to be drawn into the conflict. Thus it was that the French thesis that in view of the ever-present possibility of war some investigation

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 133.

2. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 165.

of a basis for co-operation in case of war was imperative, was accepted by Grey.

A feature of Sir Edward Grey's method in this, as in other respects of his foreign policy was the extreme caution with which he handled the problem of the conversations. His care in making it clear that the Military Conversations were of a strictly provisional character and did not in any way impair the freedom of action of either power, or impose any obligation upon Great Britain, has been regarded as evidence either of cynicism and hypocrisy or of stupidity. In reality his policy arose from none of these qualities but represented his own sincere belief that these negotiations between the military and naval experts of both countries could insure sufficient co-operation in case of the war which he sought to avert becoming inevitable, without committing the Governments to any formal obligation.

This attitude on the part of Grey may have been in part a result of that academic quality in his mind which has previously been noted, but there is another far more important factor which gave rise to his cautious method of procedure and which may account in some measure for his delay in informing the Cabinet. This factor was Grey's uncertainty with regard to certain elements in the Liberal party, which, prior to its coming into power, had been divided by differences of opinion with regard to policy. These differences, while they ^{had been} ~~were~~ healed to some extent after the Liberal Party had come into power, nevertheless exercised a certain influence. The Cabinet itself was split into two, and a glance at the list of its members ¹ makes one realize the varying shades of opinion, of a pacifist and pro-German character, and the conflicting aims which must have reigned therein. Grey as Foreign Secretary had, therefore, a difficult task to lay down a policy which would escape censure from one or more of these groups.² Grey himself comments on the strong pro-German bias which manifested

1. Spender op. cit. Vol. 2. pp. 204 and 205.

2. Poincaré op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 86.

itself not only in certain sections of the Liberal Press and in the House of Commons but in the Cabinet itself, and which persisted in accusing Sir Edward Grey of being more "French than the French" in his policy, and of being personally hostile to Germany.¹ An example of the manner in which the attitude of a part of the Cabinet was known even in Germany,² may be seen in the surprise caused by Lloyd George's Mansion House speech during the Agadir^{Crisis}. This surprise was increased by the fact that Lloyd George was regarded as the leader of the pro-German element in the Cabinet, which ^{had been} ~~was~~ relied upon by Germany to weaken and obstruct Grey in his support of France.³ This action on the part of Lloyd George in ranging himself on the side of the Foreign Secretary established a unity of opinion in the Cabinet for which Germany was totally unprepared.

Sir Edward Grey's caution is shown in the care which he took in differentiating between his official opinion as Foreign Secretary and his personal opinion as an intelligent observer. He saw no reason why the two separate approaches could not be maintained in dealing with international problems and this fact may account in some measure, for his manner of carrying on the provisional arrangements for co-operation with France in the case of war, while at the same time he stated in plain terms his inability to pledge the Government to a definite promise of armed support which would in reality constitute a defensive alliance. This attitude, Grey maintained without a break until 1914, and that his often repeated denials of the existence of any commitments resulting therefrom was recognized by the French, is proved by Poincaré's own words--"at no moment did England or France strip off any shred of their absolute liberty." . . . One knew only too well that even after the letters which passed between Cambon and Grey, England was,

1. Grey op. cit. Vol. 2. p. 41.

2. Poincaré op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 86 .

3. Nicholson "Lord Carnock" pp. 332-333. Note the pacifist tendencies in the Cabinet as exemplified by Campbell-Bannerman's own attitude .

up to the date of her declaration of war, free to fight or stand aside."¹.

This official attitude of Grey does not mean, however, that he was totally oblivious to the effects of the conversations upon French opinion in awakening expectations of British military aid, in spite of official denials. Officially he had safeguarded against any increase of British obligations to support France, but privately he realized as Lansdowne had done, that the course of action which was being pursued would create a moral obligation to France in spite of official denials of any unauthorized alliance. This expectation he knew, existed, although he states that even during the last days before the outbreak of war, France made no ^{suggestion} ~~statement~~ that Great Britain was in any way bound to take up arms.² As a Minister he acted constitutionally in refusing to pledge his country without consent of parliament, but he realized none the less clearly that in carrying on the conversations Great Britain was binding herself to France by ^a moral obligation, which if it were shirked would entail Great Britain returning to her old position of isolation, having incurred the contempt of the other Powers.³

Cambon's question as to whether France could rely on British armed support in case of an attack by Germany confronted the Foreign Secretary with three considerations. In his memoirs Grey shows that he was conscious that in spite of the repeated statements on his part that the British engagements to support France in Morocco were purely diplomatic in character, a refusal of military support would be regarded as a treacherous desertion on the part of Great Britain and would result in the breaking up of the Entente. He also knew that it would be impossible to gain the consent of the Cabinet to an alliance which would pledge Great Britain to possible war with Germany under circumstances which could not be foreseen.⁴

1. Poincaire op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 92.

2. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 152.

3. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 140.

4. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 141.

Grey realized or, as he admits "felt instinctively" that in the case of war between France and Germany arising out of German ambitions in Morocco, public opinion in England would favor the support of France by force of arms in order to protect the Entente from German aggression. Thus he relied on public opinion to rally for the discharge of the moral obligations which he ignored officially but recognized as an individual. Grey realized clearly, however, that unless measures were taken in advance to insure rapid and efficient co-operation between the two Powers, all the sympathy of British public opinion for the French cause would be of no avail. The Military Conversations were therefore necessary if the British will to aid France in case of attack by Germany was to be utilized. It was seen by the Foreign Secretary, however, that everything would depend on the manner in which war was declared as British public opinion would not respond to any appeal if the initiative for the war seemed to come from French ambition in Morocco. The only hope of arousing a favourable reaction would be for Germany to appear to be striking at the Entente through France. An indication of this attitude on the part of Sir Edward Grey is found in a despatch of Jan. 31, 1906, to Bertie.¹ In this despatch Grey pointed out to the French that under the existing arrangement they enjoyed full liberty of initiative in their Moroccan policy. If the two powers were to enter into a formal alliance and Great Britain be pledged to support French policy in Morocco by arms, she would naturally require to be informed by France of any steps taken in a course whose consequences might involve her in war. At this juncture Grey gave additional evidence that he was not blind to the implications which might arise out of the Military Conversations, for he suggested to Cambon that time and the pressure of circumstances arising out of German activities would have the effect of drawing England and France

1. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 180, Grey to Bertie, Jan. 31, 1906.

closer together and would eventually turn the Entente into a defensive alliance pledged to mutual support in war, when the time should come when such a partnership should be necessary. He also reiterated that no alliance such as the one suggested could be contracted by a Foreign Secretary without the knowledge and consent of Parliament. Public opinion, he pointed out, was the force to which France must look for the desired military support in case of war. He gave Cambon the warning, however, that British opinion would never sanction a war to promote French ambition in Morocco but would only be likely to rally to the aid of France if it appeared that Germany was the aggressor.

It was the alarm inspired by German aggression during the Moroccan crisis of 1905 which had caused the authorities of both countries to place on an organized basis those military discussions which had been carried on unofficially since 1904. Similarly the Agadir crisis supplied the incentive for renewed activity in this direction during 1911 and 1912. The conversations which Grey had sanctioned in 1906 had been carried on during intervening years but had attracted little attention outside of military and naval circles. Grey himself seems not to have kept in touch with their progress¹ until the threat of approaching war again brought them to his attention. On April the 16th, 1911 Grey wrote to Asquith, placing before him the circumstances which had attended the inauguration of the conversations in 1906.² Asquith's reaction, as shown in his letter of September the 5th, 1911³ was similar to that of Campbell-Bannerman in 1906; that is, he regarded the conversations as a possible source of embarrassment, in that they might raise in the minds of the French, hopes for British support in the Moroccan question, far in excess of what England had pledged or was prepared to give. At this juncture Grey pointed out that Asquith's fear was not that France might

1. Grey. op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 165.

2. Grey. op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 164.

3. Grey op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 166. See also Haldane op. cit. p. 161.

would cherish a general expectation of British help, but only such an expectation with regard to a war arising out of the Agadir crisis in which the Foreign Secretary had stated that England had special interests of her own at stake.

Mr. Asquith was not the only person to be admitted at this time to this knowledge of the existence of the conversations. Grey himself points out that they could not have remained hidden from those Ministers who served on the Committee of National Defence.¹ On March 30th, 1911 Sir Edward Grey was questioned in the House of Commons as to whether there existed any undertaking by which England was obliged to give military support in case of war.² In stating that no such commitment existed, beyond those implied in the agreement of 1904, the Foreign Secretary gave answer in accordance with his policy, steadily pursued since 1906, of maintaining the purely hypothetical nature of the military conversations. An indication of the recognition of British freedom of action on the part of the French authorities may be seen in the complaint of M. Cruppi as reported by the British Ambassador, in which he regretted Grey's positive denial in the House of Commons of any secret agreement with France. Cruppi was himself aware of the exact relation existing between the two Governments, but felt that a hint of the existence of some military understanding might have been useful.³ Grey's reply to this despatch is interesting for the light which it throws upon his efforts to make it clear at home and abroad that England was free from any commitment other than that of giving diplomatic support to France in Morocco, while, at the same time being careful not to bar the road to any future conversion of this diplomatic support into something more far-reaching.

1. Haldane op. cit. p. 161-162. Haldane points out that the presence of this committee of nonmilitary Ministers such as Crewe, Morley, Harcourt, Grey and Lloyd George in addition to the heads of the Admiralty and War Office was a guarantee that this Committee under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister had no intentions of concealing its deliberations from the Cabinet which it served in an advisory capacity.

2. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. p. 182. Question in House of Commons March 30, 1911.

3. G. & T. op. cit. Vol. 7. p. 188-189. Bertie to Grey April 9th, 1911

Although at the time when the above-mentioned question was asked in the House, the Cabinet as a whole, was as yet, officially "in the dark" concerning military and naval questions, the fact that such a question was put to the Foreign Secretary at this time strengthens the belief that although official information might be lacking strong rumors had already gone abroad. The narrow margin by which war with Germany had been averted during the Agadir crisis, had directed the attention of the Government toward the possibility of a war between the Entente on the one hand and Germany on the other, and as a result the minds of the Ministers were prepared to receive the idea of military and naval co-operation with France more favorably than might have been the case in 1905. Although by the end of 1911 the military authorities had matters well in hand for the co-operation of an British expeditionary force on French soil in case of an attack by Germany, never once had either nation departed from the original position taken by the British Foreign Secretary that these strategic discussions were purely conditional and pledged neither England nor France to any set course of action.^{1.}

As has been seen the military and naval conversations received impetus from each apparent threat on the part of Germany to some interest vital to one or both members of the Entente. The Naval Conversations of 1912 were no exception to this rule. In the previous Moroccan crisis of 1905 which had been the occasion of the inauguration of the Conversations, German aggression had been directed against French interests in Morocco and the British part had been that of supporting France diplomatically in fulfilment of her pledges. The Naval Agreement of 1912, came, however, as a result of the German menace to interests vital to the existence as well as to the prosperity of England, namely her supremacy at Sea.

1. Poincaré op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 113.

It was to preserve her supremacy on the Sea, for which Great Britain was willing if necessary to sacrifice the peace which was so important to her as a nation whose wealth is dependent on overseas trade, that Sir Edward Grey during the two years between 1910 and 1912 had steadily opposed any attempt on the part of Germany to obtain a political understanding with Great Britain which did not include a naval agreement.¹ France on her part, was anxious for a closer alliance with Great Britain as a result of the alarm which never failed to stir French Statesmen at the least indication of a rapprochement being about to take place between England and Germany. This uneasiness on the part of France was very noticeable during the Anglo-German naval negotiations of 1912, and as on other occasions, the anxiety of her partner in the Entente was a hindrance to Great Britain's attempts to draw nearer to Germany. An example of the manner in which French nervousness influenced British conduct may be seen in the way in which Grey put aside the suggestion that he himself should go to Berlin in 1912, lest such an action on his part should increase French uneasiness and lead to a suspicion of Great Britain's good-faith.² Poincaire records an incident which serves to indicate how closely Grey adjusted his attitude to demands of France, and also shows how Bertie, the British Ambassador to Paris not only took care to report protests from France against an Anglo-German rapprochement but on one occasion at least, was the instigator of such protest.³ Poincaire describes how, on March 27th, 1912, Bertie came to see him, and in an unofficial capacity, and without the knowledge of Grey, advised him not to express satisfaction with regard to the declaration of neutrality proposed by Germany. He gave as his reason the fact that the proposal involved a promise of benevolent neutrality on the part of Great Britain, incompatible with her engagements to France, but whose acceptance was favored by a number of Grey's colleagues who had leanings toward Germany.

1. Holldane op. cit. pp. 9-10.

2. Fay op. cit. pp. 301, 302.

3. Poincaire op. cit. pp. 385, 386, 387.

By expressing satisfaction France would leave the way open for an agreement to be ratified, which would involve the disruption of the Entente and force England to remain neutral in case of a Franco-German war. As a sequel to this secret warning may be read in Count Metturnich's despatch of March 29th, 1912,¹ a report of Sir Edward Grey's refusal of the German proposal for British neutrality on the grounds that "this draft was very like an alliance.---An agreement absolutely binding to neutrality would be misunderstood by other Powers and might injure England's relation to them, and this, British policy desired to avoid."

The uneasiness manifested by France on the occasion of Holldane's visit to Berlin had resulted in Cambon's seeking an interview with Nicolson² in order to ascertain to what extent France might depend upon Great Britain for support in the event of a war being brought on between France and Germany through the activities of the German Chauvinists. It was the belief of the French Ambassador that if Germany were to be convinced that England would not remain neutral in the event of an attack upon France, war might be avoided. Thus the stimulus of alarm which had provided the impetus for the inauguration of the Military and Naval Conversations which prepared the way for their revelation to the Cabinet in 1912.

The two letters of November 22nd and 23rd, 1912, exchanged by Grey and Cambon at the request of the Cabinet, in order to demonstrate that the position of the two powers had not been altered by the negotiations, reveal that Sir Edward Grey on his part had not advanced from his original position with regard to the Anglo-French commitments.³ According to his belief the Military and Naval Conversations, even at this date, had no binding character whatever with regard to the action to be taken by either country in the event of war, while the Entente itself, entailed

1. Dugdale op. cit. Vol. 4, p. 88, Metturnich to Bethman Hollweg, March 29th, 1912.

2. Nicolson op. cit. p. 370.

3. Grey, op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 168-169, 170.

upon England no obligations stronger than those laid down in the Agreement of 1904. Cambon's reply demonstrated that the stipulations of the British Foreign Secretary had not fallen on deaf ears, and that French statesmen, however dissatisfied they might be with the situation had understood it, and impelled by the need of British support, had officially accepted the conditions of England's "free hand" in the event of war breaking out.^{1.}

The repeated warning of Mettarnich, dismissed by the Emperor and his satellites with contempt and indifference, that the introduction of a Supplementary Naval Law would only have the effect of causing England to renew her efforts to meet the German challenge from the Sea was justified by the events which followed.² Admiral Tirpitz, like his Royal Master, held the belief that British opposition to German plans of a big fleet would be silenced and over-^{3.} awed by an aggressive naval programme on the part of Germany. In after years he pointed out as a proof that this opinion was correct, the manner in which the British protests against the increase of the German navy had ceased during the years of 1912, 1913 and 1914 in marked contrast to the repeated outbursts of earlier years. This silence on the part of Great Britain was not, however, one of acquiescence but of decision. It was an indication of the manner in which opinion was hardening in all classes of the British population, Having realized that Germany could not be turned from her purpose Great Britain was determined to continue in the naval race rather than yield up her supremacy on the sea. The concentration of the British fleet in home waters in order to keep watch upon the activities of the steadily growing German Navy forced Great Britain to turn to France for the protection of her interests in the Mediterranean which this new grouping of her ships had left unguarded. This involved an agreement for co-operation which by its very nature served to draw the Entente

1. Poincaire. p. cit. Vol. 1. p. 333. See also Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 116

2. Dugdale op. cit. vol. 4a p. 46. Mettarnich to Bethman Hollweg, Nov. 1, 1911.

3. Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 117.

into a closer union hostile to Germany. This policy Germany herself had brought about by challenging England on the one issue on which she would never give way. In so doing she had played into the hands of France thus giving her enemy the opportunity to strengthen the Anglo-French Entente and ~~be directed~~ against Germany. At this point it might be advisable to state the precise nature of the Anglo-French Naval Agreement of 1912 and what it involved. According to the arrangements made, the entire British Battle Fleet was to be concentrated in the North Sea thus leaving the Mediterranean unguarded with the exception of four battle cruisers and an unarmoured cruiser squadron with its base at Malta.¹ This deficiency was to be made up, as has previously been stated, by a concentration of the French Fleet in the Mediterranean, pending the completion in 1916 of a Dreadnought Battle Fleet designed for service in this region. This agreement on the part of France to concentrate in the Mediterranean, thus leaving her Northern and Western coasts unguarded placed upon England a moral obligation to guard these undefended French coasts from attack or invasion by any hostile Power. Neither the Cabinet nor Grey, however, seemed fully to have realized the extent to which this naval co-operation committed Great Britain, in spite of the unwilling admission on the part of France that the new Agreement did not involve her partner in any commitment to joint naval action in case of war.

It is with special reference to the Military Conversations that Grey has been accused of allowing himself to be unduly influenced in his policy by his subordinates in the Foreign Office. The influence of Nicholson who was now Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs was particularly noticeable and would seem to support this view to some extent. A closer inspection, however, inclines one to the belief that while Nicholson's hand was prominent in the negotiations,

1. Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 113-114.

his roll was not that of a leader but of a supporter of a policy which was a continuation of one which had been developing under Grey's guidance since 1906.

During the Agadir crisis Nicolson had been very much alive to the German menace, and greatly in favor of the strengthening of the Anglo-French Entente into a formal alliance, to be used as a weapon to combat German attempts at world domination. At the same time he advocated the cultivation of a closer friendship with Russia in order to prevent her being won over to the German cause. In the event of Russia entering into an alliance with Germany France would be rendered powerless by the loss of her ally who was so valuable in checking Germany on the Eastern frontier, while British interests would be menaced not only in the Mediterranean, but also in Central Asia. During the course of the negotiations which led up to the Anglo French Agreement of 1912 one is constantly aware of the figure of Nicolson, recommending, persuading and urging on the Foreign Secretary.¹ Nicolson's minute of May 6th, 1912, in which he set before Grey the three alternative courses of action which England might adopt in order to offset the German *Novelle*; was in response to a request on the part of the Government for his opinion of the best manner of dealing with the situation. The first proposal made by him for remedying the difficulty created by the concentration of the British Battle Fleet in home waters, was to create an additional squadron for permanent service in the Mediterranean. The second suggestion was for an alliance with Germany which would free the British Fleet from the necessity of patrolling the North Sea. The third alternative suggested by the Under Secretary was for an undertaking with France, by which the French Navy should be concentrated in the Mediterranean in order to defend British interests there in case of war, while in return for this service England should give the required guarantee of military aid and also undertake the defence of the Northern and Western coasts of France from invasion. The first solution, Nicolson brushed aside as too expensive,

1. Nicolson op. cit. pp. 369-370.

The second one, he pointed out, would place England in a position of inferiority to Germany beside causing a disruption of the Entente, thus burdening England with the hostility of France and Russia. To Nicolson's mind this third solution was the only possible one, and it was this which was adopted by the Government. The above circumstances, therefore, would seem ^{on the surface} to indicate that it was Nicolson and not Grey who took the lead in formulating Foreign Policy.

A second example of Nicolson's prominence in the Anglo-French negotiations is his interview with Cambon. In a minute to Grey he recorded the uneasiness manifested by the French Ambassador with regard to Holldane's mission in Berlin and referred to his own answer to Cambon's repeated enquiry as to whether British support could be depended upon/in a war against Germany. Cambon showed himself increasingly eager for a definite assurance on this point for a two-fold reason, firstly as a means of strengthening the position of the French Government against enemies of the Entente in France and secondly because of his belief that if Germany could be convinced that she would find Great Britain allied with France in any war which might occur it would have a restraining affect upon German policy. Nicolson's response to Cambon's request was a statement to the effect that in seeking to conclude such an alliance the Foreign Secretary would find himself hampered by the Government and by public opinion. In both cases there would be an inclination to regard any attempt to tighten the Entente into a formal alliance as a direct challenge to legitimate German expansion. Grey's attitude of complete agreement as expressed to Nicolson in a minute on Nicolson's despatch of April 14th, 1912, coupled with his promise that although England could not guarantee to support France in a war with Germany, neither would she bind herself to Germany not to assist France, has been regarded as an indication that the Foreign Secretary was merely accepting the policy laid down for him by Nicolson.

It must be remembered, however, that in agreeing with Nicolson's statements to Cambon as well as to the policy of the tightening of the Entente by means of a planned ^{of} co-operation which omitted definite engagements on either side, Grey was merely confirming the positions which he himself had maintained since entering office. Also it was a policy which he had reaffirmed and clarified in 1906, when he had given his official sanction to the continuance of the Military Conversations which had been begun under his predecessor. It cannot be said truthfully that the position taken by Nicolson in conferring with Cambon with regard to the Entente in accordance with his, Nicolson's, own views as they had been manifested during the Agadir and previous crises.¹ Had Nicolson been the real dictator of British Foreign Policy as has been alleged the half-measures which he hated, and which were so characteristic of Grey's own views would have been abandoned, and the loosely knit Entente replaced by a formal alliance such as was desired by France. The fact that the policy of the "free hand" and of the attempt to work toward an understanding with Germany was maintained in spite of Nicolson's repeatedly expressed wish for the formation of a definitely Anti-German Alliance with France, is fairly conclusive evidence that the Foreign Secretary had the reins in his own hands.

Even the Anglo-French Naval Agreement which committed Great Britain so much more deeply than Cambon had hoped or expected, does not prove Nicolson's predominance. In October of 1912² the Cabinet had learned for the first time of the existence of the Military Conversations. Their alarm had been quieted by the words of Grey and by the letters which had subsequently passed between the Foreign Secretary and the French Ambassador denying the existence

1. In the section dealing with the Agadir Crisis an example has been given of the divergence of opinion between Grey and his permanent advisors regarding the attitude to be taken with regard to German claims for compensation in the Congo. Grey's moderate attitude was in striking contrast to the Anti-German bias of Nicolson and Crowe.

2. Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. p. 115. There is a discrepancy here between Grey's account and that of Churchill who says that on August the 6th "the Cabinet decided that Naval Conversations should take place between France and England similar to those which had been held since 1906. This implies a knowledge by the Cabinet

of any obligation on either side other than diplomatic.

Harold Nicolson expresses surprise at the failure of the Cabinet to realize the extent to which Great Britain had been pledged by the new Agreement. This apparent lack of comprehension in the British statesmen may, however, be traced to the alarm occasioned by the renewed efforts of the Pan-German group for a larger German Navy. just as the ^{French} German anxiety for British support against a common enemy had led her to give an unwilling consent to the British policy of an informal Entente. For the rest the Foreign Secretary had contrived to insure England's technical freedom from obligations to France as is made clear by the ^{Grey-Lambton} letters of November 22nd and 23rd, ¹⁹¹² and with this technical freedom the Cabinet, eager for the security which lay in the proposed Naval Agreement, expressed itself as satisfied.

Nevertheless it is unlikely that either Grey or the Cabinet were entirely oblivious to the possibility, inherent in the Agreement, of the creation of a moral obligation. Certainly the first Sea Lord was not. Mr. Churchill, in his memoirs ¹ displays at this period an attitude very similar to that of Campbell-Bannerman toward the Military Conversations on their being brought to his attention in 1906. He, Churchill, saw in the proposal for naval co-operation an enormous extension of the moral obligations which he regarded as having already been created by the negotiations of the past six years. His anxiety lest this strengthening of the moral obligations should result in the creation of a political commitment is shown in his letter of August 23rd, 1912. ² wherein he pointed out that France, not unreasonably, might take the attitude that in having left her own coasts unguarded in order to watch over British

1. Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 115 and 116.

2. Churchill op. cit. Vol. 1. pp. 113 and 114.

interests elsewhere, she had placed Great Britain under an obligation to defend the French coasts against attack in case of war. Thus, while the creation of a moral obligation and the extent to which British commitments had been increased was not invisible to the Cabinet Ministers, necessity had forced them to avert their eyes from the daggers of the only road which lay open before them.

Grey himself throughout his career, saw the tendency of the policy which he pursued to create this moral obligation, but seeing no other way to security he had pinned his hopes to a favorable reaction of public opinion in Great Britain, to enable him to fulfil this moral obligation in the event of a Franco-German war in which Germany should show herself as the aggressor. In acting as he did, the Foreign Secretary was guided by a knowledge of his countrymen and of the limitations imposed upon foreign policy by England's position with relation to the continent at large. ^{Great} Britain's geographical situation was such as to place her in the position of being in Europe but not of it. Her proximity to the Continent made it impossible for her to disassociate herself from its struggles, while her position as an Island Power rendered it impossible for her to profit by any Continental war into which she might be drawn. It was owing to these circumstances that the policy of England was one of preserving peace on the Continent, not only because war could gain her no positive advantage but because any disturbance in Europe, even though she herself might avoid becoming embroiled, would serve nevertheless to damage her commerce. Thus Grey's policy of refusing to consider an Anglo-French alliance with formal commitments for armed support, grew out of his knowledge that Great Britain could never be brought to pledge herself to go to war as a result of any unforeseen contingency which might arise. This also explains Grey's care in stating that British armed support could not be given to France in case of a Franco-German war unless

Germany appeared as the obvious aggressor . Historically her willingness to go to war only in order to preserve interests which she deemed vital to her security or to her existence, has been demonstrated repeatedly by the manner in which she has risen ^{time after time} in defence of the Balance of power and in her long struggle to preserve her supremacy on the Seas . Thus any aggression on the part of Germany against France would place the former nation in the position of disturbing the Balance of Power, and this consideration, ^{together with} coupled with the friendly feeling for France which had grown out of the Entente, and the aggressive Naval Policy being pursued by Germany would in Gray's opinion arouse British public opinion to fulfil the French expectations of armed support in the event of war.

FINIS.
