

Abyssinia by a treaty of November, and abandoned the protectorate they had claimed. This was the end of the policy of adventure, and when in 1899 the Government pegged out a claim in China like other Great Powers and proposed to occupy the Bay of San Mun, public opinion in Italy forced them to withdraw. Labour troubles and political factions were disorganizing the State, and in the last five years of the nineteenth century Italy was in a sorry state. But while she was setting her house in order, the whole face of European politics was being changed.

The first consequence of Bismarck's disappearance was a better understanding between France and Russia, which began in 1891 and grew in strength. Pan-Slavism—the dream of a Confederation of all the Balkan Slavs with Holy Russia—became every day a more tangible force in politics. Almost simultaneously, Italy began to mend her relations with France: in 1896 Visconti Venosta brought about a Franco-Italian Convention which settled disputes of trade and navigation rights in Tunis, and in 1898 a new commercial treaty was completed. In the same year the long period of Anglo-French rivalry in Egypt culminated in the Fashoda incident, and thereafter ended. The South Africa War at the end of the century had this import for Italy, that the German attitude to the war and the passing of the German Navy Law of 1900 destroyed the friendship of Germany with Great Britain. In 1904 the arrangement known as the 'Entente', between France and Great Britain, first became a matter of public knowledge; it was especially directed towards the mutual safeguarding of British supremacy in Egypt and French supremacy in Morocco. The test of these new arrangements and of the change in Italian sympathy came at the Conference of