



A CARICATURE OF BISMARCK AS AN OCTOPUS

£850.00

La Grande Pieuvre.

Cartographer	<u>GILBERT-MARTIN, Charles.</u>
Date	1888
Stock #:	25648
Publication:	Bordeaux, 1888. Coloured wood-engraving. Sheet 650 x 490mm.
Condition:	Laid on archival canvas, otherwise a fine example.

DESCRIPTION:

A caricature of German Chancellor Otto von Bismark as a baggy-eyed octopus in the sea but extending its tentacles up to a map of Europe on which a pair of female warriors representing France and Russia stand together with swords drawn.

At the time of publication France was unknowingly benefiting from the secret 'Reinsurance Treaty' of 1887, intended to keep the peace in Europe: Russia and Germany agreed to remain neutral in any war unless Germany attacked France or Russia attacked Austria-Hungary. However in June 1888, the more bellicose Kaiser Wilhelm II came to the throne of Germany, and in 1890 Bismark was sacked and the 'Reinsurance Treaty' was allowed to lapse, a step towards the First World War.

The satire was published in a republican newspaper 'Le Don Quichotte', which had been founded by Charles Gilbert-Martin in 1874 and ran until 1893.