

THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY  
THE RHINE POLICY OF NAPOLEON III  
1863-1870

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## PREFACE

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It is the purpose of this paper to trace the Rhine Policy of the French nation from its incipency in 1547 to its adoption as the main plank in the foreign policy of Napoleon III in 1863; and to show how the failure of this policy resulted in the War of 1870 and the subsequent dissolution of the Second Empire.

## INTRODUCTION

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During the reign of Henry II, 1547-1559, French foreign policy was about to take a new trend; namely, the extension of the French frontier in the Rhine valley. This aim seemed more promising and more easily justifiable than the heterogeneous objections which had preceded it. The opportunity to advance in this direction came to Henry through the religious and civil strife in Germany.

In 1547 Charles V attempted to subdue Protestant Germany by force of arms, and was at first successful. Soon, however, he was checked, as the Protestant Princes began to turn to France for assistance, offering to Henry the little ecclesiastical states on the border of Lorraine including Verdun, Toul, and Metz, in return for money with which to equip their forces. As France had already begun to turn from Italy as the direction in which to look for foreign conquest, and to center her attention upon Germany, both regions being equally incapable of defending themselves. She needed no urging to make this first very considerable annexation to German territory. Indeed her real objective was the acquisition of the left bank of the Rhine.

After a brief period of civil and religious wars, Henry IV, 1594, resumed his foreign policy which now had a two-fold objective: to humble the House of Hapsburg at any cost and to extend the frontier to the Rhine. To promote his policy Henry planned the Thirty Years War, but was assassinated leaving France the victim of a weak minority and a troubled regency.<sup>1</sup>

Richelieu, who became prime minister in 1624, took up the threads of Henry IV's foreign policy. Realizing that the accomplishment of three things, - national unity, monarchical centralization, and the extension and security of frontiers was necessary to establish French hegemony in Europe, he entered the Thirty Years War. Unfortunately he died before its culmination and was succeeded by Mazarin, prime minister of France, 1642-1661, during the minority of Louis XIV. Mazarin inherited the policy from Richelieu, and it was he who directed French diplomacy during the last five years of the great war which closed with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.<sup>2</sup>

Under the provisions of this treaty Alsace was ceded to France; Breisack and Philippsburg on the Upper Rhine passed under French control; Austrian fortresses in the same part of the river were dismantled, excepting Strasburg a free city of the Empire; the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun were formally annexed. Thus the whole Upper Rhine passed under French control. As a guaranty of these terms against Austria and in order that French leadership in Central

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IV, p. 1 passim.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 395 passim.

Europe might be greatly strengthened, the League of the Rhine was formed among France, Sweden, and a number of the German states which had begun to look to France instead of Austria for guidance because of her successful intervention in German affairs and her protection of her allies.

After Mazarin's death in 1661, Louis XIV became his own prime minister, and France began to ascend to the most enviable position in Europe. His long reign, 1661-1715, must be divided into earlier and later periods - to 1697, Louis secures enormous territorial acquisitions for France; after 1697, France is opposed by a European Confederacy as the result of the long series of foreign wars begun by him in 1667 and culminating in this period. The success of the earlier period is due chiefly to the consistent policy of Richelieu and Mazarin and to the turbulent political conditions of the principal European states. Richelieu and Mazarin had reduced the nobility to obedience and had laid down the principles of development along which France should proceed.<sup>1</sup>

A French empire extending over the continent was the central idea of Louis' policy. Though he failed in securing Lorraine, he succeeded in acquiring Franche Comte and Alsace with Strasburg. His death in 1715 brings to a close a long period in French history beginning with the accession of Henry IV, a period characterized by the attempt to humble the House of Hapsburg and to advance France to the dictatorship of Europe by extending her frontier to its "natural

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<sup>1</sup> Hassal, Arthur, Louis XIV, p. 7 passim.

boundary" - the Rhine.

A new period begins with Louis XV in which England supplants Austria as France's bitter rival; and there is a shift of interest from the religious strife and the maintenance of the balance of power to commercial leadership and colonial expansion. The failure of France, clinging so tenaciously to her traditional foreign policy, to awaken to this change permitted England to take advantage of the situation and to usurp first place before France realized fully what was going on.

The period from 1715 to the Treaty of Vienna is characterized by the struggle for commercial supremacy which brought about a re-alignment of the powers. In 1755 England and Austria were allied against France and Prussia because of the colonial conflict. In 1756 England sought Prussia for an alliance which materialized as the Convention of Westminster. This was immediately counterbalanced by a defensive alliance between Marie Therese and Louis XV known as the Treaty of Versailles, signed May 1, 1756. These alliances held as long as they best protected the interests of the powers concerned.

The greatest advance toward the materialization of the Rhine Policy came as an immediate result of the French Revolution and its subsequent wars. The pushing of the Republican and later of the Napoleonic armies into these regions aroused, as nothing ever had before, patriotism and the spirit of nationality among the Germans. On the left bank of the Rhine the landed estates were broken up and more liberties granted the peasant proprietors, **concessions** which naturally drew the people of the Rhenish provinces toward France. These provinces Napoleon had divided into four departments under the supervision of a French commissioner.<sup>1</sup> It was his idea to exclude.

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<sup>1</sup> By the Treaty of Campo Formio 1797 France gained the frontier of the

Austrian and Prussian influence from these districts by organizing them into a league under French control, but the opportunity for doing so had not yet presented itself. He had not long to wait, however, as the bitter rivalry between Austria and Prussia over the electorate of Cologne and the bishopric of Münster was rapidly reaching a culmination. This rivalry gave Napoleon the excuse for which he had long been waiting to meddle in German affairs.

When their dispute was settled in Paris in 1803 Napoleon was careful to bind to him by separate treaties all the German Princes who had received favors from him.<sup>1</sup> For, to establish his much coveted League on the left bank, was it not necessary to have friends on the right bank? The Diet approved Napoleon's scheme for the settlement and Francis II accepted its decision. By this decision Prussia was particularly benefited and a big step was taken towards a united Germany.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon, in spite of his theories of nationality, had not counted on this ultimate outcome which will have great significance for us in a later chapter.

In 1806 Napoleon completed the work begun by the treaty of Luneville - the destruction of Germany as a unit - with the Act of Federa-

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(continued from p. 4)

Rhine; and by the Treaty of Luneville 1801 she gained from Austria the German provinces west of the Rhine. See Anderson, Frank M., Constitution and Documents of France 1789-1901, pp. 261, 290; Fyffe, Charles A., A History of Modern Europe, Vol I, pp. 149, 158.

<sup>1</sup> They were willing allies for as yet no sentiment for national unity had been aroused in the Germans as people. See Fyffe, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Camb. Mod. Hist., Vol. IX, P. 94. "But, of all the states, it was again Prussia that came off best. In place of the 2750 square kilometres and the 125,000 subjects which she lost, she acquired 12,000 square kilometres and 500,000 inhabitants in Westphalia, the very heart of Germany; She was thus placed in a position to renew her designs on the hegemony of the north."

tion.<sup>1</sup> By this act, subscribed to by the sovereigns of Western Germany, the kings of Bavaria and Wurtemberg, the Elector of Baden, and thirteen minor princes were united in a league called the Confederation of the Rhine under the protection of the French Emperor; the affairs of the Federation were to be managed by a Diet at Frankfurt consisting of a college of kings and a college of princes over which the former archbishop of Mainz should preside. Thus the aim of Richelieu and Mazarin had been realized. This state of affairs remained until the Congress of Vienna in 1815 which wiped away Napoleon's entire territorial organization of Europe and established Prussia as the principal guardian of the national security on the Rhine.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Rhine frontier, the driving ambition of French diplomacy for three centuries, was both gained and lost for France by Napoleon - a blow which the French nation never accepted as final, as we shall see by their recurrent periodic outbursts of patriotism which spent themselves in the cry to regain the left bank of the Rhine.

After Vienna the powers became reactionary and Metternich and his tyranny settled over all Europe like a pall. It was at this time that Napoleon, imprisoned at St. Helena, dreaming of what might have been, created the Napoleonic Legend. This legend was gladly received by the liberals of Europe. In it he deliberately explained away his mistakes and played up his successes. How easy it is to forget and live in the glories of the past! France, too, steeped in her love of glory, for-

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<sup>1</sup> Fyffe, Col. I, p. 303; Camb. Mod. Hist. Vol. IX, p. 265 passim; Anderson's op. cit., pp. 398-405.

<sup>2</sup> Camb. Mod. Hist., Vol. IX. p. 576 passim; p. 646 passim.

got that it was Napoleon who had lost for her the Rhine and the Alps by remembering only the glory of her past acquisitions through his power. After the death of Napoleon I in 1821, this was the heritage claimed by his nephew - Louis Napoleon.

Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Paris April 20, 1808, the third son of Hortense and Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland and brother to Napoleon I. His birth was a source of great satisfaction to the imperial family as he was the first child to be born a prince, Napoleon was still childless. Of the other two sons the elder, Napoleon Charles (1802-1807) had already died and the second son, Napoleon Louis (1804-1831), died childless during the insurrection of the Romagna. As a child, Louis Napoleon gave signs of a grave and dreamy character. During the One Hundred Days, he witnessed as a child of seven the brilliant ceremony with which Napoleon inaugurated his liberal constitution on the Champ de Mars, and with his mother bade the Emperor good-bye on the eve of his departure for Waterloo.<sup>1</sup>

After Waterloo, Hortense, suspected by the Bourbons of having arranged the return from Elba, had gone into exile, taking with her her younger son, the father having obtained custody of the elder through divorce proceedings. As the Duchess de Saint Leu, she bought an old country house at Arnenberg in the canton of Thurgau and settled there. Hortense supervised her son's education in person and tried to form his character. Never losing sight of the future and always fully confident of the future destiny of the Bonapartes, she kept before her son the idea that he would be king or at least <sup>would</sup> perform some great work.

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<sup>1</sup>

Simpson, F.A., The Rise of Louis Napoleon, p. 20 passim.

His tutor, Philippe Le Bas, son of a rep<sup>b</sup>ublican leader of the great Revolution and a follower of Robespierre, was a firm disciplinarian inspired with the ideals of nationalism. The military side of Louis Napoleon's education was directed by Colonel Dufour, an old officer of Napoleon.

At the age of twenty he was a "liberal" and the enemy of the Bourbons and the Treaties of 1815 - dominated however by the Napoleonic cult which caused a confusion in his mind of the liberal idea with the Napoleonic.

In 1830 he and his brother took part in the Italian Revolution; he could not return to France because the law of 1816, banishing the Napoleonic family, was still in force. From this youthful intervention there were two results: first, the death of his brother at this time made certain his own eventual succession to the head of the House of Bonaparte; secondly, the beginning of his permanent interest in Italy which resulted in Italian unity - according to some his greatest achievement.

In the years following, Louis Napoleon watched attentively events in France. Knowing the discord between the people and Louis Philippe, he led a small uprising in 1836 to establish himself as ruler of France. This was a failure and he was deported but never lost hope. About this time, 1839, he published his theories of government under the title "Des Idées Napoléoniennes."<sup>1</sup>

A great outburst of patriotism, following the diplomatic humilia-

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<sup>1</sup>This treatise is an admixture of Bonapartism, socialism, and pacifism; Simpson, F.A., op. cit., p. 161 *passim*.

tion of France in the affair of Mehemet Ali (1840) reached its height in 1841, when the ashes of Napoleon I were returned to France and spent itself in the cry to retake the left bank of the Rhine. Louis Napoleon took advantage of this outburst of chauvinism and made a second unsuccessful attempt to establish himself as ruler of France. Escaping to England after a term of imprisonment, he returned to France under the second Republic in 1848 and ran for the Assembly but was not elected. He then devoted himself to propagandizing the people in his own interest and on June 4, 1848 he was elected by four departments, - Seine, Yonne, Charente-Inférieure, and Corsica, only to be barred from office as a member of a ruling house. On June 4, in a letter to the President of the Assembly he wrote, "I was leaving for my post when I learnt that my election would be the pretext for deplorable troubles and fatal misunderstandings. Should the people impose duties on me, I should know how to fulfil them. But I disavow all who ascribe to me ambitions which are not mine. My name is the symbol of order, nationality, and glory, and it would be a great grief to me to see it used to increase the troubles which are rending our country. To avoid such a misfortune I should be ready to remain in exile. I am willing to make any sacrifices for the good of France. Be so good, Mr. President, as to acquaint the Assembly with this letter."<sup>2</sup>

Crafty politician that he was, he bided his time until the next

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<sup>1</sup> Simpson, F.A., op. cit p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

election and was re-elected to the Assembly by five districts on September the twenty-sixth; on October the eleventh, the law decreeing the banishment of the Bonapartes was abrogated; on December the tenth he was elected president of the republic by 5,434, 226 votes against 1,448, 107 votes for Cavaignac, his opponent.<sup>1</sup>

From 1848 to 1852 Louis Napoleon's efforts were spent to gain absolute authority and to ingratiate himself with the people. To do this he introduced a program of extensive economic and civic reforms. By intervening in behalf of the Pope (Pius IX) in 1849 and restoring him to the papal throne, he won the support of the clergy and further established himself in their good graces by putting education under the supervision of the Church by the law of March 15, 1850. In the same year he appeared as the champion of the people against the legislative body, when it attempted to reduce the number of electors from nine to six million. He had in mind all the while the fact that his term of office expired May 2, 1852 and that the Constitution forbade his re-election; therefore the Constitution must be revised. By the famous Coup d'état of December 2, 1852, he was re-elected president for ten years by an almost unanimous vote.<sup>2</sup> The new Constitution contained all his ideas and plans. Desirous of going a step further, he brought about a plebiscite in November 1852, as result of which he was proclaimed Emperor of the French.<sup>3</sup>

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La Gorce, Pierre de, La Second Republique Francaise, Vol. I, p. 481

2

Tchernoff, I, Le Partie Republicain Sous Le Second Empire, p. 30 passim; Berton, Henry, L'Evolution Constitutionnelle Du Second Empire, pp.23-24.

3

Tchernoff, op. cit., p. 82 passim.

His success from 1852 to 1855 was almost complete. The question of the Holy Places and the Crimean War gave him further opportunities for winning glory and for further courting the favor of the Catholic Party. The policy of Napoleon III in this crisis shattered for the first time the old concert of the Great powers.

From 1856 to 1863 Napoleon was engaged in the struggle for Italian unity. During this period he was careful not to alienate the favor of the Clerical Party, as he was now dependent upon its support. His personal rule lasted only during the first four years of his reign, after which his power was not so absolute.

At the end of 1860, the very time in which Napoleon had hoped his personal policy would bind to him all France and render secure the future of his dynasty, he saw turn against him his heretofore strongest supporters. In an attempt to win them back he resorted to his favorite soothing syrup, reforms; namely, the decrees of November 24, 1860 (right of address, ministers without portfolio, etc.) and the letter of November 14, 1861 (financial reform). From now on the growing opposition which threatened the future of his regime and the influence of Eugénie and his Italian advisers kept him of two minds.

In the spring of 1863, despite the united opposition of the Catholics who were further dissatisfied by the dismissal of Thouvenel and his replacement by Drouyn de Lhuys, Napoleon was obsessed with the idea of securing his throne by adding a new glory to France which would appease all parties alike. He thought he had found such an opportunity in the uprising of the Poles in 1863, but only succeeded in losing friendship with Russia.

Then came the great inspiration of his reign, the establishment of a Catholic and Latin Empire in Mexico - an inspiration which he never quite succeeded in transmitting to the French. And while he was thus engaged, Bismarck was founding German unity.

## II

### THE GERMAN POLICY OF NAPOLEON III

February 1863 to July 1866

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As Napoleon arose to power he became more and more obsessed with the accomplishment of his "great idea"- to tear up the treaties of Vienna and reconstitute the map of Europe on the basis of nationality, with France the predominant factor in the new regime. The only exception to this theory was his ardent desire to gain the left bank of the Rhine, for the possession of which he must oppose German unity. The seven years, 1863-1870, cover the story of his connivances, hopes and despairs to bring to reality this classical Rhine Policy of Henry IV, Louis XIV, and Richelieu, by opposing the equally determined unification movement developing across the Rhine.

After having secured Savoy and Nice as compensation for his contribution to Italian unity in 1859, why not repeat the process in Germany and add further glories to France, this time by extending her frontiers to their natural boundary, the Rhine. The success of such an undertaking depended wholly upon a break between Prussia and Austria and the subsequent dissolution of the German Confederation. It was his task therefore to make this break possible. Accordingly in November 1859 when the Marquis Pepoli, sent by Cavour with a message to the Prince of Hohenzollern, stopped at Paris en route and was received by the Emperor, Napoleon asked him to present to the Prince the advantage of an alliance between Prussia and France.<sup>1</sup> "In Germany," said he, "Austria represents the past, Prussia represents the future by chaining herself to Austria, Prussia condemns

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<sup>1</sup> Sorel, A., Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande, Vol. I., p. 6.

herself to immobility, she cannot content herself with it; she is destined to a higher fortune, by binding herself to France, she will gain all the power which would be lost through Austria; she could accomplish in Germany the great destiny which awaits her and which Germany expects from her."<sup>1</sup>

And so Napoleon's hopes began to rise in 1862 when Bismarck assumed the direction of Prussian politics. Napoleon hoped to make of him a Prussian Canvour who would lend an attentive ear to his proposals. In this hope, however, Napoleon was doomed to disappointment, for Bismarck, too, was obsessed with an equally ardent ambition, the object of which he did not hide, namely - to make Prussia the dominant German power of Germany, and to make Germany, under Prussian hegemony, one of the first powers of Europe. The Polish insurrection gave Bismarck the opportunity to disillusion Napoleon completely concerning any further ideas that he might have entertained in that direction; for then Bismarck concluded with the Czar a military Convention on February 8, 1863, and received as his reward a grant of complete freedom of action from the Russian government. Napoleon objected to this Convention and proposed a common war on Russia, but the other powers objected to this. Palmerston saw in it an excuse to give France the pretext to attack Prussia and to take from her the Rhine provinces.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon then urged the

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<sup>1</sup> Sorel, A., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 135-136. App. No. I.

Czar in a personal letter to restore the kingdom of Poland, but the Czar, regarding intervention of any sort as an infringement upon his rights as sovereign to control his subjects, refused. According to Napoleon a Congress was always in order and his next step was to propose the said Congress to settle the Polish question. Again England and Austria refused his overtures. Thus, having found no support on this side of the fence, Napoleon decided to switch to the other and seek his definite objective with the help of Austria and in connection with the Polish insurrection.<sup>1</sup>

On February 21, 1863, he proposed to Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, at first through the Empress Eugénie, who was often used as a tool in such matters of diplomacy, and later in personal negotiations, an alliance aimed at the revision of the map of Europe, and especially at the securing of the left bank of the Rhine for France.<sup>2</sup> By the terms of this alliance, Russia would give up her share in Poland for compensation in Asiatic Turkey; Poland would be restored with an arch-duke as king or better still with the King of Saxony resuming his dynastic rights in compensation for the cession of his kingdom to Prussia; Prussia would cede Posen to Poland, Silesia to Austria, and the left bank of the Rhine to France, but would obtain Saxony, however, and the duchies north of the Main; Austria should be compensated for the loss of Venetia and Galicia by Bosnia, Serbia, Silesia and South Germany; Piedmont should have Lombardy, Venetia, Tuscany, Parma, Plaisance, Bologna and Ferrare; thus would French preponderance be established in Europe!

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<sup>1</sup>Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Oncken, Hermann, Die Rheinpolitik Kaiser Napoleons III von 1863 bis 1870, Vol. I, pp. 3-6.

On March 8, 1863, Eugenie proposed in a personal note to Metternich a secret entente guaranteeing an offensive and defensive alliance between France and Austria,<sup>1</sup> but Austria, not convinced of the sincerity of Napoleon's proposals, refused - a blow for which Eugenie and Napoleon never forgave Metternich.

Thus discouraged Napoleon again reverted to the panacea ~~for which he~~ which he employed in 1856 to settle the Eastern Question, and which he had hoped to employ in 1859 to settle the Italian affairs. He proposed to the sovereigns through a personal letter of November 4, a Congress at Paris to settle all unsettled questions, Poland, the Duchies, and Rome, and the annulment of the treaties of 1815. "On almost all points the treaties of Vienna are destroyed, modified or threatened; thence they become obligations without principle, rights without title and claims without restraint. The treaties of 1815 have ceased to exist.... broken in Greece, in Belgium, in France, in Italy, on the Danube... Germany exerts herself to change them, England has modified them generously by the cession of the Ionian islands, Russia tramples them under her feet at Varsovie....What is more just than a Congress...to help arbitrate?"<sup>2</sup>

The Congress project failed to materialize and Napoleon, after an unsuccessful attempt to secure his objective through the Polish insurrection, began to court Prussia's good graces, especially during

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<sup>1</sup>Oncken, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 13; App. No. 2.

<sup>2</sup>

Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 137.

the Assembly of the Princes at Frankfort, as an understanding between Austria and Prussia at this time would be a blow to his plans for conquest. Fortune smiled upon him, however, and set the stage for the crisis which he had failed to bring about. The death of King Christian VII of Denmark in November 1863, brought to a close the Danish dynasty and reopened the Schleswig - Holstein question, which the powers had believed settled in 1852 by the Treaty of London.

These two German duchies had long been united to Denmark through a purely personal union, one which the Danes wished to make real. To incorporate them was an almost futile hope because Holstein belonged to the German Confederation and the old treaties guaranteed that Schleswig and Holstein should never be separated, so that one could not be incorporated without the other, and the incorporation of Holstein was impossible without the consent of the German Confederation. The London treaty decreed that the duchies be permanently associated with Denmark and assigned the succession to the heirs of the female line of Glucksburg by buying off the claims of the Duke of Augustenburg. As European powers Prussia and Austria signed this treaty, but it was never ratified by the German Confederation nor accepted by the Schleswig - Holsteiners.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the Danes had separated and incorporated Schleswig to Denmark, by the patent of March 30, 1863, and later by a constitution voted by their parliament November 14, 1863, two days before King Frederick's death.<sup>2</sup> By the Treaty of London, Christian IX became King of Denmark

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, Count Von, Memoirs of Count Buest, Vol. I. pp. 233-238.

<sup>2</sup>Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 345; Bismarck, Otto von, Bismarck the Man and the Statesman, Vol. II, p. 1 passim.

and duke of the duchies. Neither the German Confederation, nor the Schleswig-Holsteiners, nor the sons of the Duke of Augustenburg, who declared their father could only renounce the rights to his private possessions, had agreed to this. The German Diet, refusing to abide by the treaty, recognized the Duke of Augustenburg as duke of the duchies. Bismarck saw in this melee, the impetus, which if rightly directed would lead to the solution of the German problem. Accordingly, he accepted as binding the Treaty of London, and by a master stroke of diplomacy secured for his Danish policy the support and cooperation of Austria, whose ill will he had recently incurred by shattering her plans for reorganizing the German Confederation by means of a Congress of Princes at Frankfort.

Napoleon objected to this cooperation between Prussia and Austria as it delayed the break upon which everything depended; he was impatient that Bismarck should waste time with <sup>the</sup> petty Schleswig-Holstein question instead of freeing Prussia of Austria, that she might accomplish in Germany the great destiny which awaited her and which Germany expected of her. Perhaps his impatience was increased by the fact that he was planning to repeat with Bismarck a policy similar to that used with Cavour at Plombières, and this delay reduced him to a spectator watchfully waiting along the side lines. War was declared, and Prussia and Austria, working together against the other German states, occupied Schleswig. England proposed intervention in the Duchies, but Napoleon declined, because Schleswig-Holstein represented his <sup>theory of</sup> nationality ~~theory~~, also he may have discovered in it a sequel to the Italian War and the beginning of European reform.<sup>1</sup> The war ended with the preliminary Treaty of

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<sup>1</sup>

Sorel, op.cit., Vol. I. p. 9.

Vienna on August the eleventh, by which Denmark ceded Schleswig-Holstein and the little duchy of Lauenburg to Prussia and Austria.

Thus for the fourth time in five years Napoleon's proposals for a Congress had failed, showing plainly the decline of his influence. He had stood by and seen the break up of Poland under his very eyes; he had become alienated from England through Italy; through Poland he lost Russia's friendship forever; his promise to free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic was still unfulfilled; and Prussia without his assistance was slowly but surely rising to assume the hegemony of Europe. This kept Napoleon on the alert for the moment to ally himself to Prussia; he made personal overtures to the Prussian Ambassador. In February 1865 Goltz told Bismarck that he could have an alliance with France against Austria, and urged him to hurry as a French alliance would be more difficult to procure after the rupture. Bismarck, suspecting Napoleon of using Goltz as a tool to compromise Prussia, replied that he preferred to continue le mariage with Austria in spite of petty family quarrels. He had no intention of risking a treaty with France.

The war with Denmark ended; Prussia and Austria established joint control in the duchies. This was as Bismarck wished, for he believed a war with Austria was necessary to solve the German problem, and how easily it would be provoked under such favorable circumstances as these! Bismarck wanted either to annex the duchies or put them under Prussian control, since they were more valuable to Prussia than to Austria. They seemed unable to reach an agreement suitable for such an arrangement and were immediately on the verge of war - this time against each other. Hostilities

were prevented through the Gastein Convention signed August 14, 1865.<sup>1</sup>

This was only an interlude foreshadowing the coming storm. "The experiment was completely succeeded according to my conjectures," said Bismarck some time after; "the natural rivalry and animosity of Austria are more manifest than ever; the king is cured of his Austrian alliance, he has henceforth, abandoned his too narrowly legitimists scruples and I can now lead him according to my views."<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon, surprised and dissatisfied with the blasting of his hopes for immediate action by the Gastein Convention, protested publicly against a decree contrary to the desires of the German people and of the Duchies, which contravened the treaties, the rights, the succession, the popular will. "We regret to find no other basis for it than force, no other justification for it than the mutual convenience of the two joint-sharers." At Fontainebleau, August 28, 1865,<sup>3</sup> he complained to Goltz of this action as being contrary to all principles of the Prussian program. However, when he learned that the agreement meant neither an entente against France nor a guarantee of Venetia, he withdrew his objections. Behind every move that Napoleon III made there was some design for promoting the interests of his dynasty or extending the French frontiers. He aimed to keep Germany weak and divided in order to restore French influence as protector of the lesser German

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By the terms of this convention Prussia bought the rights in Lauenburg, Austria assumed control in Holstein and Prussia in Schleswig.

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Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 10.

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Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 146.

states against the two Great Powers, Prussia and Austria. Bearing in mind Napoleon's promise to Italy in 1859, "free from the Alps to the Adriatic," Bismark felt sure of getting his support by offering him the occasion to fulfil his promise. "The Emperor," said Bismarck," would judge less advisable a war for the possession of the Duchies; he would not find it as justifiable as a war undertaken to free a province from foreign domination, for example a war by Italy for Venice." "There is room to believe," added he,"that the Emperor desires a great German war, because at the head of an army like the French army, he can always get his share of the spoils; but he would much rather approve a great war for German unity than a war for the duchies on the Elbe."<sup>1</sup>

In October 1865 Bismarck visited Napoleon at Biarritz. What was said during this visit is known only through reports of the conversations by Bismarck and Napoleon. The former is reported to have said "The Emperor has a great mistaken incapacity;" while the latter is reported to have said concerning the visit, "Bismarck offered me everything that did not belong to him."<sup>2</sup> It is reasonable to surmise, however, that Bismarck left behind him some assurances and carried away with him some encouragements; he could at least count on French neutrality and the Emperor's good-will. Bismarck then turned his attention to the negotiation of an alliance with Italy. Prussia promised her Venice and signed with her a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance April 8, 1866.<sup>3</sup> It was now Bismarcks' problem to cause the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Sorel, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Lavisse, op. cit., Vol.VII, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Both were to engage in the war with all their forces, and make peace

With the break between Prussia and Austria assured after February 28, 1866, when the King of Prussia held a council with his ministers, three generals, Goltz, and the crown prince, Napoleon began to play one side against the other.<sup>1</sup> He talked of peace and neutrality; hinted to Goltz upon his return to Paris of the difference between the French frontier of 1815 and that of 1814; but asked nothing. He advised Italy to make the alliance with Prussia in order to frighten Austria into giving her Venetia, and went so far as to send his cousin Jerome to advise Victor-Emanuel to sign the treaty, even without reciprocity, and promised Italy his aid should Prussia desert her.<sup>2</sup> The minister of Foreign Affairs opposed the Emperor's policy; he wished to preserve neutrality and refused to give Italy any advice. At Paris the legislative body denounced Prussia's advance to Italy. On May the third, General La Marmora, quoted M. Thiers as having intimated to the French sovereign before the whole assembly in one of his most vehement speeches against Italy, to prevent at any cost the Italo-Prussian alliance.<sup>2</sup> But Napoleon had no intention of letting the opportunity which this situation offered him slip unheeded through his fingers. He began urging Austria to restrain Italy; in fact he had begun to prepare already his glorious mediation. Franz-Joseph, alarmed at the Italo-Prussian alliance, made it known to Napoleon through Metternich that he would cede Venetia to him for

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(continued from p. 21)

only by common consent, such consent to be given as soon as Austria should have agreed to cede Venetia to Italy and an equivalent territory to Prussia. Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 12.

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Lavisse, op.cit., Vol. VII, p. 147.

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Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 367; Seignobos, op.cit., pp. 800-801.

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Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 13.

Italy for compensations in Silesia, making his concessions at Prussia's expense.

As the result of an assembly of his ministers and the members of the Privy Council, Napoleon decided to remain neutral, but on the condition that Prussia guarantee not to make any settlement without his consent. Bismarck and Goltz consented to this gladly since Napoleon seemed content with their verbal assent and did not exact a written agreement. To prevent any move toward reconciliation between Prussia and Austria, Napoleon again proposed a Congress to settle three questions: Venetia, Schleswig-Holstein, and the reform of the German Confederation. M. Mura, the Italian ambassador, wrote from Paris, May 11, 1866, "The French government proposes a Congress to settle three questions: Venetia, Schleswig-Holstein, and the reform of the German Confederation. The Emperor's ideas would be the cession of Venetia to Italy, Silesia to Austria, Prussia would have the duchies and some other German principalities to suit her convenience; on the Rhine he would establish three or four small duchies forming a part of the German Confederation under French protection."<sup>1</sup>

Invitations to the Congress were issued May the twenty-eighth and accepted by Prussia and Italy; Austria accepted only on the condition that no arrangement should be discussed which should give any one of the states invited an increase in territory or power, thus rendering impossible the cession of Venetia to Italy.<sup>2</sup> This was as Napoleon wished for it made the Congress impossible and assured the rupture between Prussia and

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<sup>1</sup> Sorel, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Pyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 369.

Austria. His next move after the Congress failed to materialize was to offer Prussia an alliance with France, which proposed as compensation for France, the boundaries of 1814, the Rhenish Palatinate and Rhenish Hesse - in short the territory between the Moselle and the Rhine including Coblenz and Mainz.<sup>1</sup> Thus the acquisition of the "petit Rhin," the establishment of a Rhenish buffer state under French domination, and the "grand Rhin" neutralized, would be accomplished with one stroke. Bismarck refused this offer by indicating that he thought the French speaking countries would be a more suitable acquisition for him than German speaking ones.<sup>2</sup> And would they not be more in keeping with his principle of nationalities? Napoleon was determined, however, to secure natural frontiers for France - his excuse to get the Rhine, while Bismarck knew the German people would never consent to cede one inch of German territory to anybody so long as Prussia was undefeated.

In any case to assure Venetia to Italy and compensation for France, Napoleon proceeded to conclude an alliance with Austria on June 12, 1866, whereby France promised to keep absolute neutrality and to put forth every effort to keep Italy neutral. Austria agreed if victorious to cede Venetia to Napoleon and to make no territorial changes in Germany without consulting England and France. Thus Napoleon hoped to get what he wanted in the territorial changes. He agreed not to interfere if Austria made annexations in Germany so long as they did not affect the hegemony or upset the balance of power in Europe; while Austria agreed

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<sup>1</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 14.

neither to oppose the establishment of a separate Rhineland state under French domination nor the enlargement of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Saxony, at the expense of the states favorable to Prussia.<sup>1</sup> In a letter written June the eleventh, to the minister of Foreign Affairs and read to the legislative body, Napoleon clearly announced his position: "The war has three causes: (1) Prussia's faulty geographical boundaries, (2) The German resolve for political reconstruction, (3) the necessity of securing Italian independence." The remedies are the increase in Prussian influence in the North, "a closer union of German States with a more important role for the middle States," the annexation of Venetia---France has no direct interest; she asks only that the European equilibrium and Italy be maintained; she will keep a disinterested neutrality, assured by the declarations of the countries in conflict that any questions which concern us will not be decided without the approval of France."<sup>2</sup> In this way Napoleon had prepared for war and watched it come with security, feeling assured that he would get from it, regardless of the outcome, an advantage for France and Italy. He thought that after the smoke of the battle had cleared away, he would be master of the situation. He had courted the German middle states for months in an attempt to convince them of his sincerity and unselfishness. To Bavaria he gave special attention as he hoped the middle and smaller states which formed the heart of Germany would form a Confederation under Bavaria excluding Austria and Prussia and dominated by French

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<sup>1</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 262; pp 265-266; App. No 3.

<sup>2</sup> Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 151.

influence.

By the end of June Bismarck had attained his purpose; war was inevitable and Austria, accused of spreading Augustenburg propaganda in Schleswig, was the aggressor. Contrary to all expectations the conflict was of short duration. Sadowa was a blow to all Europe. All Napoleon's well laid plans were upset. He had counted on a long drawn out contest in which he would intervene when the contestants were exhausted. Recovering from his surprise, he immediately offered his mediation. Austria accepted it and ceded Venetia to him. Bismarck refused mediation: once master of the battle field, he remembered only one thing, neither France nor Prussia had signed any written agreements. Drouyn de Lhuys urged Napoleon to mobilize and force Prussia (and therefore Italy) to accept his mediation by threatening to take possession of the left bank of the Rhine, which had been left unprotected by the withdrawal of Prussian troops when hostilities began. But Randon, the minister of War, informed him that the army was on peace footing. La Valette, the Minister of the Interior, believed the desired compensations to balance those of Prussia could be better obtained through negotiation; so that it was necessary to avoid the alliance which Austria was then seeking with France. Finally, Napoleon accepted this view and advised Beust, who had come from Franz-Joseph to ask for troops on the Rhine, to conclude peace with Prussia at once.<sup>1</sup> By so doing he lost his one opportunity to intervene effectively.

Prussia and Italy were still avoiding mediation by hiding behind

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Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 154.

each other as a shield: Prussia because she was victorious and felt she did not need his mediation; Italy because she wanted to conquer Venetia herself as a point of honor. Napoleon decided to force them to it by resorting to personal proceedings. On July the ninth, Benedetti was sent to the King of Prussia to get him to accept an alliance and to persuade Italy to do likewise. Bismarck did not like this for he knew mediation would be beneficial only for Austria, who, if left alone, would be forced to seek peace. The conflict ended finally with the preliminary Peace of Nicolsburg, July 26, 1866, which recognized Prussia's sovereignty in Schleswig-Holstein, and provided that she should annex Hanover, Nassau, Hesse-Cassel; that Austria should completely withdraw from German affairs; that Germany north of the Main, together with Saxony, should be included in a Federation under Prussia's leadership, and that the States south of the Main, although left outside the new Confederation could attach themselves to it by separate treaties.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Napoleon, after having permitted Prussia to destroy the old German Confederation, helped her to acquire a more compact territory and the hegemony of North Germany; he even paved the way for Bismarck's future policy towards Austria. Bismarck did not wish to impose upon her so heavy a penalty that it would render impossible future friendly relations. By stipulating that Prussia's influence be confined to the States north of the Main and by securing the independence of the Southern States, Napoleon thought he had divided Germany in two and had laid the foundation for a South German League under French preponderance.

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<sup>1</sup> Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 379; Buest, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 242 *passim*.

Any such tendencies on the part of the Southern States were checked in their infancy for Bismarck casually informed the King of Bavaria and South German ministers of Napoleon's demand from him, of the cession of the Barvarian Palatinate, and the Hessian districts west of the Rhine, and bound them by a series of secret treaties of offensive and defensive alliance to Prussia.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Napoleon becomes the exponent of that traditional policy which has shaped French politics since Henry II. As the exponent of that policy, his diplomacy had been successful so far in that it secured Venetia for Italy and brought about the dissolution of the old German Confederation, thus altering the treaties of 1815, which he held to be so iniquitous. It failed in that Napoleon refused to resign himself to the new situation created by Sadowa and to adapt his policy to this new situation. Instead he obstinately continued to execute the projects prepared so carefully before Sadowa. Napoleon committed his first costly blunder when he permitted the Italo-Prussian Alliance and his second when he failed to exact a written agreement from Prussia guaranteeing that she would make no settlement without his consent.

<sup>1</sup>

Fyffe, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 380.

### III

#### THE COMPENSATION POLICY OF NAPOLEON III

July 1866 to July 1868

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After Sadowa, it seems that Napoleon should have realized that nothing was to be gained by negotiation. He could not or would not see this and at once began to formulate demands for compensation. The opportune moment for action in this matter presented itself on the day of the preliminary peace at Nikolsburg on July the twenty sixth, when Benedetti, the French ambassador, informally announced that His Majesty the Emperor would not be loathe to receive the frontiers of 1814 (Saarbrücken, Landau) and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg as compensation for his neutrality.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the conversation, Bismarck told Benedetti that it would be quite difficult to persuade the king to give up any portion of Prussian territory whatsoever after such a decisive victory, and asked if it would be possible to find in the Palatinate a means of adjustment, adding, however, that it would be better to look elsewhere for compensation, Belgium perhaps. In reporting this interview to Drouyn de Lhuys, Benedetti, probably as the result of a misunderstanding, wrote that Bismarck was of the opinion that France ought to look for equivalent compensation in Belgium, and offered to come to an understanding concerning such an equivalent.<sup>2</sup> But Paris under the influence of Drouyn de Lhuys clamored for the country between the Rhine and the Moselle, which Prussia had no intention

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<sup>1</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 234; App. No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 22.

of giving up.

It seemed that Bismarck wished to let the French diplomats keep their illusions concerning German territory as long as possible; thus he resorted to a "dilatory policy," without ever making them any promises, as he preferred to postpone war with France until the Prussian military system had been introduced in the annexed provinces and in the other German states. He also wished to obtain Napoleon's recognition of the annexations made in North Germany. Accordingly, the Prussian ambassador, Goltz, demanded it of Drouyn de Lhuys on August <sup>the</sup> first and of Rouher, August <sup>the</sup> third, to which Rouher replied, "The question of recognition seemed to him to be linked up with that of rectification of frontiers; they ought to treat them simultaneously."<sup>1</sup> But Goltz, having received no instructions regarding these propositions, refused to discuss them.

Drouyn de Lhuys, having received such an optimistic report from Benedetti, thought the time ripe to follow up Goltz's demands for reconnaissance with definite negotiations. Rouher, however, made the following proposal: "Public sentiment expresses itself more and more for an increase of territory....If we can say officially, Prussia consents that we resume the frontiers of 1814, public opinion would be satisfied. I do not think that this rectification, if obtainable, should be secured at once."<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the sick Emperor had gone to Vichy for his health. While there he refused the Czar's offer

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<sup>1</sup>Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Lavissee, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 158.

of a Congress to settle the changes in Germany, as he still hoped to gain more from Prussia. Drouyn de Lhuys also secured from him at Vichy a list of desirable compensations and ordered Benedetti to present these as demands at Berlin. Accordingly on August 5, 1866, the French demands were put into definite form, when Benedetti communicated to Bismarck the project of a secret convention demanding for France the cession of Luxemburg, the Bavarian Palatinate, of that portion of Hesse-Darmstadt west of the Rhine, including the fortress of Mainz, and the strip of Prussian territory on the Saar which had been given to France in 1814 but taken from her in 1815.<sup>1</sup> Thus the demand has been enlarged so as to include not only the Rhineland but also the territory of the middle states. The King of Prussia refused this offer on August the seventh, by saying it was impossible to cede any German territory without putting France at war with all Germany. Bismarck, when reporting this conversation in the German Parliament some years later, said Benedetti asked for Mainz<sup>1</sup> or war, to which he replied, "Very well, we shall have war." When the failure of this proposal was reported to Napoleon, he immediately blamed Drouyn de Lhuys for pursuing this policy. On August 12, 1866, he wrote to LaValette: "It results from my conversation with M. Benedetti that we shall have all Germany against us for a very small advantage."<sup>2</sup>

Now Bismarck realized it would be exceedingly advantageous to the French to keep these negotiations secret. He also realized it would

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<sup>1</sup>Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 383; App. No. 5.

<sup>2</sup>La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 56.

be equally advantageous for Prussia to publish them, for by doing so he would arouse against France the German national feeling; he would quiet Russia's remonstrances by reproaching Napoleon with his ambitions; and most important for him, he would rally the South German States to Prussia by holding before them either a doubtful existence under French domination or independence under Prussian hegemony. With these advantages in mind, Bismarck gave the news of the French proposals to the German press to arouse German national feeling, and to the French press because Napoleon did not want it known. To a correspondent of the *Siecle*, M. Vilbord by name, he confided that France had demanded territorial compensation which had to do with the Rhine frontier and that the Prussian government supported by the country at large refused to grant the demands, and if France persisted in them she would have war on her hands.<sup>1</sup> Thus the paper eager to be the first to impart this choice news item published it on August 10, 1866. By this move the wary old chancellor meant to show Europe at large that Napoleon III was not primarily interested in the European balance of power but in his own personal gain, for the attainment of which he had forsaken the role of mediator for that of solicitor of territory. Bismarck succeeded in making it appear to all Europe that Napoleon was using his disinterestedness as a cloak for securing compensation for France - disinterested in favor of nationalities. In 1859 his disinterestedness secured for him Savoy and Nice; in 1866, he hoped it would secure for him the left bank of the Rhine, but the fact that Bismarck had re-

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<sup>1</sup>La Gorce, *Empire*, Vol. V, pp. 56-57.

placed Cavour in the equation calls for a wholly different method of solution - a fact which he never fully grasped.

As the result of this move, the alliance between Prussia and Russia was renewed. In fact the Czar was so irritated at the news that he wrote the King of Prussia that he would never ally himself with his enemies. Also defensive and offensive alliances were concluded with the South German States. So again, Prussian policy triumphed over that of the French.

In the meantime, Napoleon had returned from Vichy to Paris and vehemently contradicted the rumors in the papers. He placed the blame on Drouyn de Lhuys and wrote La Valette, the minister of the Interior, that Drouyn de Lhuys had divulged the project which should have remained a secret and that he wished to have him contradict the rumor. Drouyn de Lhuys resigned and Rouher filled in during the interim until the permanent appointment of Moustier on September the first.

The failure of the project to secure Mainz made doubtful the success of any further attempt to obtain German territory as compensation. But in spite of this the French persisted in seeking some equivalent which would at least appease public sentiment and serve as a guaranty against their menacing neighbor - Prussia. Such thoughts inspired the following negotiations: One day, either in May or June 1866, while deliberating at the Tuileries on the Austro-Prussian conflict and what attitude the Imperial French government should<sup>ed</sup> assume concerning it, M. Persigny proposed that they give Bismarck full liberty "to expand from the Baltic to the Main;" in revenge the deposed princes would be indemnified on the left bank of the Rhine, where they would constitute

a barrier between France and Prussia. The little principalities, united among themselves, would be naturally drawn to France because of their common religious interests and by commercial interests.<sup>1</sup> Thus the idea of an intermediary state on France's eastern frontier is accepted.

There happened to be in Paris at this time, a Danish agent, M. Hansen, who was quite attached to France and very zealous for the interest of Schleswig. He was called into consultation about August the eleventh and a memorandum of the plan previously drawn up by Drouyn de Lhuys put before him for his most careful consideration. The memorandum began by denying any thought of ambition or conquest on the part of the French government. It set forth the increasing threat of the recent Prussian acquisitions and stated that the principal need of France was protection of her eastern frontiers.<sup>2</sup> "The Emperor," continued M. Drouyn de Lhuys, "would see with satisfaction all cause of conflict between two great people definitely removed by an establishment analogous to that of modern Switzerland or of Belgium."<sup>3</sup> The state, although neutral, would be purely German, but separated politically from the rest of Germany and it would remain in communication with the rest of Germany. The memorandum went still further to suggest a prince from the House of Hohenzollern for the throne. After careful perusal, Hansen presented the project to Bismarck in an interview on August the thirteenth, but soon discovered that Bismarck was more de-

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<sup>1</sup> La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 37-40; App. 6.

<sup>3</sup> La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 63.

terminated than ever not to cede, or neutralize even an inch of German territory. This he immediately communicated to Paris. In the meantime Drouyn de Lhuys had resigned and the affair was dropped - just another incident indicative of French persistence for the possession of the Rhine.

Nevertheless, Napoleon still persisted in having compensation; Bismarck again suggested that he look for it elsewhere - Belgium maybe. Perhaps Napoleon was goaded to insistence because of his illness; perhaps he was beginning to feel more acutely than ever the lessening of the general confidence of the French people toward him which was slowly but surely undermining the prestige of his dynasty - thus the consuming desire for success at any cost obsessed him. He had failed miserably in the Polish insurrection; his failure in the Schleswig-Holstein affair was equally humiliating; the recent triumph of the Prussian policy in securing alliances with the South German States and in renewing the Russian alliance was the last straw. At this point Napoleon decided to change his tactics; accordingly he substituted for his policy of compensations one of agglomerations. The Emperor now began to think in terms of an alliance with Prussia, but he must first win Prussia by showing her that France sought compensation elsewhere than on the banks of the Rhine. The plan took definite form August 1, 1866, when Benedetti received instructions to present to Bismarck another proposal of an alliance, this time asking for France only the places of 1814 (Laudau, Sarrelouis, Sarrebrücken), of Luxemburg, and a secret alliance in which France would ask nothing of Prussia but would take compensation in Belgium. In short, the principal object of the nego-

tiation was a secret treaty which would permit France with Prussia's support to get possession of Belgium. In exchange France would conclude with Prussia an offensive and defensive alliance and recognize all her annexations.<sup>1</sup> Benedetti found Bismarck more adamant than ever concerning the cession of German territory, and instead of a secret treaty for Belgium, Bismarck suggested that Benedetti give him an exact text of the alliance that he might submit it to the King. Benedetti, not suspecting the motive for this request, transcribed the proposal in his own handwriting and sent it to Bismarck on August the twentieth. France, besides promising to recognize all Prussia's acquisitions, declared she would not oppose a federal union between the South German States and the North German Confederation; Prussia would facilitate French acquisition of Luxemburg, and in case French troops should enter Belgium to conquer it, Prussia would assure the cooperation of her armies. Although Bismarck never accepted this arrangement, he let Benedetti believe that he did and laid the manuscript away for future reference.<sup>2</sup> He had it published in 1870 before the outbreak of the Franco-German War to embroil France with Belgium and therefore with England who was always ready to enter the picture whenever the channel ports were threatened. Benedetti tried to say that he wrote the proposal at Bismarck's dictation; however, when the Germans occupied Rouher's chateau at Cercey, a letter was found among his papers directing Benedetti as to what propo-

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<sup>1</sup>Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 25-26; Lavissee, op. cit., Vol. VII, p.159; App. No. 7.

<sup>2</sup>"When M. Benedetti had laid down the pen, M. Bismarck folded the document and put it away as one does with a thing that may be of use. A second time, he had, in accordance with the recommendation of the great Frederick, procured something in writing." La Gorce, Empire, Vol V, p.69.

sitions to make.

In the meanwhile, the plenipotentiaries of Prussia and Austria were still negotiating at Prague, while representatives of the South German States were debating at Berlin the separate treaties which they were about to conclude with Prussia. During the heat of the debate, Bismarck let leak to the representatives there assembled the fact that Napoleon, at the same time in which he promised to protect them, was seeking to reach an understanding with Prussia at their expense. Bismarck imposed light penalties upon them and offered them protection against "the hereditary enemy." This had the desired effect, and the South German States concluded with Prussia treaties of offensive and defensive alliance. They guaranteed the integrity of their respective territories and agreed in case of war to put all their military forces at the disposal of the King of Prussia. These alliances, which they promised to keep secret, were signed August the thirteenth with Württemberg, August the seventeenth with Baden, August the twenty-second with Bavaria, and a little later with Hesse-Darmstadt.<sup>1</sup>

On August 23, 1866, the preliminary Peace of Nikolsburg became the definite Peace of Prague. By the terms of this treaty Austria recognized the dissolution of the German Confederation; promised to recognize the North German Confederation; and ceded to Prussia her claims to Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon refused to sign the treaty as he still hoped to prevent German unity by instigating the organization of the

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<sup>1</sup> Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 380-381.

<sup>2</sup> Lavissee, op. cit., Vol VII, p. 160.

four large South German States under Bavaria into a South German Confederation, and therefore under French influence. To this effect he had the following clause inscribed in the treaty - "the free states of the South to form a German union which will enjoy an existence of national independence." However, Bismarck's secret treaties of offensive and defensive alliance with the South German States defeated this plan. Napoleon also had inscribed in the treaty as an overture to his principle of nationalities that the population of North Schleswig should decide by plebiscite whether or not they should be reunited with Denmark.

Italy delayed signing the treaty with Austria until October the third. She still hoped for frontier rectifications in the Tyrol and wished to receive Venetia directly from Austria without French mediation, but Napoleon had not the slightest intention of giving up the only chestnut which he had pulled out of the fire. And so again the policy of Napoleon III had failed in that it had secured for him so far neither territorial compensation nor an alliance with Prussia - not even Italy's friendship. By adopting a policy of peace at this time he hoped to conciliate public opinion fiercely embittered against him because from the war which he had provoked for the sole purpose of securing territorial aggrandisement for France, he had succeeded in furth<sup>er</sup> aiding Italian and German unity instead, while France through his connivances had been left isolated and practically friendless - threatened on her eastern frontier by a rapidly uniting Germany, the rising military power of Europe. To win Italy's friendship again, Napoleon began speaking of hastening the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome - the possession of which was Italy's most ardent desire and for

which she must court Napoleon's favor. It is quite probable that she would willingly ally herself to France against Prussia in spite of the alliance of 1866 if Rome were to be gained by so doing. However, Napoleon notified the Italians in October 1866 after his proposal to hasten the withdrawal of the troops that this would be "a simple change in the method of protection" of the pope, and "not at all an abandonment of this protection." It must be remembered that he could afford to do nothing to alienate what support he got from the Catholic Party during this period of domestic and political instability - a period during which he saw the prestige of his dynasty rapidly crumbling. In spite of the desire to complete the only job in whose undertaking he had met with a fair degree of success, he must support the temporal power of the pope by every means possible to him. And this had begun to be irksome to His Majesty - but he had no choice. Napoleon also sought to become reconciled with Russia by promising to aid her in securing Crete and Thessaly for Greece. Nothing came of this proposal because of the traditional rivalries between the Russian and the French ambassadors at Constantinople.

To understand the Luxemburg Crisis, one must review Bismarck's policy since Sadowa. By the terms of the Treaty of Prague, Prussia was authorized to rebind, by a common bond, all the Germanic principalities situated on the right bank of the Main. On December 15, 1866, delegates from the Northern States assembled at Berlin to determine the basis for future reorganization - this to be a confederation. La Gorce thinks the term confederation is improperly used, as a confederation presupposes a certain equality among the confederates. In this

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<sup>1</sup> Lavissee, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 162.

case Prussia dominated the situation - the petty princes being civil administrators of their territory in time of peace only.

Article V of the Treaty of Prague, inserted at the instigation of Napoleon, stipulated that the people of North Schleswig should decide by plebescite whether or not they wished to be annexed to Prussia. This Prussia evidently forgot or conveniently ignored as they were never consulted.

Toward the end of November, M. Rothan, the French consul general at Frankfort, had affirmed in a despatch to the minister of foreign affairs the existence of secret treaties between Prussia and the South German States.<sup>1</sup> In January 1867 the prime minister of Bavaria, M. de Hohenlohe, was questioned in the Bavarian parliament concerning the existence of these treaties. He declared that the fusion of North and South Germany was impossible for the present, but was very desirable for the future; he further stated that an alliance with Prussia was a necessity in case of war. At the preliminary Peace of Nikolsburg, Napoleon wanted some compensation as a boon for his own disappointment and to appease national sentiment in France. However, Bismarck, although he would not agree to the cession of one foot of German territory, had no objections to sit idly by while Napoleon should try to get possession of Luxemburg.

In Paris the incorporation of Luxemburg was thought a proper compensation for Prussia's recent acquisitions, and a Prussian alliance, for the subjection of Belgium as a fitting price for Prussia's future

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<sup>1</sup> La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V. p. 157.

leadership in South Germany. Through the years, Luxemburg had undergone various dominations without losing any of its historic individuality. Under the terms of the treaty of April 19, 1839, it was declared independent but under the scepter of the King of Holland who should govern it with separate institutions, thus a sovereign state but with a prince residing at The Hague. The duchy was also a part of the old German Confederation and a member of the Zollverein. The fortress of Luxemburg became a federal one under the treaties of 1815 and the right to garrison it was given to Prussia.<sup>1</sup> After the dissolution of the old German Confederation in 1866, the duchy remained a member of the Zollverein and the fortress continued to be garrisoned by Prussian troops - however, the duchy did not enter the North German Confederation. Napoleon held that with the dissolution of the old German Confederation was also dissolved Prussia's right to garrison the fortress and rightly so. As for Luxemburg, Bismarck was quite willing to recommend the withdrawal of the Prussian garrison to the King but under no circumstances as proposed by Paris. It was his idea that the initiative for any negotiation having as its object the cession of the duchy to France must come from The Hague, as Prussia would not give any German territory to the King of Holland as indemnification for Luxemburg. On the other hand Napoleon was equally determined that the acquisition of Luxemburg appear not in the eyes of all Europe as a sacrifice accomplished by France, but as a concession consented to by Prussia. Since the French wanted Luxemburg and the

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<sup>1</sup>La Gorce, Empire, Vol V, pp. 158-159; Seignobos, op. cit., pp. 803-804.

King of Holland was willing to sell it, it was certainly their responsibility to assume the first risks, after which Bismarck would aid them in whatever way he could provided they would act quickly and in secret and present the transaction to him as fait accompli. Accordingly he advised that Napoleon instigate through the influence of his friends at The Hague agitation for the removal of the Prussian garrison and to open without his knowledge secret negotiations with The Hague. "You are the ones who desire to incorporate Luxemburg," said he, "therefore it is incumbent upon you to assume the first risks; after which we will do what we can. You have good friends among the notables of Luxemburg; endeavor through their influence to instigate an agitation for the withdrawal of our garrison; then, without our knowledge open secret negotiations with The Hague, and when you can appoint to an accomplished fact, its recognition on the part of Germany can probably be secured. In one word, an active support of this step is impossible to us. All that is within our power is to allow it to be done; - to that end, in the interest of our friendship, I will confer with the King."<sup>1</sup> Bismarck left the matter at this and was surprised upon his return to Berlin in December to learn from a visit of the French ambassador that France was still expecting Prussia to take the initiative with Holland and still desired an offensive alliance with Prussia to promote her Belgian aspirations. Benedetti concluded since nothing had been done for three months toward the culmination of the alliance that Bismarck had changed his mind, decided to delay, and finally break off the negotiations, and that it was best for France that she put an end to them.

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, Heinrich von, The Founding of the German Empire, Vol.VI, p. 48.

Moustier was of the same opinion. Napoleon still obsessed with the desire to make some sort of territorial acquisition to conciliate the Chauvinistic outbursts rampant in France, gave orders to be patient and wait for overtures from Bismarck. At the same time should the worst come he issued orders that the army be increased to twice its present numbers. When this order was made public there was so much indignation against the increase of the military burden that it was immediately withdrawn.

When Bismarck presented the French proposal for an alliance to the King, he was inclined to disfavor an alliance of any sort. Also he regarded the protection of Luxemburg as his particular duty and imposed upon him by European treaty.

Early in 1867 expectant patience came to an end in Paris. Rouher, the minister of State, said to Count Goltz, "In a short time the Chambers will be convened, and I shall then have to appease public opinion in regard to the relations between our two countries. These discussions, prolonged for months, must now be concluded; and we must be informed whether Prussia intends to continue its garrison of Luxemburg, whether Count Bismarck will relinquish his policy inspired, no doubt, by greatest wisdom."<sup>1</sup> Along similar lines Moustier instructed Benedetti, "We do not wish to urge or to threaten, but the approaching opening of the Chambers compel us to insist upon a definite decision."<sup>2</sup> And straightway scurried Benedetti, not without qualms, however, to a final con-

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 52.

ference with Bismarck<sup>on</sup> January the tenth. Bismarck informed him as regards Luxemburg - "The King is a slave to his sense of duty, and he esteems it as such to defend a charge intrusted to him by the European powers." So far as an offensive alliance was concerned binding Prussia to give armed assistance if France occupied Belgium, Bismarck said, "The King may be persuaded to a merely defensive alliance by which Prussia will guarantee to the Emperor Napoleon its friendly neutrality in any event."<sup>1</sup> Thus it is clear that Bismarck maintained the attitude that any active cooperation with France in her attempt to get Luxemburg was impossible, but he was willing to let much pass unnoticed provided France would allow German unity to be completed.

Napoleon did not relinquish his intention to acquire Luxemburg, but decided to get it as Bismarck had suggested since he could not force Bismarck to secure it for him. Accordingly in January 1867 Moustier sent political agents into Luxemburg to create sentiment among the people favorable toward annexation to France, although the French Chargé d'Affaires at The Hague reported that the people of the duchy had no other desire than to keep their independence. On February the twentieth, the Dutch representative at Paris, M. de Lichtenfeldt, asked Moustier what attitude would France assume if Holland were threatened by Prussia without any provocation. This gave France the opening for which she had been looking. Soon after this the French Chargé d'Affaires, M. Baudin, received instructions to approach the Dutch minister, Van Zuylen, regarding the possibility of concluding

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 52.

a secret treaty of alliance and during the negotiations to broach the Luxemburg matter. The Dutch minister would have been glad to get rid of the duchy to avoid future quarrels with Prussia but decided he must have proof of Prussia's acquiescence. Napoleon was so anxious for Luxemburg that he had Baudin instructed to lay before the King of Holland two secret propositions - a defensive alliance with a French guaranty against Prussia in return for which Luxemburg should be surrendered to him. He assured the King that Prussia would submit when she learned that the negotiations were completed. He went even further to emphasize the fact that Napoleon was not motivated by any desire for conquest, but from a military point of view he could not leave so strategic a place on the French frontier under German control in view of Prussia's increased strength, and from a political point of view Napoleon owed some satisfaction to the self-respect of his people.<sup>1</sup> Likewise the Prussian right to garrison the fortress was dissolved with the dissolution of the old German Confederation.<sup>2</sup>

On March 18, 1867 formal negotiation was opened with the King - Grand-Duke.<sup>3</sup> Baudin submitted to him the two secret treaties, offered

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 120; La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> By the treaty of May 31, 1815, between the Netherlands and the four Great Powers, then allied, Luxemburg was made a fortress of the German Confederation by the King of the Netherlands in his capacity as Grand Duke of Luxemburg, with the consent of the Federal Diet and subject to whatever conditions it might impose. This was incorporated in the acts of the Congress of Vienna. By a protocol of November 26, 1815, Mainz and Landau were also made fortresses of the Confederation. Russia, Austria and England obtained for Prussia and the Netherlands the right to garrison Luxemburg conjointly and to appoint its Governor by terms of a treaty between them November 8, 1816: The Netherlands was to furnish one fourth of the garrison and Prussia three fourths. This agreement was sanctioned by the four great Powers March 12, 1817 in a treaty with the Netherlands, and by the Confederate Diet in a treaty concluded October 5, 1820. Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> App. No. 8.

him an indemnity of about four or five million francs for the surrender of the duchy, and requested him to leave the negotiation with Prussia in the hands of the French government. The King assured the French minister that he would agree to no proposition to which the people of Luxemburg, <sup>and</sup> the Great Powers, especially Prussia, had not previously consented. He further contended that the consent of the powers who signed the treaty of April 19, 1839 was necessary before Luxemburg should be ceded. And on the very next day the secret treaties of offensive and defensive alliance with South German States were published. Thus it seemed that Bismarck was always a jump ahead of Napoleon. When the powers were approached as to their views, England was indifferent, Russia urged immediate action, while Austria counselled for peace and warned Napoleon to be careful lest he give Bismarck a stick with which to crack his head. The Emperor was quite irritated because of the position Austria took as he had counted on her support.

Following this Benedetti was instructed to find out whether Prussia's consent could be obtained. He found Bismarck cold and reserved. "We will let matters take their course," said he, "but I cannot assume the responsibility to the King, the Reichstag, and toward public opinion, of authorizing the statement that the surrender of Luxemburg is consequent upon Prussian agreement."<sup>1</sup> Bismarck then warned Napoleon to influence the King-Grand-Duke not to communicate the matter in any way to the King of Prussia. Somehow the news leaked to the German press and immediately agitation began against the project. In the meantime the

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 125.

two treaties (of guaranty and of cession) prepared by the King of Holland were ready to be signed. But the agitation in the Reichstag became so intense that Bismarck asked the French government to delay the conclusion of the negotiations until the intensity of the agitation in Germany cooled. Moustier, suspicious of Bismarck's motive, refused the delay and ordered the treaty signed April the first.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day Benedetti came to inform Bismarck that the treaty was about to be signed and met Bismarck leaving his home for a meeting of the Reichstag. He advised Benedetti not to inform him officially as he would have to tell what he knew at the meeting. During the session of the Reichstag Bismarck tried to allay the fury of the attack but without much success as the surrender of Luxemburg to the French was considered as prejudicial to German unity and it was the consensus of opinion that the government should prevent it if necessary by force of arms. After such a hectic session Bismarck telegraphed the King of Holland that he had the liberty and also the responsibility for his acts and that he would be mistaken if he saw in the cession a guarantee for peace. Upon the receipt of this telegram the King refused to sign the treaties. Thus the Luxemburg affair was a public failure and France was made the laughing stock of Europe. Napoleon was furious and determined to force the withdrawal of the Prussian garrison from the fortress.

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<sup>1</sup> After the dissolution of the old German Confederation, the Luxemburg government sent a communication October 12, 1866 to Berlin stating that the government desired an international alliance with Prussia providing for the continuation of the joint occupation of the fortress. Bismarck declined this offer on March 27, 1867.

Bismarck refused to evaluate <sup>and</sup> rumors of war followed immediately but both William and Napoleon wanted peace. During the heat of the excitement for war, Moustier approached Austria as to the possibility for a closed alliance against Prussia offering as an incentive the acquisition of Schleswig. Austria answered that she was much in need of a long continued peace and must therefore decline any alliance by which this is jeopardized. In addition Beust stated that it would be impossible for the sovereign of ten million German subjects to take up arms in support of a foreign annexation of German territory, as would be the case in the question under consideration.<sup>1</sup> This helped to cool the French ardor for war.

Napoleon now realized that any further effort to secure the cession of Luxemburg was useless. As a last attempt, however, Benedetti was instructed to allude once more to the old proposals for an alliance whereby Prussia would gain control of South Germany in return for her support of France in an attempt to incorporate Belgium. Prussia was less interested now than ever. Napoleon was determined not to be outdone and immediately began concentrating his efforts upon forcing the withdrawal of the Prussian garrison. On April the fifteenth he sent a note to St. Petersburg, London, and Vienna, including protestations of French disinterestedness and asking whether Prussia were still entitled to the right to garrison the fortress of Luxemburg. The Powers did not care to meddle in this question. The English prime minister, Lord Derby, later announced to the Upper House that the government

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 147.

did not intend to reply to the circular. Alexander also declined to interfere in the matter. Beust, however, proposed two alternatives in the Luxemburg affair: either the solution which was accepted or that Luxemburg, which the King of Holland was eager to give up, should be ceded to Belgium and in return Belgium should restore to France those small frontier districts<sup>1</sup> and fortresses which had been left to her in 1814, and were incorporated into the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815.<sup>2</sup> In either case Prussia would be requested to withdraw her garrison. This proposal was favorably received at Berlin but was frustrated by the refusal of the King of Belgium to part with any of his territory. The idea was, on the whole, quite favorable to Europe as one neutral state could be more easily protected than two. But France refused to accept this arrangement and war again seemed imminent. At this juncture, Russia proposed a conference of the signatory powers of the Treaty of 1839 to meet at London to settle the question upon the following basis: the neutrality of Luxemburg under a European guaranty under which Prussia would withdraw her garrison. Napoleon accepted this proposal on April the twenty-seventh. Accordingly, on May the first, the King of Holland issued invitations to the Conference. Italy was invited to attend. The Conference met at London on May the seventh and after four days a treaty was concluded May the eleventh between the five Great Powers, Belgium, Holland Luxemburg, and Italy, which provided that the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg should become a sovereign state heredi-

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<sup>1</sup>Philippeville and Marienburg.

<sup>2</sup>Beusts, op. cit., Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 25.

tary in the family of Nassau, and "perpetually neutral under the sanction and collective guaranty of the Powers." Prussia withdrew her garrison and the King of Holland who continued to be the sovereign of the Grand Duchy was ordered to demolish the fortress of Luxemburg and to maintain it in the future as an open town.<sup>1</sup>

Napoleon's next move was to try at least to gain the moral satisfaction of forcing the execution of Article 5 of the Treaty of Prague, which stipulated that the northern districts of Schleswig should express their desire to be united with Denmark by plebiscite. Bismarck answered this move by reminding the Emperor that Prussia had concluded the Treaty of Prague with Austria.

In resigning himself to the decision of the London Conference, Napoleon turned his attention back to the traditional Rhine policy, just as if nothing had happened and as if he had never strayed from it. Even after the Emperor had accepted Russia's proposals of mediation, Gramont was instructed to offer Beust an offensive and defensive alliance with far-reaching war aims. Austria and France were to pledge themselves not to cease fighting until they had attained certain objectives, the objective for France being the left bank of the Rhine, especially the Bavarian Palatinate and the Prussian provinces situated on the left bank of the Rhine (Rhenish Hessa); while for Austria the objective was the possession of Silesia, to rearrange South Germany as she saw fit even to forming a Confederation and placing herself at its head, and to make whatever annexations that suited her - but to

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<sup>1</sup> Lavissee, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 165; La Gorce, *Empire*, Vol. V, p. 194. For an interesting and detailed account of the Luxemburg affair see La Gorce, Vol. V, Bk. 32.

remember that France was interested in the Grand Duchy of Baden.<sup>1</sup> Beust refused the alliance even though Gramont had hinted of turning to Russia or even to Prussia in case of refusal. In the meantime the Constitution of the North German Confederation was being adopted - this later became the basis of the constitution of the German Empire.

After the Luxemburg crisis, Napoleon was more determined than ever to possess the left bank of the Rhine at the expense of German unity - for German unity must be prevented if France were to have the Rhine. And so for the next few years, as a step toward his objective, the Emperor adopted a policy of alliance.

During the summer of 1867, all thoughts were turned towards the Exposition of the World's Fair at Paris, during which Napoleon tried to patch up his personal relations with the sovereigns who attended. Everybody came. Among the first arrivals were the King and Queen of Belgium, the Queen of Portugal, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, and Prince Oscar of Sweden. The Tzar arrived June the first, accompanied by his Vice Chancellor, Gortchakoff, and followed by King William and Bismarck on June <sup>the sixth.</sup> 6. Both were received with the greatest respect and given a warm reception. But in spite of the cordial reception the Tzar could perceive rumors running among the crowd, distinct protestations in favor of Poland. While at the Palais de Justice he heard the cry "Vive la Pologne!" On June the sixth while seated in a carriage with Napoleon, he was returning from a military parade, a Pole named Berozowski shot at him but fortunately missed his aim. The Emperor recover-

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<sup>1</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 361-362.

ing from the shock of the attempt exclaimed, "This, Sire, has made us allies, for we have stood under fire together!"<sup>1</sup> Alexander left Paris, June the eleventh, ill enough disposed toward France and especially as upon the arrest of his would-be assassin, several lawyers offered to defend him and he was not condemned to death. Thus the Tzar left France more favorably inclined toward Prussia than ever.

King William avoided every political discussion possible, and expressed himself as earnestly wishing that peace might be maintained. Bismarck, however, was less reserved in his conversation. He assured the Minister of State, Rouher, of his good will in the Luxemburg affair, and also assured him that the South German States had shown no desire to enter the North German Confederation and that he was little inclined to urge them into it. To Persigny he criticized the French policy in 1866 and added that all the difficulty in the Luxemburg affair would have been avoided if France had first negotiated the evacuation of the fortress; the evacuation once completed, the cession would have been accomplished without offending anyone's self respect. Persigny shrewdly urged him nevertheless to preserve the peace of Europe by having Prussia make further annexations in North Germany only, especially of Saxony, and by placing the King of Saxony on the throne of a neutral Rhenish state. Moustier suggested that he exclude Luxemburg from the German Zollverein.

In July 1867 another step toward German unity was taken which aggravated the slowly increasing tension. Before leaving for the

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 226-227.

Exposition, Bismarck had concluded negotiations for the reorganization of the Zollverein, the new organization to include the four southern states, and the establishment of a customs parliament to be composed of delegates of both Northern and Southern States, to meet at Berlin and to regulate industrial and financial questions.<sup>1</sup> Thus from the Baltic to the Alps, economic as well as military unity had been established in Germany. News of this accomplishment reached Paris shortly after the departure of King William and Bismarck and the French bubbling over with the desire to meddle into and to control the affairs of others, which their government seemed to consider its lawful prerogative, immediately accused Prussia of overstepping all the bounds of peace and of violating the letter and spirit of the Treaty of Prague. Moustier frankly stated that Prussia should have restricted herself to the states North of the Main, and then have concluded treaties with the South German Zollverein as with other powers. All this was but a manifestation of the determination of the French to interfere in Germany, a tendency which has characterized their attitude since Sadowa in their desperate effort to use the Treaty of Prague to hinder the development of the German national state, and especially by attempting to apply it to the economic sphere.

For the past eight years Napoleon had been a party to practically every Austrian defeat; at Magenta, at Solferino, Franz-Joseph had succumbed to French arms - on the eve of Sadowa Napoleon was the willing accomplice of his enemies. With the promise of empire he had sent

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<sup>1</sup>La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 229.

Maximilian to Mexico and through the tragedy of Querétaro again brought grief to Austria. This unhappy incident rendered impossible the anticipated visit of the Austrian Emperor and frustrated the hope of concluding a treaty of alliance between France and Austria against Prussia as the result of this visit. Fate favored Napoleon however and put before him the opportunity to seek the realization of his hopes. About this time, Beust, deploring the entrance of the South German States into the Zollverein, said to the French ambassador at Vienna, "The real remedy is a strong alliance between France and Austria."<sup>1</sup> When this was communicated to Napoleon, he forthwith announced his intention to pay a visit of condolence to the Austrian Emperor. Accordingly Napoleon and Eugénie arrived at Salzburg August 18, 1867, on the Austrian Emperor's birthday, and William took the occasion to send a friendly, congratulatory telegram in which he very graciously and subtly asked to be remembered to "Leurs Majestés Françaises."

The only conferences were between the two sovereigns together with their ministers, Beust and Gramont. At the last conference both ministers produced elaborate memoranda of many pages - that of the Austrian Chancellor was accepted by Napoleon. It suggested an arrangement on three points: 1- that it was the joint task of Austria and France to observe minutely the stipulations of the Peace of Prague, but to avoid on both sides any interference in German affairs. It was especially agreed that France should refrain from any measure or manifestation of a threatening nature, while Austria should limit herself to preserving the sympathies of the South German States by dev-

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<sup>1</sup> La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 233.

eloping a liberal constitutional system; 2 - with regard to some Russian tendencies which were at that time manifesting themselves, it was agreed that if Russia should again cross the Pruth, Austria should occupy Wallachia without delay, and that the acquiescence and support of France should be assured her in the undertaking; 3 - finally, as to the Cretan Insurrection, it was decided that a less minatory line of conduct should be followed towards the Porte than hitherto pursued by Russia in union with France, Prussia and Italy.<sup>1</sup> In short, Napoleon offered Austria South Germany in return for the left bank of the Rhine, and if Prussia refused to accept this arrangement, both Austria and France were to declare war, the objectives of which were to be: for France the frontiers of 1814, for Austria, Upper Silesia. The territory which Prussia annexed in 1866 was to decide by plebiscite its form of government and also its membership in the North German Confederation. The two powers were to enforce Article 5 of the Treaty of Prague jointly. The excuse for all this was their pretended championship of the independence of the South German States as stipulated by the Treaty of Prague, but - should the states refuse to conclude the suggested alliances they would be forced to do so either by an ultimatum or by war and then be punished with the loss of territory - the height of inconsistency.

The German press vehemently denounced the conferences of the two sovereigns and declared that the visit of condolence had become a political congress, that France was contemplating extending her pat-

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 36; Oncken, op. cit., Vol II, pp. 454-457.

ronage to the South Germans by reopening the Schleswig question; but that the Franco-Austrian alliance would only call for a counter-alliance by the other powers. Nevertheless, Beust refused to accept this proposition, as Austria with her present difficulties could not run the risk of another war. Napoleon finally agreed to aid Austria against Russia in the East and to let her act alone in South Germany, but his acquiescence to such a peace program was with the hope of getting what he wished in the future when Austria should have recovered from the effects of Sadowa.

Meanwhile, the Exposition interrupted by the news of Maximilian's death resumed its former splendor and gaiety. On his return from Salzburg, Napoleon passed through Munich; while there he expressed to Hohenlohe, the Bavarian prime minister, his regret that the South Germans had not formed a Confederation. When he reached Paris, the Emperor learned that an official journalist, M. Duvernois, had declared that France would oppose "even with arms" the direct or indirect absorption of the South Germans by Prussia. This made Napoleon quite uneasy for he realized that his only hope to preserve the French policy was an alliance with Austria and the Salzburg interview gave France very little support if any in this direction. The Emperor, sick and discouraged, hesitated between two policies - that of peace which he desired, and that of war which he felt was inevitable. Ollivier and Napoleon in the Imperialist Party and Simon and Favre in the Republican party were for peace - thus the peace policy was adopted. The Conservatives, however, agitated to avenge Sadowa, prevent German unity, destroy the military preponderance of Prussia, and to maintain the in-

dependence of the South Germans at any cost. But the South Germans had already bound themselves to Prussia by the renewal of the customs treaties which had transformed the customs union into an economic federation, and by the establishment of a Customs Parliament composed of representatives from all Germany.

Dalwigk, the prime minister of Hess<sup>a</sup>-Darmstadt, urged France to intervene. In September 1867, he said that the longer France waited the stronger fortified she would find Prussia, and that if she was looking for a casus belli, he would furnish her with one by making his state enter the North German Confederation.

Franz-Joseph and his prime minister returned Napoleon's visit in October. They were very cordially received. At a banquet in his honor, the Austrian Emperor responded to Napoleon's toast as follows: "When a few days ago," said he, "I visited at Nancy the tombs of my ancestors, I could not keep myself from wishing that we could bury in these tombs, intrusted to the keeping of a generous nation, all the discords which have separated two countries destined to walk together in the paths of progress and civilization, that we could through our union, offer a new guarantee for that peace without which the nations cannot prosper."<sup>1</sup> This seemed a proposal for an alliance; however, no definite move in that direction followed, just as at Salzburg. During their visit, however, Beust succeeded in making the French government withdraw from a declaration in which it had promised to join Russia, Prussia, and Italy, on the subject of the Cretan Insurrection,

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<sup>1</sup>La Gorce, Empire, Vol. V, p. 239.

and of which Austria strongly disapproved for the reason that the French government had not fully borne in mind the arrangement made at Salzburg. Beust promised in turn to urge Württemberg and Bavaria to form a Confederation.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Franco-Austrian alliance was still unrealized when Franz-Joseph returned to Austria and the Exposition gradually came to a close.

Now Bismarck was anxious to know whether France intended to make war against Prussia. Moustier ordered Benedetti on January 26, 1868, to give him the most formal and also the most general assurances that France would not intervene, but to avoid saying anything that could be construed as an eventual approval of the absorption of the South Germans under Prussian leadership. To further allay Bismarck's suspicions, the French government ordered the Hanoverian legion, reassembled at Strassburg by the dispossessed King of Hanover, to be dispersed. Napoleon, personally favorable to Prussia, visited the King and his son incognito, and talked with Bismarck. He sought a means of establishing good relations with Prussia, but he wanted compensation. Bismarck again informed him that he (Bismarck) did not wish to give up any German territory; he spoke of Belgium but Napoleon refused this as least of all did he wish to antagonize England.<sup>2</sup>

In France public sentiment was clamoring for the Emperor to resume the Rhine policy, ~~to realize the desire of the nation and make France the master of the Rhine policy,~~ to realize the desire of the

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<sup>1</sup> Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 38-42.

<sup>2</sup> Lavisse, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 171.

nation and make France the master of the Rhine from Strassburg to Cologne. Even the Emperor's closest advisers were beginning to interpret his silence as a sign of war. In confidential letters to Queen Victoria, written late in March and early in April, the English ambassador reported that although the language of the French ministers was very pacific and their present policy seemed founded on the supposition that peace in Europe would be preserved at least another year, close observers of Napoleon's character fancied that they could see symptoms which indicated that the idea of a sudden declaration of war against Prussia was present in his mind.<sup>1</sup>

The reorganization of the Customs Parliament in March 1868 aroused the hopes of the enemies of German unity; Würtemberg and Bavaria sent delegates hostile to Prussia to the Parliament which was to convene at Berlin on April the twenty-seventh. This was a hopeful sign for France who decided to resume the Salzburg policy - to bide her time while Austria tried to embroil the South German States with Prussia before declaring war. On April the seventh, Napoleon asked Metternich what ~~would be~~ <sup>would be</sup> Austria's attitude ~~if~~ <sup>if</sup> the South Germans should voluntarily take sides with Prussia or if Prussia should violate the Treaty of Prague and force them to support her. The Duc de Gramont reiterated again and again in Vienna that France would regard the crossing of the Main line as a casus belli, and that France was now prepared to defend it. When Beust attempted to evade the question and spoke of neutrality,

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<sup>1</sup>Oncken, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 544, 552; App. No. 10.

Gramont replied, "Then we will drag you along with us."<sup>1</sup> Likewise he cautioned the Bavarian minister that he too would be called upon to choose between friend and foe. Thus was Napoleon taking advantage of the situation to intimidate the Customs Parliament and the South German States and to draw Austria closer to France. He did succeed in getting Beust to write a note to Berlin warning Prussia that in case the Customs Parliament overstepped its competency, Austria would be more than an uninterested spectator. Thus not only Paris, but also, Vienna/~~was~~ now bringing pressure to bear upon the German movement for national unity.

Intrigues in Spain at this time helped to increase the tension. Napoleon suspected Bismarck of creating a situation there embarrassing to France through secret negotiations with the Duc de Montpensier, son of Louis Philippe and husband of the Infanta who had become a candidate for the Spanish throne by the abduction of Isabella. Napoleon retaliated by saying/<sup>that</sup> if the South German Confederation joined the North German Confederation, France would break diplomatic relations with them.

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 48.

#### IV

### THE POLICY OF ALLIANCES OF NAPOLEON III

July 1868 to August 1870

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In the late spring and early summer of 1868, the opposition to the Emperor Napoleon had definitely begun to crystalize because of the failure of his foreign policy. Its leaders were proclaiming to the people that Napoleon was ambitious for war that he might restore the former glory of his dynasty through brilliant victories. The Emperor, although eager for peace, knew that any sudden step taken by Bismarck might be regarded as an insult to the national honor of France and thus without a moment's notice cause war. The opposition papers let pass no opportunity to publish any and every thing which might incite or promote the hatred of Prussia and of Italy. The Empress Eugénie, not over eager for war at this time, realized nevertheless that the succession of her young son to the throne was doubtful as long as the name of Napoleon remained unadorned by fresh laurels. A large part of the clergy was quite hostile to Protestant Prussia and to King Victor Emmanuel - the despoiler of the Church. That the great majority of the corps of officers looked forward with eagerness to avenge Sadowa was but a matter of course. However, the Emperor, Rouher, and Marshal Niel realized full well France's isolated position in Europe, the insufficiency of her new military preparations and the substantial strength of Prussia. From the Left came the accusation, "You have destroyed French preëminence," while from the Right was heard, "You must restore the glory and honor of France."

During the summer of 1868, Napoleon was occupied with Prussian and Oriental occurrences, and allowed his Belgian interests to drop, hoping to approach the matter later in the fall in a most careful and inoffensive manner. Then he would base his hopes for success upon the Belgian Ultramontanes and their exasperation with the Frère-Orban ministry. Early in July 1868, Napoleon expressed his regrets to Metternich that Austria and France had failed so far to conclude a treaty providing for joint action. Metternich immediately assured the Emperor of Austria's good will, being especially cautious to point out Austria's peaceful intentions; however, Napoleon proceeded to ask him whether a Franco-Austrian Entente for a common specific objective (active alliance) were possible, and if not, whether it would be possible to arrange an entente to convoke a European congress (passive alliance) to insure the present status quo of Europe. Negotiations concerning these alternatives were immediately begun and lasted with short interruptions until the outbreak of the war of 1870. Now Beust interpreted Napoleon's proposal for an active alliance as a joint move from which war could not help but result for Napoleon had expressed the common, specific objective as being the restoration of Austria to her former position in Germany, and Beust knew full well that such a state of affairs would be possible only as the result of a war; he knew equally well the Emperor's secret designs in case of war on the Main line. Thus he rejected this first proposal because an offensive alliance with France against Prussia would only serve to estrange the South Germans from Austria and to unite them under Prussia's leadership. He agreed to the second proposal on the condition that they discard the idea of a Con-

gress to preserve the status quo for a proclamation calling for general disarmament, in which direction the Emperor should take the initiative.

Beust suggested that Napoleon issue a manifesto to the effect that, 'he, the Emperor Napoleon had sincerely accepted and even participated in the Peace of Prague, although it was opposed to all traditional French policy. That he was just giving a new and improved organization to his army. It was obviously the desire and to the interest of the nations of Europe to obtain a reduction of their military burdens and he would gladly set the example of disarmament as soon as he should be able to do so by a satisfactory explanation on the part of the Prussian government as to the maintenance of the provisions of the Peace of Prague.'<sup>1</sup> The Austrian ambassador pointed out to the Emperor that by adopting such a policy he would show the North Germans how to get rid of their oppressive burdens and at the same time show the South Germans how to evade compulsory military service. The Emperor was naturally disappointed over this rejection of his plans, but was too shrewd to let it be known. However, Beust succeeded in persuading him to pursue, after much hesitation, a policy for general disarmament. For if Prussia should refuse to accept, Napoleon would remain master of the situation with the choice of peace or war, while the responsibility for the situation would fall upon the King of Prussia, who would be branded as the aggressor in the eyes of Europe and, in the eyes of his own people, as one who had made peace impossible. On the other hand, if Prussia consented and bound herself not to violate the Treaty of Prague in the future, she would cease to be the cause of so much anxi-

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 174.

ety for France, her prestige among the German nationalists would wane and the South Germans would no longer have any reason to hesitate to organize themselves into an independent confederation.

Accordingly Napoleon offered a proposal for an "effective and serious" disarmament to Prussia for a period of ten years, during which they were to bind themselves to reduce their peace footing in each case to 250,000 on the condition that Prussia should also agree to send her reserves home and free them of every military obligation; while France in turn would discontinue the development of the national mobile guard.<sup>1</sup> Along with these military agreements, Prussia was to pledge herself not to modify the status quo created in Germany by the Treaty of Prague. Napoleon thought it quite likely that Prussia would accept this proposal especially since King William was getting old and might prefer ten years of guaranteed peace to the constant threat of war with France and possibly with all Europe. In case Prussia should reject the demand for the abolition of her compulsory military system and the abandonment of her national mission, Napoleon planned to ask Austria if she were prepared to support him by armed force in case of necessity. Thus by aiming at an alliance with Austria, he hoped to force Prussia, in the name of peace but with the threat of war, to abolish her military system. Thereby he placed himself on the very pinnacle of hypocrisy - virtually saying "Abandon your unity or there will be war." This plan was given up after Napoleon's return from Biarritz.

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 52-67.

Lord Clarendon, the future Liberal foreign minister of Great Britain, his party being about to take over the control of the government, arrived in Paris on October 12, 1868. He favored the disarmament idea and brought from Berlin reassurances of King William's peaceful disposition. But he heartily disapproved Napoleon's particular plan for disarmament because he saw that it would ultimately lead to war. A few weeks after the formation of the Liberal Ministry in England, Gladstone, the new premier, received the North German Ambassador Count Bernsdorff. During the interview he assured Bernsdorff that the new ministry sincerely desired to entertain the best relations possible with the foreign Powers, especially Prussia, that they were convinced that Prussia was the Power called to unite Germany, and that the national cause was the real aim of her policy. He went even further to criticize severely the "bad traditional policy of the French which always demanded that France be surrounded only by weak states." And he added that "they insulted themselves by being jealous of the unity of their neighbors, since, by their own magnificent geographical position, the homogeneity of their population, the richness of their soil, and the military spirit of their people, they were well able to defend themselves against all attacks and consequently had nothing to fear."<sup>1</sup> Although Napoleon knew nothing of Gladstone's views the protest of Lord Clarendon was sufficient to cause him to abandon the pursuit of his scheme as unwise and to change it secretly into a plan for an alliance in which not disarmament and public opinion but arma-

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<sup>1</sup> Oncken, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 64; App. No. 11.

ments with definite war aims were the prime factors.

Meanwhile the Emperor had again turned his attention to Belgium. He induced the French Eastern Railway to open negotiations with the management of one Dutch and two Belgian companies for the control of their roads with the promise that they should be reimbursed for any expense the transfer might entail, and with a pledge that the Government would guarantee to them a reasonable rate of interest. Inveigled by such a generous offer, the Belgian companies signed a preliminary agreement in December 1868, by which the French government was given control of direct lines to Brussels and to Rotterdam. When this became known pandemonium broke loose as this was naturally interpreted as the first step toward the incorporation of Belgium with France. On December the eleventh, Frère-Orban, the Belgian prime minister, declared in the parliament that the surrender of a Belgian railway to a foreign company was invalid without governmental sanction and this sanction the government would never give. Relying upon French support the Belgian companies denied the governments right to interfere with their profitable transaction and accordingly concluded with the Eastern Railway Company on January 31, 1869, a lease for forty-three years with a guarantee of interest from the French State. As a result, the Belgian people forgot all party differences and in an outburst of patriotic indignation supported the ministry, and several days later the Belgian parliament unanimously passed a law invalidating the contracts of sale. France was highly incensed at this interference by Frère-Orban and the failure resulting there from. The Opposition immediately seized upon this with the hope that it would prove a convenient excuse for war.

They went even further and accused Bismarck of bringing pressure to bear upon Belgium which influenced her final hostile attitude. Although the truth of this was denied it served to strengthen French indignation that little insignificant Belgium should have the audacity to oppose powerful France. The Emperor's irritation continued to increase because of a rumor, circulated by the Opposition at this time, to the effect that Prussia had entered into an agreement with France according to which there should be no modification in the organization of Germany during the next three years. This last annoyed Bismarck equally, so that he hastily assured the South Germans that the report was absolutely groundless.<sup>1</sup>

Matters grew worse as the result of a report from Karlsruhe that Baden and Prussia were negotiating a treaty to the effect that any citizen of Baden could fulfil his military obligations in North Germany, and that, vice versa, any North German could serve his term in a Baden regiment. Although this would not affect the states rights of the Duchy, it would be another step toward national unity, - and this news, coming at a time when France was incensed at Belgium's attitude, made her feel it behooved her to look about for protection and support. La Guéronnière, the French minister at Brussels, an ardent Chauvinist who literally hated Bismarck, summed up the opinion of the French people as follows: "The Emperor is more peaceably inclined than are his ministers, and they are more so than the people; the people, too, prefer peace to war, but are easily provoked through their sense of national

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 103-106.

honor. If Bismarck continues his uncertain policy in German affairs, he may bring about a terrible outbreak despite the general desire for peace."<sup>1</sup>

Filled with misgivings, the Emperor resorted to a different plan of action. He summoned Metternich and Vitzthum to the Tuileries informed them that their disarmament proposal would not be feasible for the present, and suggested as a better idea a triple alliance of France, Austria, and Italy, the negotiations for which he carried on with utmost secrecy with Rouher, - not even with La Valette who usually enjoyed the Emperor's confidence, and who had recently been made a foreign minister, and above all, not with that idle gossip, Gramont, the French ambassador at Vienna, who should be carefully kept in complete ignorance. In one of his first conversations with Metternich, Napoleon added to his proposition the observation, that if France and Austria should ever have to undertake a joint military action, however far distant that might be, it would be of great importance to them to come to an understanding on military matters, that is to say, the strategic questions would have to be discussed beforehand and not left to unwise experiment when too late for efficiency.<sup>2</sup>

In a few days Rouher submitted a draft of the proposed alliance. It stated that the three Powers should combine to check Prussia's desire for conquest, and to restore Austria to her former position in Germany. Vitzthum, knowing what Beust's position would be in the matter and in view of the existing internal situation in Austria, de-

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op.cit., Vol. VII, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Oncken, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 74; App. No. 12.

clared that such a plan was impossible for the present. Metternich supported Vitzthum's contention, but requested that he outline a draft which would better express the Austrian point of view as an alternative. Vitzthum's draft began as follows: "The three Powers, being resolved to follow the same line of policy both in the Orient and in the Occident, have concluded a defensive alliance."<sup>1</sup> The supplementary articles stipulated that they would give each other mutual support with one exception, - in case France should be induced to make war on Prussia, Austria reserved the right to remain neutral during the conflict. Of course this was the last thing Napoleon wanted, so the negotiations lagged. In March 1869 Vitzthum was ordered to present his draft at Vienna for a more careful examination. There Beust approved it as it would check over hasty action in France and at the same time permit Austria in case of necessity to reassume an attitude of neutrality. The Emperor Franz-Joseph also approved the draft and Vitzthum returned to Paris to begin formal negotiations for a Triple Alliance.<sup>1</sup>

Encouraged by this good news from Vienna, Rouher decided to reprimand Belgium for her impudence. The opportunity to do so presented itself when Frère-Orban came to Paris to negotiate. Rouher began by informing him that Belgium must first recognize the contracts of lease to the Eastern Railway Company, and then if there were any clauses therein which threatened Belgian independence, they would be removed, - otherwise no agreement could be reached. Frère-Orban replied, "the mere existence of the contracts imperils our independence, they are

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 108.

and will remain annulled. We will, however, gladly make just amends to the Eastern Railway Company by way of special concessions to facilitate intercourse between the two countries."<sup>1</sup> Rouher persisted in his demands nevertheless, and Napoleon supported him. Both counted upon Frere-Orban weakening under the pressure, but he stuck to his guns. The French Ministers threatened to break off negotiation. The Council discussed war. The Emperor, however, was thinking more of intimidating Belgium than of annexing her. He was quite disappointed with the whole affair for he hoped to unite Belgium to France as the result of negotiation, - not by annexation or by a customs union but by a political alliance, as a part of his general system of alliances against Prussia. An added reason for his taking this initial economic step was the desire to satisfy French national pride; but he found that the idea of a commercial union with Belgium was distasteful to the French industrialists who feared the resulting competition in the domestic market, preferring the most complete separation to any amalgamation with Belgium.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, these interests supported the Opposition which was now crying for peace abroad and a responsible ministry at home.

Public opinion in England was violently opposed to any attempt to alter Belgian neutrality as established under European guaranty.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore Bismarck's attitude toward the Belgian situation is well

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, op.cit., Vol. VII, pp. 110-111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Belgium was placed under the guarantee of the Great Powers by a treaty signed by them in 1832.

expressed in a letter written by him at this time. "Above all," he wrote, "we must not give Paris the impression that we fear an encounter. We do not wish to over estimate our power, nor do we desire war; nevertheless, after careful examination of our strength as well as that of the enemy we must eventually face, it is our conviction, that we are a match for France, and that, although recognizing the issue to be in the hands of a higher power, from our standpoint the chances of victory are with us. War in itself is always an evil; that it would be a greater calamity for us than for France, that we have more reason to avoid it than has France, is a view which we cannot understand. It is this consciousness, united with a true love of peace, that actuates our whole bearing toward France; it is due to this, too, that we do not ascribe greater importance to the varying phases of opinion even in the leading political circles of France, nor to the occasional manifestation of hostile velleities."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Prussia chose the course most conducive to the preservation of peace - absolute silence. And so the policy which Napoleon had counted upon to bring him diplomatic success only netted him another defeat. The affair was settled on April the twenty-seventh, by a protocol which renounced the contracts of lease and created a Commission of fourteen to decide upon a reasonable indemnity to be paid the Eastern Railway Company and upon practical facilitation of railway intercourse between France and Belgium.

In 1869 Napoleon believed that he had completed the organization of his army. Marshal Niel, the minister of War, assured him that it

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 113.

was the best equipped in the world. Niel likewise informed the Senate that it could be put on a war footing very quickly, telling the Legislative Body that he could assemble 400,000 men in eight days without previous warning. A resume' of the "great results" obtained in two years was published in the "Officiel," April 1869, which announced that 750,000 men were available for war. Trusting therefore in the reported efficiency of his army the Emperor took up again energetically his policy of allying against Prussia with Austria and Italy. When the negotiations were first begun with Austria in December 1868, he had written King Victor Emmanuel concerning a Triple Alliance as a guarantee of peace, purposely omitting any reference to the evacuation of Rome. The terms of the draft now went so far beyond this initial suggestion that it was very doubtful if Victor Emmanuel would agree to them. The pourparlers were therefore first resumed between France and Austria with Rouher on one side, and Beust on the other as principals and with Metternich and Count Vimercati as intermediaries. An agreement was finally reached, Rouher accepting the Austrian principle of only a defensive alliance. Upon the submission of this scheme to him, Victor Emmanuel was favorably inclined toward the prospect of participating in a great war as France's ally, hoping to use it in some way to secure his one great ambition, - the possession of Rome. And so before entering the alliance, he wrote to Napoleon and demanded a letter from him fixing a definite time for the withdrawal of the French troops. The Emperor did not wish to put this in writing under any condition at present preferring to keep it an oral agreement. Furthermore Italy desired France in addition to withdrawing her troops to promise to respect

for the future the principle of non-intervention. This Napoleon refused to do.<sup>1</sup> As the majority of the Italian Ministers distrusted Napoleon and as, since Mentana, the hatred of the Italian people for everything French had grown steadily more intense,<sup>2</sup> all the liberal and radical parties pronounced an alliance with France as an abomination. Consequently, the King realized that should he fail to win Rome as the price of an alliance it might prove disastrous to him politically. Therefore in answer to the present proposal for a Triple Alliance he revived his proposition of 1868 and asked that the renewal of the September Convention should constitute the primary condition for his coming into the Triplice, that is, Italy would guarantee the Pope's security against violence of any kind, while France, in recognition of the principle of non-intervention would remove her troops from Roman territory, never to return them. Rouher would not agree to this; while Beust, fearing that Italy might demand as pay from Austria the cession of the Italian Tyrol,<sup>3</sup> accepted the Italian demands and urged them upon Napoleon, who finally promised to withdraw the troops from Rome as soon as practicable, refusing however to fix an exact date for evacuation, interpreting "practicable" to mean as soon as the Pope's safety should be assured: this was as far as he would go. Vitzthum and Rouher succeeded in persuading the Italians to compromise on this: so that, when Vimercati brought consent from Florence,

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<sup>1</sup>Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Fyffe, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 408-410.

<sup>3</sup>Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 41-42.

the diplomats were agreed upon a Triple Alliance and the documents were ready for the signature of the sovereigns.

Menabrea, the Italian Prime Minister, on account of the unfavorable form which the Roman clause had taken, hesitated to lay the draft treaty before his colleagues. When he did so, as he had feared, the Council of Ministers declared an alliance of arms against their ally of 1866 to be impossible as a victory thus won would lead to an unlimited preponderance of French power. They insisted, however, upon the removal of the French troops from Italian soil and upon the recognition of the principle of non-intervention by France. Menabrea requested Austria to influence Napoleon to remove the troops as quickly as possible, hoping that this would facilitate Italy's joining the alliance. Beust gladly consented and sent Vitzthum to Paris immediately. The Emperor was too seriously ill for him to obtain an audience, so he was obliged to return to Vienna without securing any concession. Italy now declared that since Austria had reserved the liberty to remain neutral in case of war, she also must refrain from agreeing to any participation until after Rome had been evacuated.

After the Emperor's recovery he recognized that these developments meant that, in the event of war, when an alliance would be most needed, France would be left in the lurch by her allies. Further than this, he was aware that the conditions which had promoted his proposal had changed. He was now convinced that Prussia's attitude in the Belgian railway situation had been one of strict neutrality. The Convention regarding military freedom of migration between North Germany and Baden had already gone into effect without affecting the political

status of the Duchy in any way. To be sure, Bismarck still maintained the position that the South Germans had the right at any time to declare their intention to join the North German Confederation, although Prussia would make no effort to induce them to such a step.<sup>1</sup> From all this the Emperor concluded as follows: Since it does not appear that Prussia intends to hasten matters, if German unity is gradually effected, the French people will become accustomed to the idea, and seeing it come about as the inevitable result of a national development, they will not be driven to the verge of war by it. Hence why conclude an alliance with Italy and Austria which offered so few inducements? also exhausted both bodily and mentally from his severe illness, the Emperor longed for peace, with the hope that he would soon have a responsible Ministry to decide what would be the best thing to do. Napoleon wrote Franz-Joseph that he had postponed indefinitely signing the treaty, but in case Austria were attacked he would come to her assistance. And so the three sovereigns decided to regard the negotiations as merely suspended, and as a pledge of their interest ~~to result then~~ they exchanged autographed letters in which each promised to enter into no alliance with any of the Powers without first informing the other two of the intention.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that nothing definite resulted from these negotiations, their real significance lay in the fact that the French policy of preventing the unification of Germany was to have been augmented by a system of European alliances. Had the effort suc-

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Oncken, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 235, 237; App. No. 13.

ceeded a new order would have been established in Europe presided over by the Triple Alliance.

Since Sadowa relations between Prussia and Austria had been estranged. Prussia, however, despite all recent friction, was actuated by the desire to reestablish the old friendship. The first opportunity to do so came during the autumn of 1869 when the Egyptian Khedive, Ismail, invited all the European potentates to attend the formal opening of the Suez Canal. In Austria, Franz-Joseph accepted the invitation. In Prussia, King William delegated the Crown Prince to be his representative. The Prince suggested the idea of going by way of Vienna, should the prospect of his visit meet the approval of the imperial court. The Austrian court forthwith manifested a cordial attitude and the Prince arrived in Vienna on October the seventh. The Emperor Franz-Joseph met him wearing the Prussian uniform and no distinction of honor was omitted. Giskra, the Liberal Minister, expressed his pleasure at the visit as being indicative of the return to friendly relations between the two courts. Beust even remarked that he no longer harbored thoughts of revenge. The Emperor carefully avoided the mention of any topic of political interest. Thus was taken the first step toward a reconciliation between Prussia and Austria and with it a more hopeful promise of peace.<sup>1</sup>

The formation of a responsible ministry under Ollivier with a strong adherence to the principles of Liberalism took place during October and November. When the interrupted session of the Chambers was resumed on October the twenty-ninth the Emperor made a speech from the throne in which reaction and revolution were renounced and freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Sybel, Op.cit., Vol. VII, pp. 135-137.

based upon order was proclaimed. On January 2, 1870, a genuinely Liberal Ministry was set up under Ollivier. It was attacked by the extreme Right and Left who made no effort to conceal their disapproval of the liberalism and peace policy of the cabinet, - these attacks the cabinet tried to offset by various reforms. In the new Ministry, Daru, who was desirous of maintaining peace, accepted the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, nevertheless, Fleury had been sent to Russia to point out to the Tsar Alexander the danger of a united Germany to arouse the Tsar's sympathy in behalf of France, and to protest against Prussia's refusal to execute the Schleswig clause in the Treaty of Prague. Alexander wrote William concerning Schleswig but got an evasive reply. He then sent William the order of Saint George as a token of their friendship "founded on the remembrances of that ever memorable year in which our united armies fought for a holy cause which was common to us all." This reference to 1814 was clearly indicative of Alexander's friendliness to Prussia and Napoleon immediately warned the French Minister to be very careful as anything that he said to Alexander would be repeated in Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

Now Daru, partisan of peace, advocated the very plan which Vitzthum through Rouher had suggested to Napoleon in 1868 - namely, that the Emperor should propose mutual disarmament to Prussia, - and which Napoleon had then most vigorously rejected. Napoleon, now, however, raised no objection. Consequently, on February 1, 1870, Daru

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<sup>1</sup>Oncken, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 287; App. No. 14; Ollivier, Émile, L'Empire Libéral, Vol. XII, pp. 347-357.

<sup>2</sup>Lavissee, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 175.

requested the English Ambassador to transmit the proposals to the Prussian Government, France offering to diminish her yearly contingent by 10,000 men.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck, however, made the objection that the organization of the Prussian military system made disarmament impossible without a change of system.

Next a furor was raised by the Opposition in France as the result of a motion made in Baden on February the twenty-fourth advocating the admission of the duchy to the North German Confederation. Bismarck The French handled the situation. Although ~~he~~ did not yet approve of such a step, he took advantage of the occasion to hold up German unity as a thing to be accomplished in the future.<sup>2</sup> The Opposition in France interpreted this as Bismarck's intention to overstep the Treaty of Prague at the first opportunity and urged the government to restore the now tarnished glory of France to its former splendor by a brilliant recourse to arms.

For his part, Daru, when he learned of the incident, expressed surprise to several diplomats that Bismarck had not referred to the Treaty of Prague which prohibited Baden's admission to the North German Confederation. Bismarck retaliated by having Article V of the Treaty published and followed the article with a comment to the effect that he did not refer to it for two reasons: first, he did not think it necessary, and second, that it did not cover the question of the admission of the Grand Duchy to the North German Confederation. Ol-

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<sup>1</sup> Ollivier, op. cit., Vol. XIII, pp. 56-95.

<sup>2</sup> Seignobos, op. cit., p. 806.

livier, fearing that further provocation would rekindle the ire of the French people against Prussia and lead to serious consequences, summoned a correspondent of a Prussian newspaper to him for an interview through which he warned Bismarck that the encouragement of friendly relations between France and Prussia was of greatest importance, that he had instructed Fleury to drop the Schleswig question, but that only the spontaneous desire of the South Germans for union with the North Germans could bring about the union of the two sections without warlike interference on the part of the French. Bismarck simply let the matter drop.

The military world continued its secret preparation for an alliance. The Austrian Archduke Albert spent some weeks in Paris studying the French military situation. He asked Napoleon if it would not be advisable for Austria and France to agree upon a joint plan of operation against Prussia since it seemed that the two states might be forced to war. Upon the request of Franz-Joseph, Napoleon ordered Leboeuf, the Minister of War, to send an officer to Vienna to discuss the project. Leboeuf objected to this as being contrary to the pacific policy of the Cabinet, but the Archduke insisted. General Lebrun was sent. He had four conferences with Albert, during which they discussed a plan of operation. Napoleon wished the three states - France, Austria, and Italy - to enter the war simultaneously. The Archduke objected that Austria could not mobilize so quickly as France; he reckoned, furthermore, that it would take Prussia about six weeks to do so. He proposed a plan which presupposed the existence of a Triple Alliance: the main body of the French army, ready first, should leave

Strasbourg, and move as rapidly as possible upon Stuttgart; an Italian army of 100,000 men would advance toward Munich; an Austrian division from Bohemia would press forward into Bavaria, thus cutting off South Germany from the North. The remaining French troops following the Saar, would be distributed through the Rhineland and a French fleet manned by Danish troops would land on the Baltic Coast.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon asked for this plan in writing. To drive home his point the Archduke then added that the French army was too weak to fight Prussia alone. The Emperor feared this but made no comment. Despite the Archduke's energetic promotion of these schemes for cooperation, the Emperor Franz-Joseph informed Lebrun before he departed for Paris, that he was eager for peace and would support Napoleon only if the latter were forced to war by a breach of the Treaty of Prague and entered South Germany as a liberator.

The Vatican Council and later the plebescite<sup>2</sup> engaged the attention of the French Government for the time being. Ollivier and Daru disagreed so violently upon the matter at issue that the latter resigned from the Cabinet on April the fourteenth. When the Ministry was re-organized, Daru, who favored peace was replaced by Gramont who, having lived under Austrian influence since 1861, hated Prussia bitterly. In 1866 and in 1868 he had proposed war. And upon his departure from Vienna, Beust, authorized by Napoleon, informed him concerning the unsigned treaty and autographed letters from which he somehow got the

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<sup>1</sup>La Gorce, Empire, Vol. VI, pp. 151-157.

<sup>2</sup>For an account of the plebescite see La Gorce, "Histoire du Second Empire," Vol. VI, Bk. 38.

idea of an alliance already signed. It seemed that neither the Emperor nor the French people held a very flattering opinion of Gramont.

With his reorganized Ministry, Ollivier now determined to conduct diplomatic negotiations with Prussia in an entirely different manner; and he could not have found anyone more eager for an opportunity to strike at Prussia and at Bismarck than Gramont. When Bismarck was informed of Gramont's enmity in 1866, he is said to have remarked: "He is the biggest blockhead in Europe." Whereupon Gramont exclaimed, "I will avenge France." When he accepted the portfolio of Foreign Affairs Gramont declared himself in accord with Ollivier's policy: - to wage no offensive war, but to resent vigorously every affront. Thus in case of a crisis, Ollivier would resort to arms with regret, while Gramont would do so with satisfaction. The knowledge of this made him quite acceptable to the Minister of War, the army, and to that part of the clergy which was hostile to Prussia and Italy.<sup>1</sup>

As long as Daru was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Napoleon kept silent concerning the Archduke Albert's plan of campaign. Even now he hoped to avoid war especially since at this time neither Prussia nor Italy was giving the slightest indication of an offensive policy. He knew also that he could have the assistance of Austria and Italy only if he were forced into war by Prussian aggression. With this in mind, he submitted the Archduke's plan to a Council of Officers on May the nineteenth. After carefully considering it they decided to work out a new one since it would take the Austrian army six weeks to

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<sup>1</sup>Ollivier, op. cit., Vol. XIII, p. 406 *passim*.

mobilize and the Italian army even longer. When the new plan was shown the Austrian Emperor he asked even though he thought it in itself quite practical, that Napoleon would not rely upon Austrian support because of the difference of sympathies and opinions existant among the various races under his dominion, especially as the Germans would oppose a declaration of war against the North Germans. This checked the French warlike ambitions for the moment. When the army budget for 1871 was considered on June the thirtieth, the Minister of War asked the Chambers for 10,000 less men. Ollivier said in the Cabinet meeting, "I wish to state that the Government entertains no fears whatsoever that peace will be disturbed, for never has it been more certain than at present. Look in whatsoever direction we will, no question is encountered which is at all likely to prove dangerous. Upon all the Cabinets of Europe the conviction has forced itself that treaties must be respected, especially those two upon which the peace of Europe chiefly rests, - the Treaty of Paris of 1856, securing peace for the Orient; and the Treaty of Prague, securing peace for Germany."<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of this peace and tranquility arose a quarrel which within twelve days hurled Prussia and France into war. In France, public opinion believed the Emperor had been inveigled into declaring war as the result of Bismarck's long systematic preparation to offend the self respect of the French people, while Prussia believed that Napoleon had used this incident as a ruse to seek revenge for Sadowa, and to prevent German unity in order to realize France's traditional ambition, - the possession of the left bank of the Rhine.

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<sup>1</sup>Sybel, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 283.

Since 1869 the Spanish provisional government had been seeking a king. It offered the throne to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern - Sigmaringen. This prince, although a Hohenzollern, was not a member of the Prussian branch of the family but of the South German and Catholic house of Hohenzollern, thus allied more closely to the imperial family of France than to the Prussian royalty. By tradition, however, the King of Prussia was recognized as the head of the house. The Spanish offer was made four times to the Prince's father; three times it was refused but the fourth time it was accepted.<sup>1</sup> The French government which had known of the negotiations even in 1869, protested to the Prussian government that the Hohenzollern Candidacy was unacceptable to France, that it would be regarded as a provocation and a menace from Prussia, and that France would not permit the Empire of Charles V to be restored. The Prussian government regarded the affair as the private business of the Hohenzollern family. When the question concerning the Candidacy arose in the French Chamber, the ministry prepared a peaceful answer. But Gramont who considered the affair a plot of Bismarck, agitated insanely for war. He declared to the Legislative Body on July the sixth, that the attempt of a Foreign Power to place one of its Princes on the throne of Charles V would

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The was the the  
 1./Offer/made to Prince's father in/spring of 1869 and was refused; Benedetti on hearing of it questioned Bismarck, who seemed to consider the refusal as definite. 2.<sup>The</sup> Offer<sup>was</sup> made secretly to the Prince's father, who before beginning negotiations sought the approval of King William and Bismarck, and informed Napoleon of the offer in September 1869. 3.<sup>The</sup> Offer was carried secretly with two personal letters from Prince to William and Bismarck in February 1870; the King advised refusal, while Bismarck who advocated acceptance was taken ill and left for the country. 4.<sup>The</sup> Offer<sup>came again</sup> from the Spanish government on June 14; the Prince accepted.

imperil the interests of France, and should it succeed, the Government would fulfil its duty without hesitation and without weakness. On the same day the papers began to talk of war.<sup>1</sup>

The European Powers disapproved the Prince's candidacy as inexpedient and desired to maintain peace. The English government tried to persuade Spain to withdraw the offer. In vain did Austria, like the others, try to reconcile Paris, Berlin, and Madrid. Beust wrote private letters to advise France to refrain from any steps against Prussia, and only to direct her energies against Spain and the Prince, leaving Prussia alone unless she should interfere. He knew Napoleon was inclined to make peace as soon as possible. According to Beust, Gramont's whole attitude in this matter was a delusion - the only fact that could excuse him being that he was in possession of an alliance before the declaration of war.

Therefore, convinced that the Prince was a tool of the King of Prussia, Gramont resolved to ask William to forbid him to accept this candidacy which was so offensive to France. Instructions were sent to Benedetti to seek the King of Prussia at Ems, where he had gone to ~~the~~ take waters, and to demand from him, as the only means of averting war, that he should order the Prince to revoke his acceptance of the Spanish Crown. During the first interview the King told Benedetti that the candidacy was no affair of his and that he had no power to forbid the Prince's acceptance. He stated, however, should the Prince withdraw he would approve the withdrawal and notify Benedetti. It was

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 184; Lord, Robert Howard, The Origin of The War of 1870, pp. 41-43.

Gramont's plan to show Europe that Russia was responsible for this affair and that France had forced her to withdraw. On July the twelfth, Prince Anthony announced his son's withdrawal. On July the thirteenth, King William communicated this news to Benedetti who thought this a satisfactory conclusion to the controversy.<sup>1</sup> Not only was the candidacy withdrawn, but he had succeeded in associating the King with the withdrawal.

Gramont, having no further reason for demanding prohibition, wished to obtain an apology from the King to satisfy the national honor of France, and also an assurance that the candidacy would not be renewed in the future. Benedetti was again sent to the King to say that the resignation was not sufficient guarantee for the future, and that the King should promise that he would not allow the Prince to resume the candidacy. The Minister of War proposed mobilization, but the Council of Ministers refused this. Benedetti communicated the new demands to the King on July the thirteenth. William refused to comply. Then came a despatch from the Prussian Ambassador that the Emperor was planning to ask the King for a personal letter assuring him that he had no intention to injure French interests. This vexed William to such an extent that he decided not to receive Benedetti again. Accordingly he sent Benedetti word to this effect by his aide-de-camp, and also informed him that a letter had just arrived from the Prince confirming his withdrawal. In spite of the French Ambassador's insistence for an audience, the King stuck to his decision of the morning.

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<sup>1</sup>For interesting accounts of the Hohenzollern Candidacy see La Gorce, Empire, Vol. VI, Bk. 39, and Sorel, op. cit., Vol. I, Ch. II.

Bismarck, again in Berlin, irritated both by Gramont's utterances and by the articles appearing in the French press, announced his intention to demand an explanation and guarantees from France. He received an account of the Ems interviews by telegraph, with the authorization to communicate it to the press.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck, having arrived at the conclusion that war between France and Prussia was absolutely necessary to the consummation of German unity, that France must declare it, and that the sooner it was made the better it would be for all concerned, and he therefore decided to let matters take their course, published the Ems despatch immediately in the North German Gazette, a semi-official paper, editing it somewhat for clarity but suppressing none of the frankness of its statements.

The article was sent to all the Courts of Europe. This action coming from Bismarck did not make war inevitable, but it closed the French opportunity to negotiate. The Germans thought that their King had been insulted and gave vent to their emotions in patriotic demonstrations. The French thought that their Ambassador had been insulted and demanded an immediate declaration of war.

Before this, however, during a meeting of the Cabinet Councils on July the fourteenth, Napoleon made an attempt to bring forward his usual panacea, a European Congress, but hardly had the words left his lips when Gramont exclaimed, "Sire, if you so much as mention a Congress again I will throw my resignation at your feet." Thiers felt that war with Prussia was inevitable but that the time was ill chosen. The extreme Republican Left, either favorable or resigned to German unity, condemned the war. Gramont and the Empress Eugenie, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Lord, op.cit., pp. 82-106.

apparently thought as did Bismarck that the conflict between the French policy of maintaining a weak Germany, possibly with territorial acquisitions for France, and the German policy of building a strong state could be resolved only by a war which might as well come at one time as another. At a Council held at St. Cloud on the evening of July the fourteenth, when Gramont received the published version of the Ems despatch, mobilization was immediately decided upon. War was announced the next day to the Chamber and the Government, having already called out the reserves, asked for a vote authorizing mobilization. A committee immediately appointed, listened to the statement of the Minister of War, who declared that he was ready. Gramont enlarged upon the insult and assured the Committee that Austria and Italy would come to France's aid. The Chamber then voted the authorizations. On July the nineteenth, a declaration of war was sent to Prussia.<sup>1</sup> Thus France took the responsibility for the conflict which gave Prussia the advantage of being on the defensive.

In South Germany, as in the North, the war was regarded as an attack on German independence, and the South German States at once placed their armies at the disposal of the King of Prussia. Prussia sought pledges of neutrality from Great Britain and Russia, - and obtained them.<sup>2</sup>

After the war was decided upon, France lost no time in inviting Italy and Austria to join her. She had refused to sign the Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Lord, op. cit., p. 107-117.

<sup>2</sup> England proclaimed neutrality in a manifesto issued on July the nineteenth. Russia pledged hers in return for the promise of the revision of the Black Sea Clauses in the Treaty of Paris, 1856. See Sorel, Empire, Vol. I, pp. 221-229.

## Italians

draft treaty because the/ wanted the French troupes withdrawn from Rome; now the Emperor sent word that he was ready to comply provided that Italy would promise to respect the independence of the Papal territory and protect it from attack abroad. He also made Austria an enticing offer but Beust was suspicious of the Emperor's intentions; Austria was also badly in need of peace. Should France be victorious, Napoleon would establish himself as protector of a Rhenish Confederation. Should Prussia resist too strenuously, he would give the South Germans to Prussia most likely in return for the left bank of the Rhine, - thus at Austria's expense. On the other hand, if France were victorious, Austria, having already incurred her disfavor, might she not make advances to Russia and come to an agreement with her on a common policy in the Orient again at Austria's expense? After carefully weighing both sides of the question, Beust decided that neutrality was the wisest policy that Austria could pursue, for if Prussia were victorious, Austrian neutrality will have won for her a very valuable friend. Accordingly Franz-Joseph decided upon a declaration of neutrality which Beust announced to the other Courts of Europe in a circular note on July the twentieth.<sup>1</sup>

For his part Victor Emmanuel, eager for an alliance with France and to participate in the war, hoping in some way to get Rome therefrom, was tenaciously opposed by his Minister of Finance, Sella, who carried his point that a French victory over Prussia would be the same as the triumph of the Pope over Italy, and the policy of intervention over the

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<sup>1</sup>Beust, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 175-177; La Gorce, Empire, Vol. VI, pp. 343-351.

principle of national unity, that although Italy must free her soil of French troops, she must also reserve as much freedom of action for herself in the future as possible. Consequently, Italian neutrality was proclaimed by a royal manifesto on July the twenty-fourth. And as the last hope of a Triple Alliance went a glimmering, another failure sounded the death knell of the Napoleonic dynasty and the Second Empire.

## V

### CONCLUSION

Through an uninterrupted succession of mistakes and failures in its foreign policy, the Second Empire had suffered severely since 1859. The Opposition made a point of holding up to the criticism of an ambitious and easily irritated people the loss of power which France had sustained through the toleration by the Emperor of the growth of German and Italian unity without securing compensation, - that is, an enlargement of French territory. These attacks launched so as to show the inefficiency of personal government caused Napoleon many anxious moments, for a Bonaparte could ill afford the sneer that under him France had lost her preponderance in Europe. Therefore he vigorously returned to the traditional Rhine policy of Louis XIV and Richelieu in his frantic attempt to win new glories for France and thereby secure the succession of his dynasty. However, in his effort to gain the left bank of the Rhine, it was essential for him to prevent German unity; and, in the attempt to accomplish this, he was opposed by a man whose determination that the German people should be united under Prussian hegemony was as strong as was his desire to keep Germany weak and divided.

During the years 1863 to 1870 an intense battle of wills raged, fraught with a succession of diplomatic failures for the foreign policy of Napoleon III. The settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein ques-

tion marked the first triumph of Bismarck over the foreign policy of the Emperor of the French. After 1866 Napoleon met with a complete blocking of his new compensation policy, begun by trying to play a double game between Austria and Prussia and by making the notorious proposal of alliance to the latter, according to which he should receive Luxemburg at once and Belgium later, and the left bank of the Rhine in exchange for Prussia's union with South Germany. Napoleon hoped to bring Italy in as the third party to the alliance, and thereby, without shedding one drop of blood, to restore the name of Napoleon to its former glory. However, the only outcome of this policy was to make the South German Courts the allies of Prussia, not through conquest or compulsion but out of regard for their own interests.<sup>1</sup> The failure of this policy netted Napoleon practical isolation in Europe. He realized that, if he were ever to gain the left bank of the Rhine, he must have support against Prussia, the coming military power of Europe; but he failed to realize that the current of events irresistibly impelled Germany to unity, that the very Treaty which made the main the boundary of the North German Confederation reserved for the South German States the right to attach themselves to those of the North by some kind of national tie.

Although Napoleon did not plan to attack Prussia while she was kept within the limits of the Treaty of Prague, his diplomacy during the latter part of the period from 1866 to 1870 was concentrated upon

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<sup>1</sup>Bismarck informed the South German States of Napoleon's ambitions which naturally in the interest of protecting their own territory and of preserving German people from foreign domination drew them to Prussia.

the formation of powerful alliances against her, and upon putting his own military forces into an ever higher state of readiness, with the view to eventual action should Prussia pass the bounds which French policy and opinion deemed imposed upon her by the Treaty of Prague. This state of affairs naturally rendered the assurance of European peace impossible, although the French people earnestly desired it and although no one wished for it more eagerly than the Emperor himself, for he was a man of peace, not of war, - he longed only to meditate, to plan, to dream.

The quest for alliances against Prussia ended only in one more defeat for the foreign policy of Napoleon III. His successful blocking of the Hohenzollern Candidacy was in itself a victory which was marred and turned into yet one more failure by the excessive and unreasonable demands, made at the importunity of his ministers. Therefore the failure of the foreign policy of Napoleon III, - his determination to prevent German unity in order to establish French hegemony along the Rhine, - pitted against the equally strong determination of Bismarck to attain German unity, resulted in the War of 1870 and the subsequent dissolution of the Second Empire.

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Note: Owing to deficiencies in the library, the writer has been obliged to refer in some instances to secondary works where primary sources would have been desirable. Also, for the same reason, a few instances will be found in which no reference is given for treaties and agreements, the terms of which are, however, of common knowledge among historians.

## APPENDIX

The following notes have been copied from the original text of a few of the most interesting documents contained in Hermann Oncken's "Die Rheinpolitik Kaiser Napoleons III von 1863 bis 1870 und der Ursprung des Kreiges von 1870-1871. Nach den Staatsakten von Oesterreich, Preussen und den sudeutschen Mittelstaaten." (3 volumes, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart, Berlin and Leipzig, 1926).

App. No, 1

Prince Metternich to Count Rechberg

Paris, le 22 février 1863

J'ai un hier une conversation de trois heures avec l'Impératrice au sujet de la Pologne et je me félicite d'avoir en cette occasion de devancer en quelque sorte, ce qui forme l'objet de Votre télégramme de ce matin.

L'Impératrice m'a annoncé que vu la tournure que prenaient les choses, l'Empereur n'était plus pré-occupé que de l'entente entre l'Autriche, la France et Angleterre, entente qui peut amener la solution de toutes les affaires, la consolidation de sa dynastie et le bonheur du monde. Il se réserve, me dit-elle, de me parler franchement de tout cela lorsque le moment serait venu. Elle voulait, disait-elle, jeter Son bonnet par-dessus les moulins et me dire tout ce qu'Elle pensait. Je la prendrais pour une folle si je voulais, mais comme elle était sûre que d'Elle à moi, cela ne parterait pas à conséquence, Elle voulait devancer l'Empereur et aller de suite beaucoup plus loin que Lui. - Je Lui dis que j'étais prêt à l'écouter puisque je n'étais destiné qu'à entendre des rêveries politiques sans conséquence comme toutes les pérégrinations aux-quelles Elle m'avait déjà fait assister.

L'Impératrice me répondit: Je sais que Votre Empereur Vous écoute et Vous aime, faites Lui connaître le fond de notre sac. Il en fera ce qu'il voudra, mais du moins Il rendra justice à la franchise d'une femme qui est naturellement plus fantasque que les hommes, mais qui a trop à coeur l'intérêt de Son pays adoptif, de Son époux et de Son fils pour se risquer de mentir en parlant de l'avenir.

Je me suis permis d'observer à Sa Majesté que je ne méritais pas les assurances flatteuses qu'Elle me donnait, mais que dans tous les cas je croyais pouvoir repeter tout ce qu'Elle me dirait sans crainte de mécontenter mon Souverain Maître. "Vous savez du reste, Madame," ajoutai-je, "que si réellement Vous trahissez tous Vos secrets, C'est là un fait d'une importance telle que Vos plans fussent-ils le renversement du monde, leur révélation aura un prix inestimable pour ceux auxquels Vous voudrez bien les confier, car au moins serons nous avertir."

L'Impératrice me dit en sauriant: "Pour vous faire comprendre ce que voudrais, l'Idéal de ma politique, il faut que nous permions la carte!"

J'avoue que ma curiosité fut piquée au plus haut degré de la perspective de voyager avec l'Impératrice à travers une carte bien souvent parcourue par le couple Impérial.

Sa Majesté prit l'atlas de Le Sage et m'Expliqua pendant plus d'une heure le plan utopique, mais très curieux qui l'enthousiasme.

Je ne saurais suivre dans tous ses détails la pérégrination à vol d'oiseau (quel vol et quel oiseau!) de l'Impératrice et j'en arrive de suite à ce qui m'a paru être le but positif, l'arrangement décisif auquel on s'arrêterait une fois lancée dans les remaniements. Je procède par la désignation des puissances.

#### Russie

Refoulée en Orient et maigrement rétribuée de la perte de Pologne et des provinces qui en faisaient partie par une compensation dans la Turquie d'Asie.

#### Rologne

Réconstituée avec un Archiduc comme Roi, si nous voulons, mais encore mieux avec le Roi de Saxe reprenant ses droits dynastiques en compensation de la cession de son royaume à la Prusse.

#### Prusse

Céderait la Posnanie à la Pologne, la Silésie à l'Autriche et la rive gauche du Rhin à la France, mais obtiendrait la Saxe, le Hanovre et les duchés au Nord du "Meinx."

#### Autriche

Céderait la Vénétie au Piémont une partie de la Galicie (Lemberg et Cracovie) à la Pologne, prendrait une longue ligne de nouvelles frontières à travers la Serbie, le long de l'Adriatique, la Silésie et tout ce qu'elle voudrait au Sud du ne céderait rien! mais prendrait la rive gauche du Rhine respectant la Belgique à cause de l'Angleterre à moins que cette puissance ne lui laisse Bruzelles et Ostende etc., etc., pour prendre anvers.

#### Italie

Le Piémont aurait la Lombardie, la Vénétie, La Toscane, Parme, Plaisance, Bologne et Ferrarre; mais restituerait les deux Siciles au Roid de Naples qui arrondirait le Pope.

#### Turquie

Supprimée pour cause d'utilité publique et de moralité chrétienne se laisserait partager en cédant ses possessions d'Asie à la Russie, la ligne de l'Adriatique à l'Autriche, la Thessalie, l'Albanie, et Constantinople à la Grèce, les Principautés comme une enclave indépendante à un Prince du pays. - Les Rois et les Princes dépossédés en Europe iraient civiliser et monarchiser les belles républiques Américaines qui toutes suivraient l'exemple du Mexique.

Voilà le plan de l'Impératrice et je Vous prie, Mr. le Comte, de vouloir bien ne pas le considérer comme une plaisanterie, je crois l'Impératrice et même l'Empereur très convaincus de la possibilité et de la nécessité de la réaliser un fois.

Mettons de côté ces phantasmagories napoléoniennes et permettez-moi d'examiner sérieusement la situation au point de vue de nos intérêts réels. Mon instinct me dit qu'en usant de la sagesse et de l'habileté qui a présidé depuis trois ans à notre politique nous pourrions profiter de nos avantages, ne fût-ce que pour amener l'Empereur à s'engager envers nous dans la question à Orient. Pour y arriver il n'y aurait, je pense, qu'à laisser venir les envenements et les avances que nous fera l'Empereur-là ou nous pourrions faire cause commune, nous pourrions demander un engagement.

Je suis curieux de savoir si l'Angleterre entrera dans les idées de l'Empereur Napoléon.

Il est possible et désirable même que nous trouvions dans le Cabinet de Londres un auxiliaire précieux pour modérer la marche des manifestations diplomatiques à notre guise. Je suis charmé que nous ne soyons pas en tête-à-tête pour le moment, et j'encourage de tous mes efforts l'idée de l'entente à trois, parceque je prévois que la politique anglaise pourra nous être d'un grand secours.

Les dangers sont grands et les difficultés que nous aurons à surmonter sont immenses, mais je ne sais, ce qui me dit que nous réussirons à mener au port notre barque si tourmentée par les orages depuis quelques années. La personnalité que dirige la politique française aujourd'hui me paraît constituer une garantie réelle dans ces circonstances.

Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys est, en fait de principe aussi correct que possible, son désir de s'allier avec nous ne date pas d'hier. La copie ci-jointe d'un rapport de M. Lightenvelt de l'année 1855 qui emprunte aux circonstances présentes un caractère d'actualité remarquable, en fait foi.

Si nous voulons commencer à obtenir des aujourd'hui quelque avantage en Orient, il faudrait, je crois tâcher dès-à-présent à demander, que l'influence française à Belgrade et à Bukarest se mette un peu à notre service, il faudrait que Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys fasse comprendre aux Princes Couze et Michel que nous sommes appelés à les prendre en tutelle, comme étant le voisin le plus intéressé et tâcher d'éloigner les éléments révolutionnaires. (Oncken Die Rheinpolitik der Kaiser Napoleons III, Vol. I, pp. 3-6.)

App. No. 2

Empress Eugénie to Prince Metternich.

Paris, le 8 mars 1863.

Mon cher Prince, je Vous rend le papier que Vous m'avez confié. Vous y trouverez quelques mots changés, mais le sens est le même, peut-être l'idée de préciser a seule fait la modification.

Gramont nous fait dire que Vous êtes appelé à Vienne et-ce vrai? Dieu le veuille. - Croyez à tous mes sentiments.

Bien entendu que si la modification ne Vous Eugénie convient pas, vous êtes libre de faire ce que Vous trouverez le mieux et ne l'envoyez pas.

Projet d'entente secrète:

Également pénétrés de l'importance qu'ont déjà pris les événements de Plogne, du trouble qu'ils peuvent amener dans les situations relatives des puissances européennes, des conséquences extrêmes qu'elles sont de

nature à entraîner, mais en même temps par le désir sincère de résoudre les difficultés présentées et à venir au profit de la paix, si elle peut-être maintenue, et des intérêts reciproques des deux pays, si la paix venait à être compromise, les Gouvernement de France et d'Autriche comprennent dès aujourd'hui la nécessité d'entrer dans les plus confidentes communications sur la combinaison de leurs efforts dans le double but qu'elles se proposent, se réservant s'il y a lieu, de donner à leur action commune la garantie d'une alliance offensive et défensive dont les stipulations seraient arrêtées d'un commun accord. (Ibid, Vol. I, p. 13)

App. No. 3 (1)

Napoleon III to Drouyn de Lhuys

Palais des Tuileries, le 11 juin 1866.

Au moment où semblent s'évanouir les espérances de paix que la réunion de la Conférence nous avait fait concevoir, il est essentiel d'expliquer, par une circulaire aux agents diplomatiques à l'étranger, les idées que mon Gouvernement se proposait d'apporter dans les conseils de l'Europe et la conduite qu'il compte tenir en présence des événements qui se préparent.

L'accord établi entre les Puissances neutres restira à lui seul un gage de sécurité pour l'Europe. Elles avaient montré leur haute impartialité en prenant la résolution de restreindre la discussion de la Conférence aux questions pendantes. Pour les résoudre, je croyais qu'il fallait les aborder franchement, les dégager du voile diplomatique qui les couvrait, en prendre en sérieuse considération les vœux légitimes des souverains et des peuples.

Le conflit quit s'est élevé à trois causes: La situation géographique de la Prusse mal délimitée: Le vœu de l'Allemagne demandant une réconstitution politique plus conforme à ses besoins généraux: La nécessité pour l'Italie d'assurer son indépendance nationale.

Les Puissances neutres ne pouvaient vouloir s'immiscer dans les affaires intérieures des pays étrangers; néanmoins les cours qui ont participé aux actes constitutifs de la Confédération germanique avaient le droit d'examiner si les changements réclamés n'étaient pas de nature à compromettre l'ordre établi en Europe.

Nous aurions, en ce qui nous concerne, désiré pour les États secondaires de la Confédération une union plus intime, une organisation plus puissante une rôle plus important; pour la Prusse, plus d'homogénéité et de force dans le Nord; pour l'Autriche le maintien de sa grande position en Allemagne. Nous aurions voulu en outre que, moyennant une compensation équitable, l'Autriche pût céder la Venétie à l'Italie; car si, de concert avec la Prusse, et sans se préoccuper du traité de 1852, elle a fait au Danemark une guerre au nom de la nationalité allemande, il me paraissait juste qu'elle reconnût en Italie le même principe en complétant l'indépendance de la Péninsule. (Ibid, Vol. II, p. 262)

App. No. 3 (2)

The Franco-Austrian Alliance of June 12, 1866.

Leurs Majestés l'Empereur d'Autriche, Roi de Hongrie et de Bohême et l'Empereur des Français ayant jugé à propos de conclure une convention secrète, en prévision des événements qui peuvent surgir en Europe, on nomme pour leurs Plénipotentiaires à cet effet, savoir:

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Autriche, Roi de Hongrie et de Bohême etc.; le Comte de Mensdorff-Pouilly, Son Conseiller intime et Chambellan, ministre de Sa Maison et des affaires étrangères etc. etc., et Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français le Duc de Gramont, Son Ambassadeur près Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique etc.

Lesquels après s'être communiqué leur pleins pouvoirs trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants:

#### Article I

Si la guerre éclate en Allemagne, le Gouvernement français s'engage vis-à-vis du Gouvernement autrichien à conserver une neutralité absolue et à faire tous ses efforts pour obtenir la même attitude de la part de l'Italie.

#### Article II

Si le sort des armes favorise l'Autriche en Allemagne, elle s'engage à céder la Vénétie au Gouvernement français au moment où elle conclura la paix. Si le sort des armes favorise l'Italie, elle s'engage à ne pas changer dans ce Royaume le statu quo ante bellum, à moins d'une entente avec la France.

#### Article III

Si des événements de guerre changaient les rapports des Puissances Allemandes entre elles, le Gouvernement autrichien s'engage à s'entendre avec le Gouvernement français avant de sanctionner des remaniements de territoire qui seraient de nature à déranger l'équilibre européen.

#### Article IV

La présente Convention sera ratifiée et les ratifications en seront échangées à Vienne dans le plus bref délai possible.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signé et y ont opposé le cachet de leurs armes.

Fait en double expédition à Vienne le douze juin mil huit cent soixante-six

Mensdorff mpr

Gramont

#### Note additionnelle

annexée à la Convention secrète signée entre l'Autriche et la France, le 12 juin 1866.

En arrêtant, d'un commun accord, les termes de la Convention secrète, signée le 12 de ce mois, les soussignés ont résumé, dans une note additionnelle, certaines explications destinées à préciser la portée des engagements contractés de part et d'autre et à régler en partie le mode de leur exécution. Cette note additionnelle, dont la teneur suit, constitue un des éléments essentiels de la négociation et de la convention ci-dessus mentionnée, plusieurs de ses clauses devant faire partie, du Traité réglant la cession éventuelle, de la Vénétie.

#### Note additionnelle

1. En rétrocédant la Vénétie à l'Italie, le Gouvernement Français stipulera le maintien de la Souveraineté temporelle du Pape et l'inviolabilité du territoire actuellement soumis à son autorité, sans préjudice des réserves faites en faveur des droits du Saint-Siège.

2. Le Gouvernement français stipulera également la reconnaissance et l'inviolabilité des nouvelles frontières de l'Autriche du côté de l'Italie.

3. Le Gouvernement français stipulera également une indemnité en faveur de l'Autriche pour les forteresses de la Vénétie et les dépenses que le Gouvernement Autrichien devra faire pour assurer la sécurité de ses nouvelles frontières. Il est également convenue que l'Etat dont la Vénétie fera partie devra aussi prendre à sa charge une part de la dette publique de l'Empire d'Autriche au prorata de la population de cette province.

4. Le gouvernement français stipulera des clauses restrictives relativement au port de Venise afin que ce port ne soit pas disposé de manière à menacer les côtes et la marine Autrichiennes.

5. Si, par suite des événements de la guerre ou autrement, il se produisait en Italie des mouvements spontanés de nature à défaire l'unité italienne, le gouvernement français n'interviendra, ni par la force, ni autrement, pour la rétablir, et laissera les populations maîtresses de leur mouvements. Il est entendu qu'il ne se produira non plus aucune intervention étrangère.

6. Si le sort des armes favorise l'Autriche en Allemagne, le Gouvernement français sanctionnera tout accroissement territorial conquis par l'Autriche, pourvu qu'il ne soit pas de nature à troubler l'équilibre de l'Europe, en établissant une hégémonie Autrichienne qui unirait l'Allemagne sous une seule autorité.

7. En cas de remaniements territoriaux le Gouvernement Autrichien, réservant les droits de Souveraineté des Princes de la Maison Impériale qui ont été dépossédés, pourra demander pour eux des compensations partout ailleurs qu'en Italie.

Fait en double expédition à Vienne, le douze juin mil huit cent soixante-six.

Mensdorff mpr

Gramont

(Ibid, Vol. II, p. 26)

App. No. 4

Drouyn de Lhuys to Benedetti.

Paris le 23 juillet 1866

Il est un point, que je ne touche pas dans les instructions que je vous adresse en date de ce jour ... et qui sera certainement un des objets essentiels de la négociation du traité de paix: je veux parler des remaniements de territoires en Allemagne. Ils ne sont ni admis ni exclus, par les préliminaires; mais les déclarations du Roi Guillaume, de M. de Bismarck et de M. de Goltz nous ont préparés à les voir produire par le Cabinet de Berlin, soit qu'il les présente comme la condition du rétablissement de la paix entre la Prusse et les alliés de l'Autriche qui n'ont point adhéré aux préliminaires soit qu'elle les admette en déduction d'énormes frais de guerre que l'insolvabilité de la Cour de Vienne et des autres Etats ne pourrait acquitter.

L'Empereur n'est pas révoqué à repousser de telles prétentions d'une façon péremptoire. Sa majesté serait même disposée à les satisfaire à de certaines conditions et dans certaine mesure: le Royaume de Saxe devrait être maintenu comme Etat indépendant; les nouvelles acquisitions de la Prusse ne dépasseraient pas en population le chiffre de quatre millions d'âmes; enfin, dans ce cas, la France obtiendrait une rectification de frontières qui lui restituerait ses limites de 1814, en y ajoutant le Luxembourg, sauf une compensation à régler avec le Roi des Pays-Bas.

Cette partie fort délicate, ébauchée d'abord dans des entretiens entre Vous et M. de Bismark, pourrait être la matière d'une convention secrète.

J'appelle dès à présent votre attention de ce côté, en vous invitant à me faire connaître votre pensée et me réservant de vous envoyer ultérieurement des instructions complémentaires. (Ibid, Vol. II, p. 3)

App. No. 5

Drouyn de Lhuys to Benedetti

Vichy, 29 juillet 1866 .

Déclarez-le franchement à M. de Bismark, en reprenant avec lui l'entretien dont vous me rendrez compte, et proposez lui la convention suivante:

Article 1<sup>er</sup>. L'Empire Français rentre en possession des portions de territoire qui, appartenant aujourd'hui à la Prusse, avaient été comprises dans la délimitation de la France en 1814.

Article 2. La Prusse s'engage à obtenir du Roi de Bavière et du Grand-Duc de Hesse, sauf à fournir à ces Princes des dédommagements, la cession des portions de territoire qu'ils possèdent sur la rive gauche du Rhin, et à en transférer la possession à la France.

Article 3. Sont annulées toutes les dispositions rattachant à la Confédération germanique des territoires placés sous la souveraineté du Roi des Pays-Bas, ainsi que celles relatives au droit de garnison dans la forteresse de Luxembourg. (Ibid, Vol. II, p. 12)

App. No. 6

The memorial of Drouyn de Lhuys on the establishment of Rhenish buffer state.

8 August 1866.

La politique de la France est guidée par un désir manifeste de maintenir avec la Prusse des relations amicales. Pour que la continuation de cette politique soit possible pour que le gouvernement puisse la faire accepter par l'opinion publique, il faut que l'alliance des deux nations repose sur une situation réciproque, n'impliquant pour aucune d'elles ni préjudice ni menace. Or il serait utile de dissimuler que les transformations qui s'accomplissent en Allemagne modifient sensiblement l'équilibre des forces, dans lequel la France a trouvé depuis 1815 la seule sécurité. C'est donc un devoir pour l'Empereur Napoléon de, rechercher d'autres garanties, et ce n'est qu'à la condition de se mettre d'accord sur ce point avec la cour de Berlin qu'il pourra donner à ses bons rapports avec elle un caractère vraiment durable. Le cabinet des Tuileries n'est point poussé par l'ambition d'englober sous ses lois des territoires situés en dehors des limites de la France et encore moins des populations de nationalité étrangère: ses déclarations réitérées, son attitude invariable dans les complications européennes, le mettent à l'abri de soupçons de ce genre. Si donc il était amené à demander aujourd'hui une extension de frontières pour la France il n'y serait contraint que par l'impérieuse nécessité de veiller à la défense nationale.

En effet, devant les agrandissements que va recevoir la Prusse et qui résultant pour elle, non seulement d'annexions territoriales considérables, mais encore d'une organisation politique qui la rendra

l'abriter toute puissante de l'Allemagne, on reconnaîtra que la sécurité du territoire serait gravement compromise et que le gouvernement impérial serait autorisé à réclamer des positions équivalentes.

Cependant une combinaison différente se présente à l'esprit qui sans soulever les mêmes objections, atteindrait le même but. Ce qu'il faut à la France, c'est une protection sur ses frontières; car il lui sera d'autant plus aisé d'entretenir avec ses voisins les relations cordiales qu'elle s'attache à conserver lorsqu'elle n'aura rien à craindre de leur prépondérance. Le meilleur moyen d'assurer ce résultat ne consisterait-il pas dans l'interposition d'un Etat neutre, qui, comprenant les pays allemands situés sur la rive gauche du Rhin, supprimerait à la fois tout contact et toute cause de rivalité entre la France et la Prusse.

La formation d'un tel Etat, en reculant un voisinage facilement redoutable, permettrait à la France renoncer aux revendications territoriales et de rester dans une ligne de conduite plus conforme aux principes comme aux inclinations de son gouvernement. L'Europe verrait avec satisfaction les occasions d'un conflit entre deux grands peuples définitivement éloignées, grâce à un établissement conçu dans l'esprit même qui a présidé à l'organisation de la Suisse moderne et de la Belgique.

Le nouvel Etat trouverait dans l'homogénéité des populations de la Prusse, de la Hesse et de la Bavière rhénane dans l'unité du territoire, dans le nombre et la richesse des habitants d'excellentes conditions de vitalité, tandis que sa neutralité perpétuelle, garantie par les puissances limitrophes, le mettrait à l'abri de tout danger extérieur.

La Prusse sans démentir les principes qui font sa force, admettra l'existence autonome d'un Etat purement germanique, séparé politiquement de l'Allemagne nouvelle qu'elle veut créer, mais restant en communication intellectuelle avec ce grand pays. Les acquisitions qu'elle se prépare à faire dans les pays occupés par ses armes lui offrent des compensations matérielles qui couvriraient amplement le sacrifice territorial auquel elle se prêterait, et l'accroissement de sa puissance compacte lui permettrait de souscrire sans détriment à un pareil échange.

Il serait possible même de ne pas détacher de la maison de Prusse ses possessions sur le Rhin, si l'on faisait choix pour le nouveau trône d'un prince qui lui appartiendrait par exemple le prince héréditaire de Hohenzollern Sigmaringen. L'empereur Napoléon, confiant dans la loyauté du roi Guillaume, trouverait dans la parole de son auguste allié un gage suffisant de l'indépendance et de la neutralité du pays sur lequel serait appelé à régner un prince de la maison Hohenzollern, et il ne ferait pas difficulté d'accorder son assentiment à cette désignation. Sa Majesté prussienne élevée par la victoire à un si haut degré de gloire et de puissance, donnerait en conférant cet apanage à une branche de sa famille qui a noblement payé sa dette sur les champs de bataille un grand témoignage de sa bienveillance royale et elle aurait ajouté ainsi à tous les titres d'honneur de l'illustre race dont elle est le chef, deux couronnes nouvelles acquises sous son règne par son seul prestige.

En résumé, la combinaison dont il s'agit, honorable pour toutes les parties, compatible avec les principes des deux cours alliées, basée sur des précédents que la prudence des cabinets de l'Europe a établis et qui ont reçu la sanction du temps, présente la sauvegarde la plus efficace des intérêts mutuels de la France et de l'Allemagne. Si le cabinet de Berlin tient sincèrement à l'amitié de l'Empereur, il doit éviter d'asseoir dans des positions offensives la formidable puissance militaire dont il va déposer, et dont l'extension sur les frontières mêmes de la France, telles que les traités de 1815 les ont faites, serait une menace permanente: la nation française provoquée par le sentiment de sa propre conservation, réagirait bientôt avec une force irrésistible contre ce danger, et la sagesse des gouvernement serait impuissante à modérer les passions rivales, qui pousseraient l'une contre l'autre deux grandes nations.

(Que la Prusse au contraire assure à la France les satisfactions qu'elle a le droit de réclamer, et elle s'en fera une alliée intéressée à soutenir devant l'Europe le nouvel ordre de chose créé par l'accord des deux puissances, ce que veut le gouvernement de l'Empereur c'est uniquement garantir la sécurité nationale, et, amène à proposer à la Prusse un partage de territoires, il ne s'y est déterminé, on de sait, que dans des vues exclusivement défensives. La constitution d'un Etat neutre intermédiaire lui donnerait des sûretés égales, et en procurerait de pareilles à l'Allemagne contre toute agression.)

Ce système répond donc aux nécessités des deux pays: il exclut les accroissements de force offensive, compromettants pour l'un ou pour l'autre, et il élève entre eux un rempart qui écarte à jamais toute menace pour l'un d'eux, tout péril pour leur alliance.

(Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 37-40)

App. No. 7

Rouher to Benedetti

Paris le 16 août 1866

J'ai en une longue conférence avec l'Empereur et cet entretien a eu pour résultat de confirmer sur tous les points nos appréciations communes. Je dois donc me honner à vous présenter le résumé le plus succinct et le plus précis possible des instructions de Sa Majesté:

1.° La négociation doit avoir un caractère exclusivement amical et ne revêtir aucune forme comminatoire.

2.° Elle doit être essentiellement confidentielle et avoir pour uniques intermédiaires l'Empereur et le Roi, M. de Bismarck, vous et moi.

3.° Suivant les chances de succès que vous rencontrerez, vos demandes doivent parcourir trois phases successives.

En premier lieu, réunissant dans une même pensée les questions des frontières de 1814 et de l'annexion de la Belgique, vous devez réclamer, par un traité public, la concession de Landau, Sarrelouis, Sarrebrück et du duché de Luxembourg, et la faculté, par un traité d'alliance offensive et défensive, qui serait secret, de nous annexer ultérieurement la Belgique.

En second lieu, si ces bases ne vous paraissent pas pouvoir être obtenues, vous devez renoncer à Sarrelouis et à Sarrebruck, même à Landau, vieille bicoque dont la possession surexciterait contre nous le sentiment allemand, et borner nos conventions publiques au duché de Luxembourg, nos conventions secrètes à la réunion de la Belgique à la France.

En troisième lieu, si la réunion de la Belgique à la France purement et simplement, rencontrait de trop grands obstacles, acceptez un article par lequel on conviendrait que, pour apaiser les résistances de l'Angleterre, on pourrait constituer Anvers à l'état de ville libre. Mais, en aucun cas, vous ne devez accepter la réunion d'Anvers à la Hollande et celle de Maëstricht à la Prusse.

M. de Bismarck demanderait-il quels avantages lui offre un pareil traité? La réponse serait simple: il s'assure une alliance puissante il consacre toutes ses acquisitions d'hier, il ne consent à laisser prendre que ce qui ne lui appartient pas. Il ne s'impose donc aucun sacrifice sérieux en échange des avantages qu'il obtient. Ainsi: traité ostensible qui au minimum nous attribue le Luxembourg; traité secret stipulant une alliance offensive et défensive; faculté pour la France de s'annexer la Belgique au moment où elle le jugera opportun, promesse de concours, même par les armes, de la part de la Prusse. Ses possessions nouvelles. Voilà les bases du traité à intervenir. (*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 82)

App. No. 8

Metternich to Beust

Paris, le 16 mars 1867

Il n'y a pas encore en des négociations précises sur le Luxembourg, mais on a insinué au Roi de Hollande que s'il céderait cette province moyennant indemnité financière on lui garantirait par traité d'alliance l'intégrité du territoire hollandais.

Marquis de Moustier croit qu'il serait de notre intérêt de recommander cet arrangement à la Haye.

La Prusse montre dans la question de l'évacuation de la forteresse du Luxembourg une résistance qui disparaît devant cet arrangement.

Le Roi de Hollande hésite, le parti Allemande lui conseille au refus, ici on le menacerait de chercher à s'entendre avec la Prusse sur le Luxembourg (scheint, mir aber schwer.) (*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 252)

App. No. 9

The French Draft of a Franco-Austrian Defensive Treaty

August 1867

1. L'Empereur Napoléon s'engage à prêter une assistance active à l'Autriche dans le cas où cette puissance exigerait de la Prusse la stricte exécution du traité de Prague ou qu'elle voudrait, au besoin, y forcer la Prusse les armes à la main.

2. Les traités d'alliance offensive et défensive des États du Midi avec la Prusse seront considérés comme une violation du traité de Prague, et les États du Midi en vertu du traité, seront

invités à former une confédération de l'Allemagne méridionale sous le protectorat collectif de l'Autriche et de la France, avec un parlement fédéral qui siégera à Vienne. L'Empereur d'Autriche jouira, en qualité de Chef de la Confédération du Sud, des mêmes pouvoirs que ceux dont jouit le roi de Prusse dans la Confédération du Nord.

3. La Prusse sera sommée d'évacuer Mayence, qui recevra une garnison des États du Midi. La partie du Grand-Duché de Hesse, située au Nord du Mein sera détachée de la Confédération du Nord pour être englobée dans celle du Sud.

4. L'Autriche et les États du Midi formeront entre eux une union douanière laquelle pourrait conclure des traités de commerce d'une part avec la France, de l'autre avec la Confédération du Nord.

5. Pour le moment la question de la restauration des princes dépossédés ne sera pas soulevée.

6. Dans le cas où la Prusse refuserait d'exécuter le traité de Prague dans toute sa teneur et de résilier toutes les conventions et tous les arrangements en contradiction avec ce traité, la France et l'Autriche déclareront la guerre à la Prusse. Après la défaite, celle-ci aurait à céder à la France le bassin houiller de Sarrebrück, ainsi que le territoire de Sarrebrück, ainsi que le territoire de Sarrebrück, Sarrelouis et Sarrebouurg. La partie méridionale de la Silésie serait cédée à l'Autriche.

La population des territoires annexés par la Prusse serait consultée par voie du suffrage universel, dont le résultat deviendrait obligatoire pour la Prusse, et que la France et l'Autriche s'obligeraient de faire respecter. Dans le cas où les populations des dits territoires se prononceraient en faveur de la restauration de leurs anciens souverains, ces derniers auraient le droit d'entrer ou non dans la Confédération du Nord.

7. La Prusse sera également sommée de s'entendre avec le Danemark, dans le délai de trois mois, pour l'exécution de l'article 5 du traité de Prague. Si cette entente n'était pas réalisée dans le délai fixe, la France et l'Autriche prendraient en mains le règlement de cette affaire, et elles soumettraient leurs décisions à une conférence des grandes puissances.

8. Dans le cas, peu probable, que les États du Midi, ou l'un d'eux refuserait de se prêter à la création d'une Confédération du Sud dans le sens du traité de Prague, il leur sera adressé par les deux puissances alliées un ultimatum, dont le refus serait suivi d'une déclaration de guerre.

La France et l'Autriche se réservent de s'entendre par rapport à des cessions de territoire éventuelles de la part des États du Midi auxquelles elles auraient fait la guerre. (Ibid, Vol. II, p. 454 ff)

App. No. 10 (1)

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley

Paris 31 March 1868

The language of the French ministers is extremely pacific and their present policy ... appears to be founded on the supposition that peace in Europe will be preserved at least for this year. Still there is a feeling of uneasiness and some close observers, who have long studied the character of the Emperor L. N., see (or fancy they see) symptoms which indicate that the idea of a sudden declaration of war against Prussia is present to his mind. They do not suppose that L. N. has yet come to any positive decision, but they think that, without confiding his plans to anyone, he is quietly so disposing matters as to be ready if he should deem it expedient to take Prussia by surprise, and produce a startling effect upon public in France.....

The following details are given of military arrangements which may certainly have been made with a view of being ready for war. It may be noted also that among political, naval and military men at Paris was is spoken of as being less improbable that it was a short time ago.

Symptoms of an intention to make war against Prussia

The reduction of the Civita Vesschia-garrison; the withdrawal of three regiments from Algeria, of which Marshal MacMahon alone has been told. The concentration of troops from the South and West provinces at Chalons (50,000 men are already quartered between Lille and Strasbourg). The first camp at Chalons, to march on the first May, the second to be formed in July, the troops proceeding by rail. way.

The Generals in Command are four aide-de-camps to the Emperor so orders can be secretly transmitted to them.

In addition the first corps (Army of Paris) the corps of the Imperial Guards and the fourth corps (Army of Lyon) are quite ready to march. There are 90,000 effective horses and 15,000 lent to farmers but ready to join in a few days.

It is said that the new loan of 440,000 is not yet negotiated because a larger amount will be required. (Ibid, Vol. II, p. 544).

App. No. 10 (2)

Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley

(Private)

Paris, April 7, 1868.

As to the negotiations between Prussia and Denmark, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, that France had carefully abstained from connecting herself in anyway with it, that the dispute was, he feared, one between the iron pot and the earthen pot.

If the Emperor intends to surprise Prussia, the language of the Gouvernement would be pacific to the last moment, nor indeed is it by any means certain, that he would confide his intentions to his ministers... Confidence in the pacific views of the Emperor diminishes daily.

The vague alarms as to the instability of the present order of things at home appear to be gradually changing into a definite apprehension of foreign war, of a war undertaken to restore the imperial prestige and like-ly to produce as its result either a new lease of absolute power - or the overthrow of dynasty.....

A general officer always well informed, said that at the War Department they spoke of war with the utmost certainty and confidence, and named the month of July as the period at which it would probably break out. Immense preparations have been made since last year, a sum of money has already been spent far beyond the loan which has been proposed and they cannot go on in this way another year. Disarming would make the Gouvernement dreadfully unpopular with the army and it would be looked upon as an additional humiliation. The only chance of peace is that the Emperor is very undecided and not so young as he was; he must assume the supreme command and play his crown at the issue of a battle. Another successful general might prove a very inconvenient subject!

(Ibid, Vol II. p. 552)

App. No. 11

Bernsdorff to King William

December 6, 1868.

Mr. Gladstone m'a répondu qu'il croyait, en effet, que sa voix ne serait pas sans une certaine influence à Paris, puisque les Français le regardaient avec raison comme un ami qui avait beaucoup contribué à reserrer les liens entre les deux nations, dans l'affaire du traité de commerce pas exemple; qu'il fallait naturellement laisser un peu de temps aux Français pour se défaire d'une mauvaise politique traditionnelle qui avait voulu que la France ne fût entourée que par des États faibles, et pour s'habituer à avoir des voisins forts, mais qu'ils s'insultaient eux-mêmes en étant jaloux de l'unité de leurs voisins, puisque, par leur propre magnifique position géographique, l'homogénéité de leur population, la richesse de leur sol et l'esprit militaire de leur peuple, ils étaient bien en état de se défendre contre toute agression du dehors, et n'avaient, par conséquent, à craindre personne. (Ibid, Vol. III, p. 64)

App. No. 12

Metternich to Baron Beust

December 9, 1868.

L'Empereur ajouta dans cette conversation, que si jamais nous avions à combiner ensemble une action militaire quelque éloignée qu'elle fût, il serait très important de s'entendre sur le terrain militaire c'est à dire qu'il faudrait à temps se concerter sur la question stratégique et ne pas s'abandonner alors à des tâtonnements imprudents.

(Ibid, Vol. III, p. 74)

App. No. 13 (1)

Napoleon III to the Emperor Francis Joseph

Saint Cloud le 24 september 1869

Monsieur mon frère,

Le Prince de Metternich m'a remis la lettre que Votre Majesté à bien voulu m'écrire, et je ne veux pas tarder à lui exprimer combien j'ai été touché des expressions d'amitié qu'elle contenait. Je prie Votre Majesté de croire à la réciprocité des sentiments qui animent envers elle et je saisirai toujours avec bonheur l'occasion de lui en donner des preuves. Je me réjouis comme Votre Majesté de voir les relations de nos deux gouvernements devenir tous les jours plus intimes. Cette communauté d'intérêts de d'idées ne peut qu'être favorable à la paix de l'Europe. Cependant si par impossible l'Empire de Votre Majesté se trouvait menacé par quelque agression difficile à prévoir, je n'hésiterai pas un instant à mettre toutes les forces de la France de son côté. Elle peut être sûre aussi que je n'entamerai jamais aucune négociation, avec une puissance étrangère sans m'être au préalable entendu avec elle. Quant à consolider par un écrit l'entente qui existe entre nous et le Roi d'Italie j'avoue à Votre Majesté que j'y vois un certain danger, à cause des incertitudes qu'il est impossible d'éviter. J'ai déjà pu m'apercevoir que le simple bruit de cet accord avait resserré les liens de l'Angleterre; de la Prusse et de la Russie.

Néanmoins je suis toujours, prêt si Votre Majesté insiste, à dire par écrit ce qui est dans mes intentions comme dans mon cœur.

En renouvelant à Votre Majesté mes remerciements pour l'intérêt qu'elle m'a témoigné dans cette dernière circonstance je lui réitère l'expression des sentiments de haute estime et de sincère amitié avec lesquels je suis.

Monsieur mon frère, de Votre Majesté le bon frère et ami.

Napoléon

(Ibid, Vol. III, p. 235)

App. No. 13 (2)

Victor Emmanuel to Napoléon III

September 25, 1869.

Monsieur mon frère,

Je remercie Votre Majesté du témoignage de confiance qu'elle a bien voulu me donner en me faisant part des réflexions qui lui sont inspirées par l'état actuel de l'Europe. L'incertitude qui règne de toutes parts et fait douter de la stabilité de la paix, la crainte d'événements qui vont troubler l'équilibre européen sont de nature à exciter la préoccupation des souverains, et je trouve bien naturel que ceux qui ont une communauté d'intérêts cherchent à s'entendre pour agir de concert dans ses graves circonstances.

Je ne puis donc qu'adhérer à l'idée d'une triple alliance entre la France, l'Autriche et l'Italie, dont l'union présentera une puissante barrière à d'injustes prétentions et contribuera ainsi à établir sur des bases plus solides la paix de l'Europe.

L'Italie n'a point oublié ce qu'elle doit à la bienveillance constante de Votre Majesté, et si aujourd'hui nous pouvons tendre une main amie à la puissance contre laquelle nous avons pendant si longtemps combattu, nous en sommes principalement redevables au concours que les armes françaises nous ont prêté dans les guerres de l'indépendance et à l'appui que nous avons constamment trouvé auprès de Votre Majesté. Aussi je suis heureux que cette circonstance me fournisse le moyen de prouver ma gratitude envers Votre Majesté en même temps qu'elle donne occasion à l'accomplissement d'un acte dont les conséquences ne peuvent être qu'avantageuses aux destinées de l'Europe.

Je désirerais que la traité qui doit consacrer l'alliance puisse se conclure promptement; mais d'un côté, je comprends que par suite des modifications introduites dans le gouvernement de la France. Votre Majesté soit dans le cas de devoir en retarder la stipulation, tandis que, de mon côté, je ne pourrai prendre un engagement formel à ce sujet avant que la Convention du 15 septembre 1864, relative aux Etats du Saint-Siège, n'ait de nouveau reçu, de part et d'autre sa pleine et entière exécution.

Je hâte de mes vœux le moment où nos accords pourront être définitifs. En attendant, je prie Votre Majesté d'agréer l'assurance des sentiments de haute estime et de sincère amitié avec lesquels je suis de Votre Majesté impériale le bon frère. (Ibid, Vol. III, p. 237)

App. No. 14

Metternich to Baron Beust

Paris le 7 janvier 1870

Confidentiel

Le Comte Napoléon Daru, ministre des affaires étrangères, est venu me voir avant hier matin. Il a tenu un langage très satisfaisant, appuyant sur trois points qu'il a relevés comme les plus importants et comme formant la base de sa politique. Le nouveau ministre m'a affirmé en premier lieu qu'il tiendrait avant tout à maintenir de tous ses efforts la bonne entente l'intimité même des rapports entre la France et l'Autriche. Les intérêts des deux pays étant identiques - ne se heurtant sur aucun point - il cherchera à resserrer de plus en plus les liens qui les rattachent l'un à l'autre. Le second point sur lequel le comte Daru a naturellement insisté est le maintien de la paix que veut la France et dont elle a besoin pour se régénérer.

"Mais," se hâta d'ajouter le ministre, "non pas la paix à tout prix."

Il m'a fait comprendre qu'il insisterait sur le maintien du statu quo et des traités seules garanties de la paix.

Le troisième point, qui servira de base à la politique du nouveau cabinet est l'entente de la France avec l'Autriche et avec l'Angleterre sur la question d'orient; politique que le Comte Daru désigné de traditionnelle et de salutaire.

J'ai remercié Son Excellence de m'avoir aussi franchement développé sa "profession de foi" et je l'ai assuré de notre concours sincère dans l'ordre des idées précitées. J'ai ajouté que, selon moi, le point le plus important du moment était l'entente active et résolue des deux Empires sur les questions orientales. Le repos du monde exigeait l'union intime des deux puissances - et à ce point de vue nous ne pourrions que nous féliciter de voir le nouveau cabinet continuer à marcher

entièrement d'accord avec le Gouvernement Imperial sur ces questions importantes et se rattacher ainsi aux traditions maintenues si loyalement par le Prince Daru m'a répondu que ses conversations récentes et très fréquentes avec son devancier au ministère des affaires étrangères l'avaient confirmée dans la conviction de son entière conformité de vues sur toutes les questions avec le très digne homme d'état que le cabinet actuel regrettait de n'avoir pu maintenir à son poste.....

Quant à l'alliance avec l'Autriche, M. de La Tours d'Auvergne lui a franchement développé la thèse suivante: "La France a besoin de l'Autriche, sans cette puissance elle restera isolée à un moment donné et si l'Autriche de son côté se sentait lâchée par la France, elle n'aurait rien de mieux et de plus pressé à faire qu'à s'entendre avec la Prusse.

(Ibid, Vol. III, p. 237)