

viewing with distrust the recent movements of German agents', and suggested that 'the Protectorate already acquired by Germany in the neighbourhood of the Cameroons should be extended over the adjoining rivers in a southerly direction'. Lord Granville was aware that continued opposition to German designs would only lead to a close colonial understanding between Germany and France to the ultimate detriment of British interests. At the same time he was unable to pursue a vigorous policy owing to the threatening position of affairs in Egypt.

Britain and Germany were about to advance upon converging lines, and it was apparent that questions of the greatest moment would arise when and if these lines of advance should cross each other. Britain was then establishing herself in Egypt, and the ideal of a great British territory stretching from north to south—an object which Cecil Rhodes had at heart when he worked for the acquisition of the countries to the north of the Transvaal—was incompatible with the secret desire of Germany to establish a Central African empire, with harbours on the western and eastern coasts and occupying the territory that was then being explored in the Congo regions. The idea underlying the prophecy of Gladstone (in 1877) that 'our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African empire that will grow and grow . . . till we finally join hands across the Equator with Natal and Cape Colony' appealed with peculiar force to patriotic Britons, but its accomplishment was naturally fraught with grave dangers.

A question of this magnitude could not be settled by founding coastal establishments without eventually leading to international complications. Lord Granville