

## **The Anglo-French Agreement 1904**

1. The Franco-British Declaration, 1904
2. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition; Vol X p 903
3. The Guardian, Saturday 9 April 1904

### **1. The Franco-British Declaration, 1904**

Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers London, 1911, Vol. CIII, Cmd. 5969  
Formally titled, the

'Declaration between the United Kingdom and France Respecting Egypt and Morocco, Together with the Secret Articles Signed at the Same Time.'

#### ARTICLE 1.

His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Egypt.

The Government of the French Republic, for their part, declare that they will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country....

It is agreed that the post of Director-General of Antiquities in Egypt shall continue, as in the past, to be entrusted to a French savant.

The French schools in Egypt shall continue to enjoy the same liberty as in the past.

#### ARTICLE 2.

The Government of the French Republic declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Morocco.

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His Britannic Majesty's Government, for their part, recognise that it appertains to France, more particularly as a Power whose dominions are conterminous for a great distance with those of Morocco, to preserve order in that country, and to provide assistance for the purpose of all administrative, economic, financial, and military reforms which it may require.

They declare that they will not obstruct the action taken by France for this purpose, provided that such action shall leave intact the rights which Great Britain, in virtue of treaties, conventions, and usage, enjoys in Morocco, including the right of coasting trade between the ports of Morocco, enjoyed by British vessels since 1901.

### **ARTICLE 3.**

His Britannic Majesty's Government for their part, will respect the rights which France, in virtue of treaties, conventions, and usage, enjoys in Egypt, including the right of coasting trade between Egyptian ports accorded to French vessels.

### **ARTICLE 4.**

The two Governments, being equally attached to the principle of commercial liberty both in Egypt and Morocco, declare that they will not, in those countries, countenance any inequality either in the imposition of customs duties or other taxes, or of railway transport charges. The trade of both nations with Morocco and with Egypt shall enjoy the same treatment in transit through the French and British possessions in Africa. An agreement between the two Governments shall settle the conditions of such transit and shall determine the points of entry.

This mutual engagement shall be binding for a period of thirty years. Unless this stipulation is expressly denounced at least one year in advance, the period shall be extended for five years at a time.

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Nevertheless the Government of the French Republic reserve to themselves in Morocco, and His Britannic Majesty's Government reserve to themselves in Egypt, the right to see that the concessions for roads, railways, ports, etc., are only granted on such conditions as will maintain intact the authority of the State over these great undertakings of public interest.

### **ARTICLE 5.**

His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they will use their influence in order that the French officials now in the Egyptian service may not be placed under conditions less advantageous than those applying to the British officials in the service.

The Government of the French Republic, for their part, would make no objection to the application of analogous conditions to British officials now in the Moorish service.

### **ARTICLE 6.**

In order to ensure the free passage of the Suez Canal, His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they adhere to the treaty of the 29th October, 1888, and that they agree to their being put in force. The free passage of the Canal being thus guaranteed, the execution of the last sentence of paragraph 1 as well as of paragraph 2 of Article of that treaty will remain in abeyance.

### **ARTICLE 7.**

In order to secure the free passage of the Straits of Gibraltar, the two Governments agree not to permit the erection of any fortifications or strategic works on that portion of the coast of Morocco comprised between, but not including, Melilla and the heights which command the right bank of the River Sebou.

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This condition does not, however, apply to the places at present in the occupation of Spain on the Moorish coast of the Mediterranean.

### **ARTICLE 8.**

The two Governments, inspired by their feeling of sincere friendship for Spain, take into special consideration the interests which that country derives from her geographical position and from her territorial possessions on the Moorish coast of the Mediterranean. In regard to these interests the French Government will come to an understanding with the Spanish Government. The agreement which may be come to on the subject between France and Spain shall be communicated to His Britannic Majesty's Government.

### **ARTICLE 9.**

The two Governments agree to afford to one another their diplomatic support, in order to obtain the execution of the clauses of the present Declaration regarding Egypt and Morocco.

In witness whereof his Excellency the Ambassador of the French Republic at the Court of His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, duly authorised for that purpose, have signed the present Declaration and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at London, in duplicate, the 8th day of April, 1904.

(L.S.) LANSLOWNE

(L.S.) PAUL CAMBON

### **Secret Articles:**

### **ARTICLE 1.**

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In the event of either Government finding themselves constrained, by the force of circumstances, to modify their policy in respect to Egypt or Morocco, the engagements which they have undertaken towards each other by Articles 4, 6, and 7 of the Declaration of today's date would remain intact.

### **ARTICLE 2.**

His Britannic Majesty's Government have no present intention of proposing to the Powers any changes in the system of the Capitulations, or in the judicial organisation of Egypt.

In the event of their considering it desirable to introduce in Egypt reforms tending to assimilate the Egyptian legislative system to that in force in other civilised Countries, the Government of the French Republic will not refuse to entertain any such proposals, on the understanding that His Britannic Majesty's Government will agree to entertain the suggestions that the Government of the French Republic may have to make to them with a view of introducing similar reforms in Morocco.

### **ARTICLE 3.**

The two Governments agree that a certain extent of Moorish territory adjacent to Melilla, Ceuta, and other presidios should, whenever the Sultan ceases to exercise authority over it, come within the sphere of influence of Spain, and that the administration of the coast from Melilla as far as, but not including, the heights on the right bank of the Sebou shall be entrusted to Spain.

Nevertheless, Spain would previously have to give her formal assent to the provisions of Articles 4 and 7 of the Declaration of today's date, and undertake to carry them out.

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She would also have to undertake not to alienate the whole, or a part, of the territories placed under her authority or in her sphere of influence.

### **ARTICLE 4.**

If Spain, when invited to assent to the provisions of the preceding article, should think proper to decline, the arrangement between France and Great Britain, as embodied in the Declaration of today's date, would be none the less at once applicable.

### **ARTICLE 5.**

Should the consent of the other Powers to the draft Decree mentioned in Article I of the Declaration of today's date not be obtained, the Government of the French Republic will not oppose the repayment at par of the Guaranteed, Privileged, and Unified Debts after the 15th July, 1910.

Done at London, in duplicate, the 8th day of April, 1904.

(L.S.) LANSDOWNE

(L.S.) PAUL CAMBON

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### 2. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition; Vol X p 903

The other questions which caused mutual animosity between England and France in the decline of the 19th century had nothing whatever to do with their conflicting international interests. The offensive attitude of the entente English press towards France on account of the Dreyfus affair was repaid by the French in their criticism of the Boer War. When those sentimental causes of mutual irritation had become less acute, the press of the two countries was moved by certain influences to recognize that it was in their interest to be on good terms with one another. The importance of their commercial relations was brought into relief as though it were a new fact. At last in 1903 state visits between the rulers of England and of France took place in their respective capitals, for the first time since the early days of the Second Empire, followed by an Anglo-French convention signed on the 8th of April 1904. By this an arrangement was come to on outstanding questions of controversy between England and France in various parts of the world. France undertook not to interfere with the action of England in Egypt, while England made a like undertaking as to French influence in Morocco. France conceded certain of its fishing rights in Newfoundland which had been a perpetual source of irritation between the two countries for nearly two hundred years since the treaty of Utrecht of 1713. In return England made several concessions to France in Africa, including that of the Los Islands off Sierra Leone and some rectifications of frontier on the Gambia and between the Niger and Lake Chad. Other points of difference were arranged as to Siam, the New Hebrides and Madagascar. The convention of 1904 was on the whole more advantageous for England than for France. The free hand which England conceded to France in dealing with Morocco was a somewhat burdensome gift owing to German interference; but the incidents which arose from the Franco-German conflict in that country are as yet too recent for any estimate of their possible consequences. One result was

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the retirement of M. Delcasse from the foreign office on the 6th of June 1905. He had been foreign minister for seven years, a consecutive period of rare length, the only one since the creation of the office, when Castlereagh held it for ten years, and one of prodigious duration in the history of the Third Republic. He first went to the Quai d'Orsay in the Brisson ministry of June 1898, remained there during the Dupuy ministry of the same year, was reappointed by M. Waldeck-Rousseau in his cabinet which lasted from June 1899 to June 1902, was retained in the post by M. Combes till his ministry fell in January 1905, and again by his successor M. Rouvier till his own resignation in June of that year. M. Delcasse had thus an uninterrupted reign at the foreign office during a long critical period of transition both in the interior politics of France and in its exterior relations. He went to the Quai d'Orsay when the Dreyfus agitation was most acute, and left it when parliament was absorbed in discussing the separation of church and state. He saw the Franco-Russian alliance lose its popularity in the country even before the Russian defeat by the Japanese in the last days of his ministry. Although in the course of his official duties at the colonial office he had been partly responsible for some of the expeditions sent to Africa for the purpose of checking British influence, he was fully disposed to pursue a policy which might lead to a friendly understanding with England. In this he differed from M. Hanotaux, who was essentially the man of the Franco-Russian alliance, owing to it much of his prestige, including his election to the French Academy, and Russia, to which he gave exclusive allegiance, was then deemed to be primarily the enemy of England. M. Delcasse on the contrary, from the first, desired to assist a rapprochement between England and Russia as preliminary to the arrangement he proposed between England and France. He was foreign minister when the tsar paid his second visit to France, but there was no longer the national unanimity which welcomed him in 1896. M. Delcasse also accompanied President Loubet to Russia when he

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returned the tsar's second visit in 1902. But exchange of compliments between France and Russia were no longer to be the sole international ceremonials within the attributes of the French foreign office; M. Delcasse was minister when the procession of European sovereigns headed by the kings of England and of Italy in 1903, came officially to Paris, and he went with M. Loubet to London and to Rome on the president's return visits to those capitals the latter being the immediate cause of the rupture of the concordat with the Vatican, though M. Delcasse was essentially a concordatory minister. His retirement from the Rouvier ministry in June 1905 was due to pressure from Germany in consequence of his opposition to German interference in Morocco. His resignation took place just a week after the news had arrived of the destruction of the Russian fleet by the Japanese, which completed the disablement of the one ally of France. The impression was current in France that Germany wished to give the French nation a fright before the understanding with England had reached an effective stage, and it was actually believed that the resignation of M. Delcasse averted a declaration of war. Although that belief revived to some extent the fading enmity of the French towards the conquerors of Alsace-Lorraine, the fear which accompanied it moved a considerable section of the nation to favour an understanding with Germany in preference to, or even at the expense of, friendly relations with England. M. Clemenceau, who only late in life came into office, and attained it at the moment when a better understanding with England was progressing, had been throughout his long career, of all French public men in all political groups, the most consistent friend of England. His presence at the head of affairs was a guarantee of amicable Anglo-French relations, so far as they could be protected by statesmanship. By reason of the increased duration and stability of ministries, the personal influence of ministers in directing the foreign policy of France has in one sense become greater in the 20th century than in those earlier periods when France had first to recuperate its strength after the war and then to take its exterior

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policy from Germany. Moreover, not only have cabinets lasted longer, but the foreign minister has often been retained in a succession of them. Of the thirty years which in 1909 had elapsed since Marshal MacMahon retired and the republic was governed by republicans, in the first fifteen years from 1879 to 1894 fourteen different persons held the office of minister of foreign affairs, while six sufficed for the fifteen years succeeding the latter date. One must not, however, exaggerate the effect of this greater stability in office-holding upon continuity of policy, which was well maintained even in the days when there was on an average a new foreign minister every year. Indeed the most marked breach in the continuity of the foreign policy of France has been made in that later period of long terms of office, which, with the repudiation of the Concordat, has seen the withdrawal of the French protectorate over Roman Catholic missions in the East though it is too soon to estimate the result. In another respect France has under the republic departed a long way from a tradition of the Quai d'Orsay. It no longer troubles itself on the subject of nationalities. Napoleon III., who had more French temperament than French blood in his constitution, was an idealist on this question, and one of the causes of his own downfall and the defeat of France was his sympathy in this direction with German unity. Since Sedan little has been done in France to further the doctrine of nationalities. A faint echo of it was heard during the Boer war, but French sympathy with the struggling Dutch republics of South Africa was based rather on anti-English sentiment than on any abstract theory. (J. E. C. B.)

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### 3. The Guardian The Anglo-French agreement<sup>1</sup>

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The Anglo-French Agreement which was signed in London yesterday is supposed to cover most of the "colonial" questions outstanding between the two countries. The publication of an authentic text will probably not be delayed, and discussion of details is best deferred till then. But no time need be lost in congratulating Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon on the broad and tolerant spirit in which they have evidently conducted the negotiations. The growing friendship between England and France is the most hopeful sign that has appeared in international politics for many a long year, but we deceive ourselves if we pretend that it has its roots in popular sentiment in either country. It is the product, rather, of popular weariness and disillusionment with a fashionable political creed; it marks the beginning of an intellectual reaction which, still imperfectly understood in all its bearings, is destined to carry us very much further than the last Agreement. In France the warmer feelings towards us is part of the reaction from the militarism which persecuted Dreyfus. In England, too, the idea of friendship with France is curiously antagonistic to the Imperialist movement which in the heyday of its favour flouted the Latin races and courted Germany. In both countries the new friendship has grown up unobserved from between the cracks in the foundations of a fashionable creed, and flourishes best amongst its ruins. All the more honour, therefore, to all those - from the King to Mr Barclay, from Lord

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[https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1904/apr/09/fromthearc\\_hive](https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1904/apr/09/fromthearc_hive)

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Lansdowne to the members of the Entente Cordial Committee - who have helped to cultivate so promising a flower in the atmosphere of popular disillusionment. A great task is still before both countries. The sensitive plant has yet to take root in the hearts of the peoples of both countries; an intellectual movement has still to be converted into one of those noble popular zeals which work miracles. We are grateful for the quiet, patient work of Lord Lansdowne, carrying out the tradition of the Salisbury school. But the ripe fruits of the new friendship can only be gathered by men with a burning zeal to benefit the workers in the two countries. The value of the new friendship lies not in the mere avoidance of disputes, but in the chance that it affords of a genuine alliance between the democracies in both countries for the furtherance of a common democratic cause.

Can we discuss in the new Agreement the germ of any new principles likely to be of practical value? The agreements about Newfoundland and West Africa conform to an old familiar type. They are territorial deals which are eminently satisfactory to us and doubtless to France also, but do not express any principle that admits of extended application. **But the agreements about Egypt and Morocco are of a different kind. We are not quite certain that Lord Lansdowne was well advised in attempting to gain concessions in Egypt in return for concessions to France in Morocco. He exposed himself to the danger of giving away something that might matter very much to us in return for something that mattered very little.** The right to apply surpluses in Egypt to general purposes instead of allowing them to lapse to the reserve fund of the Caisse de Dette, as they must do at present, may or may not be a good thing for Egypt. Mr Wilfred Blunt has shown in our columns more reasons for thinking that the tight control of Egyptian finances by the Caisse has been a good thing for the country, and that

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any relaxation of it may work to its disadvantage. But whether increased financial liberty in Egypt is a good thing for that country or not, it brings no gain to England, and there was a great danger in attempting, as Lord Lansdowne has done, to use Morocco, in which large British interests were at stake, to obtain financial concessions in Egypt, which are of no practical value to us, if honestly worked. But Lord Lansdowne, if the "Temps" summary may be trusted, has not only avoided the obvious pitfall in Morocco, but has introduced a principle that may be of immense service to English policy in the future. **He has, in fact, battered certain shadowy political interests of ours in Morocco in return for a guarantee of Free Trade for the next thirty years.** We could wish it had been a perpetual guarantee; and if Lord Lansdowne could have secured a perpetual guarantee by foregoing his demands for increased financial freedom in Egypt, we think it is a thousand pities that Egypt ever was introduced into the bargain. But, in spite of these objections, the guarantee about freedom of trade in Morocco -limited as it is in time - is to be welcomed as the first of a principle of universal validity in our foreign policy.

Mr Balfour and others have been asking for a Protectionist weapon with which to break down the commercial exclusiveness of other Powers. And all the time they have had the best of all weapons ready to their own hands in rigid adherence to the policy of Free Trade. Our Free Trade gives us no right to dictate to other Powers what their commercial policy shall be within their own frontiers. It does, however, give us an absolute inexpugnable right to demand that in all neutral unappropriated markets in which we have most-favoured-nation rights these shall be respected, whatever their political fate may be. The inexorable logic of this position can only be weakened in two ways. It may be weakened when we dissipate our energies and, instead of

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confining ourselves to the one vital point - the maintenance of our existing commercial rights - succumb to the doctrine that "the trade follows the flag" and take to annexations on our own account, setting an example to other nations which cannot but be injurious to ourselves. It would be invalidated still more dangerously if we ourselves established an empire based on a system of commercial preferences. Of both these errors the present Government has been guilty. And they are both confessed in this treaty, which allows us that military and territorial ambitions may be antagonistic to commercial interests, and that the best way of securing the latter is often to sacrifice the former. **We have in this treaty the rudiments of a commercial Monroe Doctrine for England. "With the existing possessions of the Powers" (the logic of the matter may be said to run) "we shall in no wise interfere but we shall deem it an unfriendly act if any nation infringes the existing freedom of trade in neutral markets."** But, as the agreement about Morocco shows, there are two indispensable conditions without which an English Monroe Doctrine has no chance of acceptance. The first condition is that we should forego on our own behalf territorial and military ambitions in neutral markets, as we have done by this agreement in Morocco. The second is that we should abandon any notion of preferential trade for ourselves, as we expressly do in Egypt under this Agreement.