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THE JULY CRISIS, 1914

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914, presented Austria-Hungary with an opportunity to move against Serbia and to resolve its Balkan problems once and for all.

The Austro-Hungarian government decided to hold Serbia responsible for the assassination despite the fact that the assassins claimed that they had acted alone. Subsequently an official Austrian inquiry could find no evidence of the Serbian government's involvement in the plot. Nevertheless the assassination provided the Austro-Hungarians with the excuse to act against Serbia, and act they did.

In Vienna, opinion amongst the Austro-Hungarian leaders as to how to react to the events at Sarajevo was at first divided. The military, led by Conrad von Hotzendorf, the commander-in-chief of the army, pressed for immediate action against Serbia. On the other hand, the political leaders led by Count Leopold von Berchtold, the foreign minister, wished firstly to secure Austria-Hungary's diplomatic position by gaining German support before any action was taken. German backing would provide protection for Austria in case Russia came to the aid of Serbia. Thus, on Berchtold's advice, the Austro-Hungarian Emperor, Franz Joseph, wrote to the Kaiser asking for German support and declared, 'Serbia must be eliminated as a political factor in the Balkans . . . Friendly settlement is no longer to be thought of.'

6 July — the 'Blank Cheque'

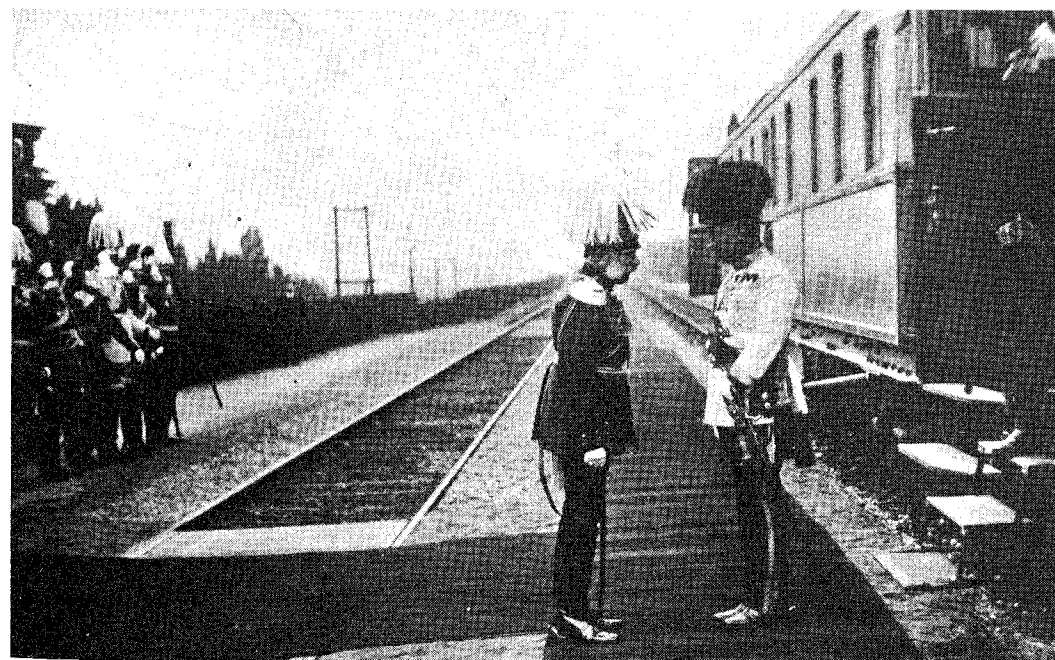
On 6 July, in response to the Austro-Hungarian approach, the Kaiser assured Franz Joseph of German support if Russia intervened. He advised that the time was right to move against the Serbs. The Kaiser told the Austrian ambassador, 'Austria must judge what is to be done to clear up her relations with Serbia; but whatever Austria's decision, she can count with certainty upon it that Germany will stand behind her ally.'

This assurance by the Kaiser was a 'blank cheque' from Germany and it allowed the Austro-Hungarians a free hand. This 'blank cheque' was central to subsequent events. The Kaiser's declaration of support for Austria on 6 July not only exceeded the terms of the Dual Alliance, which was a defensive treaty and did not cover Austria if she provoked war, but it also allowed the Austro-Hungarians to take the leading role in the critical early stages of the crisis. Had the Germans been more cautious in supporting the Austro-Hungarians, the government in Vienna may have acted more responsibly.

23 July — the ultimatum to Serbia

After a delay of two weeks which allowed the French president to conclude a visit to Russia, the Austro-Hungarian government presented the Serbs with an ultimatum on 23 July. This ultimatum contained ten demands and was written in such a way as to be virtually impossible for the Serbs to accept, thus leaving open the way for war. Serbia was given an unreasonably short 48-hour limit within which to accept the ultimatum completely or face the consequences.

At this point the crisis changed its character. Up until the ultimatum was issued it was believed by the other European powers that what was occurring was just another local Balkan upset which would soon be settled by a compromise. Such attitudes changed when the content of the ultimatum became known. The British were shocked. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, wrote to the British ambassador in Vienna saying, '... the Note seemed to me the most formidable document I had ever seen addressed by one state to another that was independent.'



The Emperor of Austria and the Kaiser. Germany's support for Austria gave Austria the strength to issue an ultimatum to Serbia.

Amongst other things the ultimatum demanded that agents of the Austro-Hungarian government go to Serbia and help investigate and suppress anti-Austrian subversive movements. This demand was designed to compromise Serbian independence and thus make Serbian acceptance of all of the terms of the ultimatum impossible.

The Austro-Hungarian ultimatum made war with Serbia practically certain and hence the prospect of Russian intervention to aid Serbia much more likely. Such intervention would make a general European war difficult to avoid. On seeing the text of the ultimatum to Serbia, the Russian foreign minister declared to the Austrian ambassador to St. Petersburg, 'What you want is war, and you have burned your bridges behind you.'

25 July — Serbia replies

Under pressure from the Russians to compromise and avoid war, the Serbian government answered the ultimatum within the time limit. Whilst not accepting totally all of the Austro-Hungarian demands, the Serbs acceded to such a degree that it appeared that the crisis was resolved. Even the Kaiser was impressed by the Serbian reply and declared, 'every cause for war falls to the ground.'

Realising the dangers posed by the unreasonableness of the Austro-Hungarian position the other powers moved to head off the crisis. Germany advised Austria-Hungary to accept the Serbian reply and to negotiate a settlement, while the Russians and the British urged international mediation of the dispute.

28 July — war on Serbia

As Serbian acceptance of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum had not been total, the Austrians took the action they had planned from the beginning. On 28 July they broke off diplomatic relations with Serbia and declared war. On 29 July the Serbian capital, Belgrade, was bombarded by artillery.

30 July — Russian mobilization

The reactions of the Russians now became the focus of attention. If Russia acted militarily, the alliance system would come into action and a general European war could follow. On 26 July the Tsar had ordered partial mobilization of the Russian forces on the Austro-Hungarian frontier. However partial mobilization had not been planned for by the Russian army and posed technical difficulties. Thus, the Russian General Staff urged the Tsar on 28 July to order full mobilization, an act which would certainly provoke a German response. After hesitating for two days the Tsar ordered full mobilization on 30 July.

31 July and 1 August — Germany declares war on Russia

In view of Russian mobilization Germany issued two ultimatums of its own on 31 July. The Germans demanded that Russia cease her mobilization within 24 hours. The second ultimatum was directed towards France and demanded that France announce its neutrality in any conflict within 36 hours and that it hand over its most important frontier fortresses as a sign of good will. This the French refused to do.

When Russia failed to reply to the German demand for demobilization Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August. On the same day both France and Germany ordered general mobilization.

2 and 3 August — Germany declares war on France

In preparation for an offensive against France, the German army occupied Luxemburg on 2 August. Germany next demanded that the Belgian government permit the free passage of the German army across Belgium into northern France. Belgium was a neutral country whose neutrality had been guaranteed by Germany, France and Britain by a treaty signed in 1839.

Belgium rejected the German demand on 3 August. On the same day Germany declared war on France and crossed the Belgian frontier, thus violating Belgian neutrality.

British hesitation

Throughout July the British government had sought to have the crisis mediated and had itself been divided over the question of possible involvement in a European war, should one occur.

The British had informed the Germans that in the event of war British neutrality could not be taken for granted. At the same time they had told France that British participation on the side of France should not be assumed. The British government was not willing to go to war for the sake of distant Serbia. Nor were they willing to back Russia in the Balkans or to automatically aid France. The Entente Cordiale was not a formal treaty arrangement and it did not demand automatic British involvement in a war on the French or Russian side.

Britain remained uncommitted until such time as her interests were clearly threatened. British interests lay in the security of the English Channel and in the safety of the shipping which passed through it. Thus the fate of Belgium and of the northern coast of France was the centre of British concern. Belgian neutrality came to be the issue which decided British involvement in the conflict.

GREAT ARMIES MOVE

GERMAN INVASION OF FRANCE

RUSSIANS CROSS GERMAN FRONTIER

BRITISH DECISION AWAITED.

"THE TIMES" SAYS: "WE ARE READY."

4 August — Britain declares war on Germany

As the crisis in Europe deepened the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, asked both France and Germany to guarantee Belgian neutrality. The French gave such a guarantee but the Germans could not, because they had made plans to invade France through Belgium. When the German army crossed into Belgium on 3 August the British felt compelled to act. On 4 August Britain declared war on Germany.

6 August

On 6 August Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia.

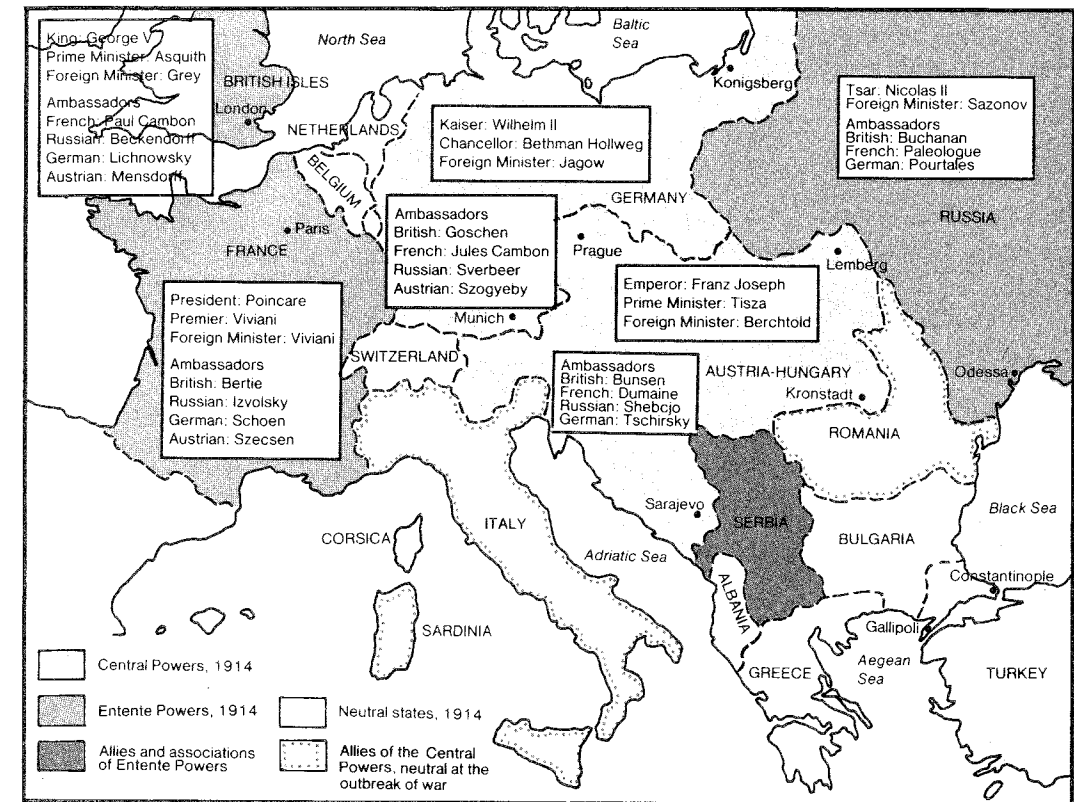
12 August

Almost as an afterthought Britain and France declared war on Austria-Hungary on 12 August.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister wish to gain German support before moving against Serbia?
- 2 The Kaiser's 'blank cheque' of 6 July was central to subsequent events. Why?
- 3 On what date was the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia presented? How long was Serbia given to reply?
- 4 What demand in the ultimatum issued to Serbia was designed to compromise Serbian independence and make acceptance by Serbia impossible?
- 5 How did the Kaiser react to Serbia's response to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum?
- 6 On what date did Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia?
- 7 Why did the Russian General Staff urge the Tsar to order full rather than partial mobilization of the Russian army?
- 8 What did the Germans demand of France on 31 July?
- 9 When did Germany declare war on Russia?
- 10 What demand did Germany make of Belgium?
- 11 Which powers had guaranteed Belgium's neutrality in 1839?
- 12 What had the British government attempted to do throughout the crisis?
- 13 Why did Belgian neutrality come to be the issue which decided British involvement in the conflict?
- 14 Why were the Germans unable to give the British a guarantee of Belgian neutrality?
- 15 On what date did Britain declare war on Germany?

MAP QUESTIONS



Map 6 European Diplomacy July 1914

- 1 Look at the map and name:
 - a the British prime minister;
 - b the German chancellor;
 - c the Austro-Hungarian prime minister;
 - d the French premier;
 - e the Russian tsar.
- 2 List the foreign ministers of each of the five powers involved in the July crisis.
- 3 With which countries does Belgium have borders?
- 4 List the countries with which Serbia has borders.
- 5 Name the capital of Serbia.

INVESTIGATING HISTORY

Document One: Opinion in Vienna, 30 June

Heinrich von Tschirschky was the German ambassador to Austria-Hungary in 1914. In this correspondence Tschirschky reports on opinion in Vienna two days after the assassination at Sarajevo. He wrote to Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Chancellor. The marginal notes were made by Kaiser William when he read the cable and give an insight into his thinking at this early stage of the crisis. Count Berchtold, to whom Tschirschky refers, was the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Read the document and its marginal notes, and answer the questions which follow.

The Ambassador at Vienna to the Imperial Chancellor

Vienna, June 30, 1914.

I hope not.

Count Berchtold told me today that *everything* pointed to the fact that the threads of the conspiracy to which the archduke fell a sacrifice, *ran together at Belgrade*. The affair was so well thought out that very young men were intentionally selected for the perpetration of the crime, against whom *only a mild punishment could be decreed*. The minister spoke very bitterly about the Serbian plots.

Now or never. Who authorized him to act that way? That is very stupid! It is none of his business, as it is solely the affair of Austria, what she plans to do in this case. Later, if plans go wrong, it will be said that Germany did not want it! Let Tschirschky be good enough to drop this nonsense! The Serbs must be disposed of, and that right soon! Goes without saying; nothing but truisms.

I frequently hear expressed here, even among serious people, the wish that *at last a final and fundamental reckoning should be had with the Serbs*. The Serbs should first be presented with a number of demands, and in case they should not accept these, energetic measures should be taken. *I take opportunity of every such occasion to advise quietly but very impressively and seriously against too hasty steps*. First of all, they must make sure what they want to do, for so far I have heard only indefinite expressions of opinion. Then the chances of every kind of action should be carefully weighed, and it should be kept in mind that Austria-Hungary does not stand alone in the world, that it is her duty to think not only of her allies, but to take into consideration the entire European situation, and especially to bear in mind the attitude of Italy and Romania on all questions that concern Serbia.

Von Tschirschky

- 1 In which city did Count Berchtold believe the threads of conspiracy ran together?
- 2 What did Tschirschky frequently hear expressed, even amongst serious people in Vienna?

- 3 What did Tschirschky think Austria-Hungary should keep in mind when weighing 'the chances of every kind of action'?
- 4 Look at the Kaiser's marginal notes. What did the Kaiser think of Tschirschky's advice to Austria-Hungary?
- 5 In the Kaiser's opinion what must be done with the Serbs?

Briefly

Why were the Austro-Hungarians and the Kaiser so quick to blame the events in Sarajevo on Serbia? What did Austria-Hungary expect to gain by acting forcibly against Serbia in July 1914?

Document Two: Austria-Hungary and Germany plan their move, 18 July

By 18 July Austria-Hungary in consultation with Germany had decided on a plan of action to deal with Serbia and had taken into consideration the larger implications and the risk of a general European war.

In this report Dr H. von Schoen, the Bavarian chargé d'affaires at Berlin gives an account of conversations he had in Berlin with officials of both governments and reveals how carefully the Central powers were planning their strategy.

Mr Zimmermann, to whom Schoen refers, was the German under-secretary of state for foreign affairs.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

The Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin to the President of the Ministerial Council

Report 386

Berlin, 18 July, 1914

I have the honour most respectfully to report as follows to Your Excellency concerning the prospective settlement between the Austro-Hungarian Government and Serbia, on the basis of conversations I have had with Under-Secretary of State Zimmerman

... The step which the Vienna Cabinet has decided to undertake at Belgrade, and which will consist in the presentation of a note, will take place on the twenty-fifth instant

... As Mr. Zimmermann told me, the note, so far as has yet been determined, will contain the following demands:

- 1 The issuing of a proclamation by the King of Serbia which shall state that the Serbian Government has nothing to do with the Greater-Serbia movement, and fully disapproves of it.
- 2 The initiation of an inquiry to discover those implicated in the murder of Sarajevo, and the participation of Austrian officials in this inquiry.
- 3 Proceedings against all who have participated in the Greater-Serbia movement.

A respite of forty-eight hours is to be granted for the acceptance of these demands.

It is perfectly plain that Serbia can not accept any such demands, which are incompatible with her dignity as a sovereign state. Thus the result would be war . . .

A powerful and successful move against Serbia would make it possible for the Austrians and Hungarians to feel themselves once more to be a national power, would again revive the country's collapsed economic life, and would set foreign aspirations back for years . . .

They are of the opinion here that Austria is face to face with an hour of fate, and for this reason they declared here without hesitation, in reply to an inquiry from Vienna, that we would agree to any method of procedure which they might determine on there, even at the risk of a war with Russia.

In Vienna they do not seem to have expected such an unconditional support . . . by Germany . . .

The attitude of Russia will . . . determine

- 1 As outlined by Mr Zimmermann, what was the second demand Austria was to make of Serbia?
- 2 The Austro-Hungarian and German officials believed that it was 'perfectly plain that Serbia can not accept' the demands to be made. Why?
- 3 What did the German officials believe 'a powerful and successful move against Serbia' would make possible?
- 4 The attitude of which power was expected to determine whether 'the attempt to localize the war will succeed'?
- 5 Why did the Germans expect to find 'our English cousins on the side of our enemies'?

Briefly

How did Germany expect Britain, France and Russia to react to an Austro-Hungarian action against Serbia in July 1914?

The Cartoonist's View: 'The Power Behind'

This *Punch* cartoon reflects the British view of relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia after the assassination at Sarajevo. Serbia, represented by the rooster standing on the ground, is about to be attacked by an eagle with outstretched claws.

The eagle has two heads as did the eagle on the Austrian coat of arms. A bear is crouched behind the rock.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



The Power Behind

Austria (at the ultimatum stage): 'I don't quite like his attitude, somebody must be backing him.'

- 1 Look at the crown the eagle is wearing. Which country, represented by the eagle, is about to attack the Serbian rooster?
- 2 Which country is represented by the bear behind the rock? Why has the cartoonist given the cartoon the title 'The Power Behind'?
- 3 What is the cartoonist implying by the relative size of the figures representing the different countries in this cartoon?

Briefly

Why did the European powers expect Russia to intervene if Austria attacked Serbia in 1914?

Document Three: Two views of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia

In the first of these documents, dated 24 July, the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey writes to the British ambassador in Vienna and sets out his reaction to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia.

The second document, dated 28 July, is the Kaiser's note to the German foreign secretary written after he had read Serbia's response to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum. It was written on the day that Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and sets out the Kaiser's view that 'every cause for war falls to the ground'.

Read these documents and answer the questions which follow.

Grey to Bunsen Tel. (No. 148)
Foreign Office, 24 July, 1914

Austro-Hungarian Ambassador has communicated to me the note addressed to Serbia with the explanation of the Austro-Hungarian government upon it.

I said that the murder of the Archduke and some of the circumstances stated in the Austro-Hungarian note with regard to Serbia naturally aroused sympathy with Austria, but I thought it a great pity that a time-limit, and such a short time-limit, had been introduced at this stage, and the note seemed to me the most formidable document I had ever seen addressed by one State to another that was independent. Demand No. 5 might mean that the Austro-Hungarian government were to be entitled to appoint officials who should have author-

ity in Serbian territory and this would hardly be consistent with the maintenance of independent sovereignty of Serbia.

The Austro-Hungarian ambassador observed that there had been so much procrastination on the part of Serbia that a time-limit was essential. Some weeks had passed since the murder of the Archduke and Serbia had made no sign of sympathy or help; if she had held out a hand after the murder the present situation might have been prevented.

I observed that a time-limit could have been introduced at any later stage if Serbia had procrastinated about a reply; as it was, the Austro-Hungarian Government not only demanded a reply within forty-eight hours, but dictated the terms of the reply.

The Emperor to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Your Excellency:

New Palace, 28 July, 1914, 10 a.m.

After reading over the Serbian reply, which I received this morning, I am convinced that on the whole the wishes of the Danube monarchy have been acceded to. The few reservations that Serbia makes in regard to individual points could, according to my opinion, be settled by negotiation. But it contains the announcement of a capitulation of the most humiliating kind, and as a result, *every cause for war falls to the ground.*

Nevertheless, the piece of paper, like its contents, can be considered as of little value so long as it is not translated into *deeds*. The Serbs are Orientals, therefore liars, tricksters, and masters of evasion. In order that these beautiful promises may be turned to truth and facts, a *douce violence* must be exercised. This should be so arranged that Austria would receive a HOSTAGE (Belgrade), as a guarantee for the enforcement and carrying out of the promises

Look at Sir Edward Grey's cable.

- 1 Why did the Austro-Hungarian ambassador believe the time limit placed on Serbia's reply was essential?
- 2 The ambassador believed 'the present situation might have been prevented'. How?
From what you have read in the earlier documents, do you think that the ambassador's claim is accurate? Give reasons for your answer.

Look at the Kaiser's note.

- 3 In the Kaiser's opinion how could 'the few reservations that Serbia makes in regard to individual points' be settled?
- 4 How did the Kaiser describe Serbia's capitulation?
- 5 Which city did the Kaiser believe should be held hostage to ensure that Serbia kept its promises?

Briefly

Explain why the other European powers were surprised by both the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia and Serbia's reply? What did they expect to be the outcome of this diplomatic exchange?

Document Four: The Austro-Hungarian reaction to Serbia's reply to its ultimatum

On 28 July, at 10 am, the Kaiser wrote 'every cause for war falls to the ground'. Yet later that same day Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and Germany backed her. The reason why the Kaiser's assessment of the situation had no effect was that Austria-Hungary had decided on war and had received full German backing to do what it wished in the 'blank cheque' statement made by the Kaiser on 6 July. Consequently the Austro-Hungarians could do as they saw fit and the Germans were committed to back them up.

This document written on 27 July, the day before the Kaiser's note, sets out the Austro-Hungarian reaction to Serbia's reply and attempts to justify war with Serbia. It states that Austria-Hungary is certain of German support. The document is a memorandum written by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Germany, Count Szogyeny, and addressed to the German Foreign Office.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the Foreign Office
Memorandum

Berlin, 27 July, 1914

The Royal Serbian Government has refused to agree to the demands which we were

forced to make for the lasting assurance of those of our vital interests threatened by that Government, and has thus given evi-

dence that it is not willing to desist from its destructive efforts directed towards the constant disturbance of some of our border territories and their eventual separation from the control of the Monarchy. We are therefore compelled, to our regret and much against our will, to force Serbia by the sharpest means to a fundamental alteration of her hitherto hostile attitude. That in so doing, aggressive intentions are far from our thoughts, and that it is merely in self-defence that we have finally determined, after years of patience, to oppose the Greater-Serbia intrigues with the sword, is well known to the Imperial German Government.

It is a cause of honest satisfaction to us that we find both in the Imperial German Government and in the entire German peo-

ple a complete comprehension of the fact that our patience was of necessity exhausted after the assassination at Sarajevo, which, according to the results of the inquiry, was planned at Belgrade and carried out by emissaries from that city; and that we are now forced to the task of securing ourselves by every means against the continuation of the present intolerable conditions on our south-eastern border.

We confidently hope that our prospective difference with Serbia will be the cause of no further complications; but in the event that such should nevertheless occur, we are gratefully certain that Germany, with a fidelity long proven, will bear in mind the obligations of her alliance and lend us her support in any fight forced upon us by another opponent.

- 1 The Austro-Hungarian ambassador states 'aggressive intentions are far from our thoughts'. How does he describe Austria-Hungary's action against Serbia?
- 2 What does the ambassador state Austria-Hungary will oppose by the sword?
- 3 What, in his opinion, is 'a cause of honest satisfaction to us'?
- 4 Where does the ambassador claim the assassination at Sarajevo was planned?
- 5 What is he certain Germany 'will bear in mind ... in any fight forced upon us by another opponent'?

Briefly

Why was Austria-Hungary so confident of German support as it prepared to attack Serbia in late July 1914?

Document Five: Sir Edward Grey outlines the British position

Speaking in the House of Commons on 3 August, Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, outlined the British position on the European crisis. Sir Edward Goschen, to whom Grey refers, was the British ambassador to Germany.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

The present crisis has originated ... in a dispute between Austria and Serbia. I can say this with the most absolute confidence — no government and no country has less desire to be involved in war over a dispute with Austria and Serbia than the government and the country of France. They are involved in it because of their obligation of honour under a definite alliance with Russia. Well, it is only fair to say to the House that that obligation of honour cannot apply in the same way to us. We are not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance. We do not even know the terms of that Alliance ...

There is the more serious consideration — becoming more serious every hour — there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium. ... I will read to the House what took place last week on this subject. When mobilisation was beginning, I knew that this question must be a most important element in our policy — a most important subject for the House of Commons. I telegraphed at the same time in similar terms to both Paris and Berlin to say that it was essential for us to know whether the French and German governments respectively were prepared to undertake an engagement to respect the neutrality of Belgium. These are the replies. I got from the French Government this reply:

'The French Government are resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium, and it would only be in the event of some other power violating that neutrality that France might ... act otherwise ...

The German Minister for Foreign Affairs ... gave Sir Edward Goschen to understand that he rather doubted whether they could answer at all, as any reply ... might ... have the undesirable effect of disclosing, to a certain extent, part of their plan of campaign ...

There is but one way in which the government could make certain at the present moment of keeping outside this war, and that would be that it should immediately issue a proclamation of unconditional neutrality. We cannot do that. We have made the commitment to France that I have read to the House which prevents us from doing that. We have got the consideration of Belgium which prevents us also from any unconditional neutrality, and without those conditions absolutely satisfied and satisfactory, we are bound not to shrink from proceeding to the use of all the forces in our power. If we did take that line by saying, 'We will have nothing whatever to do with this matter' under no conditions — the Belgian Treaty obligations, the possible position in the Mediterranean, with damage to British interests, and what may happen to France from our failure to support France — if we were to say that all those things mattered nothing, were as nothing, and to say we would stand aside, we should, I believe, sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world, and should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences ...

- 1 How does Sir Edward Grey account for France's involvement in a dispute between Austria and Serbia?
- 2 In Grey's opinion what is 'the more serious consideration — becoming more serious every hour'?
- 3 Under what circumstance did the French state they would not respect Belgian neutrality?
- 4 Why did the German Minister for Foreign Affairs doubt whether Germany could answer the British request for a guarantee of Belgian neutrality?

The Cartoonist's View: 'Bravo, Belgium!'

This cartoon was published in the British magazine *Punch* on 12 August, eight days after Britain had declared war on Germany for its invasion of Belgium. The boy in the cartoon represents Belgium and the old man approaching him represents Germany.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



Bravo, Belgium!

- 1 Which figure in the cartoon is depicted as provoking the trouble? How?
- 2 How do you interpret the relative size of the figures in this cartoon? What is the cartoonist saying about each of the countries represented by the figures?
- 3 What feature of the figure representing Germany makes fun of Germans?

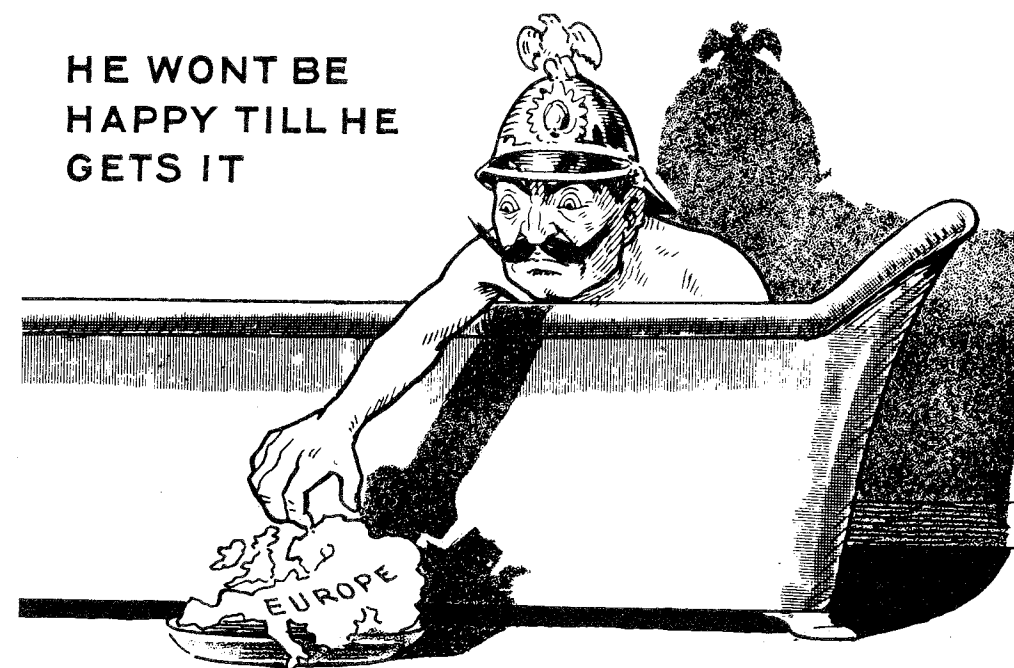
Briefly

Why did the British government regard the neutrality of Belgium as so important in 1914?

The Cartoonist's View: 'He won't be happy till he gets it'

This cartoon represents the British view of Germany and German ambitions on the outbreak of war in 1914.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



- 1 Who is the leader depicted as sitting in the bathtub reaching for the sponge?
- 2 What does the cartoonist imply by drawing this man as wearing a helmet?
- 3 What is the significance of the shape of the sponge and its title?

Briefly

Explain why Britain feared German domination of Europe in 1914?