Raymond Poincare's Role in the Negotiations from June 28 to August 4, 1914

Corlie E. Jackson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses
Part of the History Commons, and the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Jackson, Corlie E., "Raymond Poincare's Role in the Negotiations from June 28 to August 4, 1914" (1939). Graduate Thesis Collection. 185.
https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses/185

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Scholarship at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisa@butler.edu.
RAYMOND POINCARE'S RÔLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FROM JUNE 28 TO AUGUST 4, 1914

by

CORLIE ELIZABETH JACKSON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of History and Political Science
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Division of Graduate Instruction
Butler University
Indianapolis
1939
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. Introduction ................................................. 4

Poincaré's Election -- The assassination of Francis Ferdinand.

II. Poincaré's Visit to Russia ............................... 9

Preliminaries -- Events in Russia -- Agreements Reached -- The Return Trip.

III. The Ultimatum to Serbia ................................. 19

Preliminaries -- Sending the Ultimatum -- Results.

IV. Efforts for Peace ........................................ 28

Russia -- Germany -- England -- Austria and Germany -- France.

V. Mobilizations and Declarations of War .................. 34

Russia and Germany -- The Franco-Russian Alliance -- Germany and France -- Belgium -- England.

VI. Responsibility of Poincaré as Viewed by Historical Writers and Research Scholars .................. 48

VII. Conclusion ............................................... 64
PREFACE

In view of the unsettled condition of European diplomacy today, it should be profitable to study the antecedents of the World War in more detail than hitherto. Such a study will make clearer the steps taken by national leaders then—steps which at that time were unable to avoid war.

Many European statesmen who were in power before the World War have been regarded by some authors as having had some degree of responsibility for that conflict—and President Poincaré of France was no exception. The recent publication of the Documents Diplomatiques Français has provided additional information, as have other late publications on the World War. It is my purpose in this thesis to investigate the part played by President Poincaré during the days between June 28 and August 4, 1914, and to determine, as far as possible, whether there is any justification for charges of responsibility made against him by certain writers, some of whom have been trying to clear their own country of the blame for starting the World War as set forth in the so-called "war guilt" clause, Article 231, of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919.
RAYMOND POINCARÉ'S ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS
FROM JUNE 28 TO AUGUST 4, 1914

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Raymond Poincaré was born, August 20, 1860, at Bar-le-Duc, in the department of Meuse - which had formerly been a part of the province of Lorraine. He was the son of Nicolas Poincaré, who was a civil servant and meteorologist. Raymond Poincaré was educated at the University of Paris and was called to the bar in Paris. He was also the editor of Voltaire, and in 1909 he became a member of the French Academy.

The political posts held by Raymond Poincaré were many. In 1887 he was elected deputy for the Meuse. In 1893 he entered the Ministry as Minister of Education. He was a moderate republican. In the following year he became Minister of Finance, and he showed great ability in the matters of national finance and the budget. In the late 1890's he was Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies. Apart from finance, his interests were in foreign affairs. He was an intense nationalist. From January, 1912, to 1913, he was Premier, or President of the Council of Ministers, and held the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs. In November, 1912, with M. Poincaré’s approval, the Grey-Cambron letters concerning possible future naval cooperation between England and France in the event of a war were exchanged. He was elected President of the French Republic on January 17, 1913. During the trying days which followed, it

was fortunate for France that her president was a strong rather than a weak personality.¹

When Raymond Poincaré, then Premier, was elected President on January 17, 1913, it took two ballots by the National Assembly to obtain the required absolute majority for election. Thus, even in the Parliament of France, opinion was divided.² He received messages of congratulations from the other States. A former Berlin newspaper editor says that President Poincaré exaggerated when he decided that these telegrams were evidence that "all Europe saw in the vote of the National Assembly a happy pledge of peace."³ M. Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, wrote on the day before the election of President Poincaré, "Tomorrow ... are the Presidential elections. God grant that Poincaré may not be beaten. It will be a catastrophe for us."⁴ M. Isvolsky felt that he could influence President Poincaré to be favorable to Russia and unfavorable to Germany and Austria-Hungary.

In June, 1914, President Poincaré asked M. Viviani to form a ministry. This was rather difficult because some of M. Viviani's colleagues opposed the three-year military service law which had been restored in 1913 and which was favored by the President. After one unsuccessful attempt, M. Viviani, agreeing to permit the three-year military service law to remain in effect until an adequate substitute could be devised, was given a vote of confidence.

1. Munro, Governments of Europe, 425.
2. Ibid., 420.
on June 16. Thus the stage was set for the action of 1914.  

That action was begun, not in France, but in Austria-Hungary.

On June 28, 1914, occurred the assassination which set in motion the chain of events which were to lead directly to the beginning of the World War. On that day Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Emperor of Austria, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were visiting in Bosnia, which was then Austrian territory. They were on an official visit in the town of Sarajevo to witness the army maneuvers. Two attempts were made by Bosnian subjects to assassinate the Archduke and his wife; the second attempt, by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian subject, was successful.

On June 28, President Poincaré was at Longchamps for the Grand Prix when he was informed by telegram of the assassination. After returning to the Elysée, he sent his condolences to the Emperor Francis Joseph, for which the Emperor later thanked him.

On the same day M. Viviani, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent condolences through Ambassador Dumaïne, the French Ambassador in Vienna, to the Emperor.

Veuillez être auprès de Gouvernement impérial et royal l’interprète des plus sincères condoléances du Gouvernement de la République ainsi que des sentiments d’horreur que lui inspire l’attentat dont on été victimes à Sarajevo Son Altesse impériale l’Archiduc heritier et Madame la duchesse de Hohenberg.

On the following day M. Dumaïne reported to the Foreign Office.

Après m’avoir assuré de sa gratitude pour l’expression desprofondes condoléances du Gouvernement de la République, dont Votre Excellence m’avait

4. Documents Diplomatie Francais, X, 646.
charged de me faire l'interprète auprès de lui, le comte Serchtlodd m'a parlé avec une sincère émotion de sa longue intimité avec l'Archiduc défunt.1

The French attitude in respect to the assassination was reserved and correct; and when the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador came to thank him for his condolences, President Poincaré said he was convinced that "the Serbian Government would show the Monarchy the greatest complaisance in the judicial investigation and the prosecution of the accomplices."

The French, knowing nothing of the events that took place in Vienna following the assassination, continued much as usual. On July 8, Ambassador Dumaine reported that he thought that the Austrian military party would be unable to force upon Serbia an inquiry about the crime, and that the Emperor, Francis Joseph, would prevent any display of threats. A similar report was received on July 10, from the same source. President Poincaré wrote concerning the situation in Paris:

... In Paris we suspect nothing of all this, the Austrian Sphinx is impenetrable. In all this mystery I could not give up my impending journey to the North of Europe, for which every-thing had been arranged; moreover, a sudden change of plan might have suggested some impending danger and might have scared Europe.5

On the 13th of July, the Prince of Monaco, who had been on a visit to Kiel, stopped to visit the President at the Élysée and to speak of the governing ability of the Kaiser.6 On

1. Documents Diplomatiques Français, I, 654.
6. Ibid., 160.
July 14, France peacefully celebrated her national fête.¹

During this time plans for the visit to Russia were being made; the Ambassadors corresponded about the speeches to be made by President Poincaré and the Tsar.²

¹Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, II, 161.
²Documents Diplomatiques Français, X, 706-64.
POINCARE'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

In order to strengthen the Franco-Russian alliance, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaievitch had previously visited Paris, and plans had been made for President Poincaré, accompanied by Premier Viviani, to visit St. Petersburg. Because of delay in Parliament, they were unable to reach Dunkirk until the 15th of July. Here they embarked on the battleship France, with the Jean Bart as her companion.

Concerning the plans for the visit and the lack of records concerning the conversations which took place in St. Petersburg during the visit of President Poincaré and Premier Viviani, the editors of the Documents Diplomatiques Francais said in the Avant-Propos:

L'autre événement est la visite du Président de la République, M. Poincaré, et du Président du Conseil, M. Viviani, à Saint-Pétersbourg, du 20 au 23 juillet. Cette visite avait été prévue dès le mois de janvier; mais elle revêtait, dans les circonstances où elle se produisait, une importance toute particulière. La Commission a fait, bien entendu, toutes les recherches possibles pour essayer de retrouver un compte rendu de ces conversations de Saint-Pétersbourg, dont M. Poincaré a donné, on le sait, un récit détaillé dans ses souvenirs. Ces recherches ont été presque entièrement vaines, comme paraissent d'ailleurs l'avoir été celles qui ont été faites par les éditeurs de documents russes. Dans les archives des Affaires étrangères, où l'on trouve un dossier sur la préparation de la visite, il n'existe qu'une seule note, très brève, - de la main de M. Viviani, -

2. Ibid., II, 158.
qui paraîsse se rapporter aux entretiens. Les télégrammes échangés entre Saint-Pétersbourg et Paris pendant la visite concernent uniquement la politique intérieure française. Dans les archives de la Présidence de la République, aucune indication n'a été retrouvée. Les archives de l'ambassade de France à Saint-Pétersbourg, qui ont été remontées à Paris, ne donnent aucun renseignement. Les efforts qui ont été faits pour recueillir des papiers privés ou en le même résultat négatif: les papiers de M. Poincaré, tous déposés aujourd'hui dans les archives du Quai d'Orsay, ne contiennent aucune pièce pour cette période; c'est en vain que la Commission a essayé de trouver des papiers de M. Viviani, s'il en existe... Laléologue, ambassadeur de France à Saint-Pétersbourg, qui a déjà publié ses souvenirs sous forme de Journal, a fait savoir qu'il ne conservait dans ses papiers personnels aucun document à ce sujet.

Because of the silence of the Documents Diplomatiques Franaçais on the visit to Russia, it has been necessary to seek information elsewhere. Nevertheless, such a silence makes one wonder if it is possible that some one may have removed part of the files before the Commission began its work. President Poincaré has made very few notes on the results or agreements reached by this visit.

The President and the Premier of France had planned to visit Russia in accordance with the custom of France and Russia to exchange reciprocal visits since they had made their alliance in 1894. President Poincaré had previously visited Russia in 1912, then as Premier.2

Since preparations for this visit of state had been made so far in advance and events had been planned accordingly, it was impossible to postpone the visit. When it was suggested to M. Viviani that he postpone the visit because of internal happenings in France he wrote, on June 22, to the Chargé d'Affaires at St.

2. Ibid., 165.
Petersburg that he had been informed that certain engagements of the Tsar prevented such a change. After the assassination in Sarajevo, Austria seemed to be rather calm. Furthermore, it was felt that if President Poincaré cancelled his voyage to Russia at that time it might tend to aggravate an already grave diplomatic situation.

M. Sazonov, then the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote about the Russian opinion of President Poincaré:

At the beginning of January, 1913, the French Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Poincaré, was elected President of the French Republic in succession to M. Fallières - a choice which was hailed with satisfaction in Russia. At the suggestion of our Ambassador in Paris, M. Isvolsky, which received my support, the Emperor conferred the Order of St. Andrew upon the new President as soon as he had taken up his duties. This was a departure from the usual custom of granting the highest decoration of the Empire to the head of a State only after he had occupied the position for some time; exceptions were made only on some special occasion, such as a personal meeting.

M. Poincaré's visit to St. Petersburg in 1912, had left a good impression. We appreciated his peaceful disposition and his loyalty to the alliance, no less than his firmness and tenacity of purpose; this last is a quality most valuable in a statesman, even when it verges on the corresponding defect - obstinacy.

The Russians felt that President Poincaré would be pro-Russian.

The France, carrying President Poincaré and Premier Viviani arrived at Cronstadt on the afternoon of July 20. They were escorted by Admiral Gregorevitch to the Imperial yacht where they met Tsar Nicholas. The two rulers, the Tsar and the President, discussed pleasantly their previous meetings, and conversed in a lively manner. Concerning that discussion, Ambassa-

1. Documents Diplomatiques Français, X, 603-4.
2. Sazonov, Fateful Years, 149.
As was proper it was Poincaré who had the initiative. Before long he was doing all the talking. The Tsar simply nodded acquiescence, but his whole appearance showed his sincere approval. It radiated confidence and sympathy. 1

The German Ambassador was unimpressed by Poincaré's arrival in Russia. Ambassador Pourtalès reported, on July 23, that President Poincaré received a "cool reception", but he attributed part of the "great apathy of the general public" to the workingmen's strikes, which, in addition to other inconveniences, prevented some of the newspapers from being published. 2 On the following day he again reported to Berlin:

... For the arrival of the President and for his passage along the Neva Quay to the Winter Palace, but a comparatively small proportion of the public had gathered, which not only failed to give Mr. Poincaré an ovation, but, indeed scarcely greeted him. The streets - decorated by police orders, but in no way particularly thickly belflagged - through which the President with his escort and a numerous suite passed on a drive about the city during the afternoon, were far from being unusually lively, and only at the street corners did a few curious sight-seers gather to await the passing of the cortège. 3

On July 20, the Tsar gave a banquet in honor of his guests from France. At this banquet the Tsar and President Poincaré made speeches concerning the alliance and friendship of the two countries. 4 These same speeches had been the subject of several telegrams between Premier Viviani and Ambassador Paléologue in St. Petersburg during the early part of July. The Documents Diplomatiques Francais give the full text of President Poincaré's speech, but only the suggested modifications for the Tsar's speech, which

2. Kautsky, Outbreak Of the World War, 168.
3. Ibid., 211.
were accepted by M. Sazonov. In this manner the stage for the dinner was set, so that the speeches would be acceptable to both of the countries concerned. The text of the Tsar's speech is given in the publication of the 1923 volume of the Historical Journal of the Russian Soviet Government. Concerning the alliance, the Tsar said:

... United since long ago by the mutual sympathy of their peoples and their common interests, France and Russia have been closely bound together during nearly a quarter of a century with the object of better pursuing one and the same aim, which consists in maintaining these interests by cooperating in the preservation of the balance and the peace of Europe. I do not doubt that both of our countries, true to their peaceful ideals and relying upon their proved alliance as also upon their common friendships, will continue to enjoy the benefits of the peace which the fullness of their strength ensures by constantly tying more tightly the bands which unite them.

In President Poincaré's speech were the following statements:

"Près de vingt-cinq ans ont passé depuis que, dans une claire vision de leur destin, nos pays ont unis les efforts de leur diplomatie, et les heureux résultats de cette association permanente se font tous les jours sentir dans l'équilibre du monde.

"... l'alliance, dont l'illustre Empereur Alexandre III et le regretté Président Carnot ont pris la première initiative, a constamment donné, depuis lors, la preuve de son action bénéfique et de son inébranlable solidité.

"Votre Hauteté peut être assurée que, demain comme hier, la France pourra, avec une collaboration intime et quotidienne avec son alliée l'œuvre de paix et de civilisation à laquelle les deux Gouvernements et les deux nations n'ont cessé de travailler..."

According to Ambassador Paleologue, the President's speech

1. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, X, 706-64.
2. How the War Began, 113.
was well received. Afterwards the Tsar held a levee at which everyone seemed anxious to meet President Poincaré.\footnote{\textit{Paléologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, I}, 14-5.}

Another important event during the President's visit to St. Petersburg was the diplomatic reception given in his honor at the Winter Palace on the afternoon of July 21. There he spoke to the German Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, but the subject of politics was not mentioned.\footnote{Ibid., 17.} During this interview occurred the discussion between President Poincaré and Count Szápary, the Austrian Ambassador.\footnote{Reports of the conversation may be found in \textit{Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré}, II, 170-1; Kautsky, \textit{Outbreak of the War}, 170; \textit{Austrian Red Book}, I, 98-9; \textit{Paléologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs}, I, 17-19.} President Poincaré expressed to Count Szápary his sympathies in regard to the assassination in Sarajevo; then he inquired about Austro-Serbian relations. In reply to the question about what demands would be made of Serbia, Count Szápary replied that he was not informed about the inquiry which was still in progress. Count Szápary seems to have just returned to St. Petersburg unexpectedly after having visited his invalid wife and son in Vienna. Probably he had had verbal notice of what Austria-Hungary planned to do and had returned to St. Petersburg only to play his part in trying to keep the Russians and their French visitors from suspecting Austria's next move in the Serbian crisis.\footnote{\textit{Paléologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs}, I, 18.} The interview was further described in Count Szápary's report. So far there was no official notice given in the Austrian Red Book.

Monsieur Poincaré then delivered a kind of lecture, using all his oratorical powers and explained that to make a government responsible for anything was only admissible when there were concrete proofs against it, otherwise a demarche...
of this kind would be a mere pretext, and this he could not suppose Austria-Hungary to be guilty of, in the case of such a small country.

At any rate one must not forget that Servia has friends and that a situation might be created, which might become dangerous to peace. I confined myself to a quiet and precise answer, remarking that up to a certain degree every government is responsible for everything that happens on its territory. The president sought to refute this thesis by constituting analogous cases between other states, so that I could not but say that all depended upon circumstances and that analogies and generalisations did not serve. In the course of the conversation, Monsieur Poincaré made a concealed allusion to the alleged "Prohaska case" to which I made a fitting reply.

He closed the conversation by expressing the wish that the results of the inquiry might be such as not to give cause for disquiet.

Count Szápáry felt that M. Spalajkovic, the Serbian Minister, might have had something to do with the President's words; 2

Count Pourtalès believed that President Poincaré's words were instigated by M. Sazonov, "who is trying out a policy of bluff". 3

Both Ambassadors considered it very poor taste for the head of a state who was visiting in a foreign land to take "an almost threatening" attitude. 4 No mention is made of this in the British Documents.

Because he was pressed for time, President Poincaré merely shook hands with the ministers of the smaller states. He expressed a few words of sympathy to M. Spalajkovic. Then he left, with M. Paléologue, and went to an entertainment being given for the officers of the French squadron by the St. Petersburg Dema. 5

On the following day President Poincaré reviewed a parade of the Russian troops in which sixty thousand men took part. 6

1. Austrian Red Book, 1, 98.
2. Ibid., 98.
6. Ibid., 23.
President Poincaré, while on his Russian visit, had the objective of using his influence to bring about more friendly relations between England and Russia, who were not then on good terms in respect to the situation in Persia. This had been suggested by M. Paléologue to Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, who reported it to the British Government on July 9. President Poincaré helped to bring about a better understanding between Russia and England on this question, and after he had returned to Paris the British Ambassador there congratulated him for Sir Edward Grey on the success of his visit. In addition to the English affair, there was also a misunderstanding between Russia and Sweden. Russia felt that Sweden was rearming unjustifiably, and Sweden had grievances about Russian espionage. On his return trip President Poincaré, during his stop at Stockholm, carried a reassuring message from the Tsar to the King of Sweden.

During President Poincaré's visit, a communiqué was given to the press. This was prepared by Ambassador Paléologue at the order of and approved by Premier Viviani. The text follows.

"The visit which the President of the Republic has just paid to H. M. the Emperor of Russia has given the two friendly and allied governments an opportunity of discovering that they are in entire agreement in their views on the various problems which concern for peace and the balance of power in Europe has laid before the Powers, particularly in the East."

An agreement reached by the Russian and French Governments was reported by Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, who stated that M. Sazonov and M. Paléologue told him confidentially that they had come to an understanding on the follow-

2. Ibid., XI, 200.
4. Documents Diplomatiques Français, X, 725.
ing points:

1. Perfect community of views on the various problems with which the Powers are confronted as regards the maintenance of general peace and balance of power in Europe, more especially in the East.

2. Decision to take action at Vienna with a view to the prevention of a demand for explanations or any summons equivalent to an intervention in the internal affairs of Serbia, which the latter would be justified in regarding as an attack on her sovereignty and independence.

3. Solemn affirmation of obligations imposed by the alliance of the two countries.

On the 23rd of July, President Poincaré and Premier Viviani concluded their Russian visit and embarked on the France, at Cronstadt. After Ambassador Paleologue had said farewell to his chiefs, he returned with the Tsar on the Imperial yacht to St. Petersburg.

The Tsar made me sit behind him in the stern of the yacht and told me of the conversation he had just had with Poincaré:

"I'm delighted with my talk with the President. We see absolutely eye to eye. I am not less peace-loving than he, and he is not less determined than I to do everything necessary to prevent the cause of peace being compromised. He fears some Austro-German manoeuvre against Serbia and thinks we should reply with the united front of a common diplomatic policy. I think the same. We must show ourselves firm and united in our efforts to find possible solutions and the necessary adjustments. The more difficult the situation becomes the more important will unity and firmness become."

While President Poincaré and Premier Viviani were on their return trip aboard the France, their wireless reception was generally bad. As it was proved later, these communications had been interfered with by the creation of disturbances as ordered by the German Government. Premier Viviani cited orders found in the German wireless station at Metz that French wireless

communications being sent to the France, to Russia, and to Dunkirk were to be disturbed.\(^1\) This was done of course to prevent action by the French Government, whose President and Premier were then on board the France, after the ultimatum had been given to Serbia by the Austrian Minister, Gieal, when President Poincaré was leaving Russia on July 23.

On the way to France, the President and the Premier made a short stop in Stockholm where they delivered the Tsar's message to the King of Sweden and learned of the ultimatum which had just been sent to Serbia.\(^2\) As they continued on their homeward voyage, President Poincaré and Premier Viviani received a telegram written on July 26 by M. Bienvenu-Martin, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris. This telegram advised the two chiefs of State to come home immediately in order that they might more easily direct the affairs of France in the international crisis.\(^3\) On July 27, Premier Viviani sent a message to the French Ministers at Copenhagen and Christiania telling them to notify the rulers of Denmark and Norway that, due to the unsettled foreign affairs, President Poincaré and his entourage would cancel their visits in those countries and would return to France immediately.\(^4\) While still aboard the France Premier Viviani, on July 28, sent word to M. Bienvenu-Martin to prepare for them on their arrival at Dunkirk, on the following day, a dossier about the Austro-Serbian conflict.\(^5\) The people were glad when their leaders returned to direct their country's part in the fast moving diplomatic scene.

---

1. Viviani, As We See It, 96-7.
4. Ibid., 109.
5. Ibid., 163.
CHAPTER III

THE ULTIMATUM TO SERBIA

The assassination of the heir-apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne by the young Bosnian, Princip, an Austrian subject, was investigated by the Austrian authorities. It was proved that the assassins had secured their arms from Serbia, but it could not be proved that the Serbian Government had had any part in the plot. In fact, Councillor Wiesner, the Austrian investigator, reported on July 13:

"The complicity of the Serbian Government as to the assassination and as to preparation and delivery of weapons, rests on no evidence, and cannot even be presumed; nay more, there is good reason for considering it impossible."

The assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was not the real cause of the World War; it was the occasion for the War. President Poincaré has written that it was merely the pretext whereby a previously planned expedition to crush Serbia might be carried out.

He continued:

The Council (Austrian) wrote in its minutes, "Claims so drastic are likely to preface a refusal and will allow us to arrive at a final solution by means of a military intervention."

On the 14th of July, Count Berchtold, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, tried at the Crown Council to secure agree-

2. Ibid., 148-9.
3. Ibid., 157.
ment to the ultimatum which was to be sent to Serbia. Tisza, the Hungarian representative held out against him until July 15, since he feared that Russia might support Serbia and was opposed to war because of the risk that Hungary would run. Then Count Berchtold sent the ultimatum to Emperor Francis Joseph for his approval.¹

The Austrians had planned to send the ultimatum to Serbia before President Poincaré could leave France for Russia. This fact is shown in the report of Ambassador Tschirschky, the German Ambassador at Vienna, on July 13.² But President Poincaré left French soil on July 15, and agreement about the sending of the ultimatum was not secured until July 15. Hence this plan could not be followed because the Austrians wished to prevent common action by France and Russia to help Serbia.

On July 14, Count Berchtold reported that the members of the Crown Council had agreed that it would be best not to send the ultimatum until after President Poincaré would have completed his visit in Russia. The Austrian Foreign Minister felt that if the ultimatum were sent during that visit, France might be "affronted." He wrote:

"... Moreover, if the ambitious President of the Republic was to discuss personally the new situation created by the ultimatum with the Czar, there is more probability than otherwise, that France and Russia may interfere."³

To Count Szögyény, his Ambassador in Berlin, Count Berchtold wrote on the following day:

"... Besides, we should consider it unwise to undertake the threatening step in Belgrade at

1. Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, II, 161
the very time when the peaceloving, reserved Emperor Nicholas and undeniably cautious Herr Sazonow, are under the influence of the two, who are always for war, Iswolsky and Poincaré. 1

Ambassador Tschireshky reported the same decision to his Government in Berlin.

... For 't was best to avoid 'if possible the celebration of a fraternization at Petersburg, under the influence of champagne and of Messrs. Poincaré, Iswolski and the Grand Dukes, which might have an effect on the assumption and possible fixation of an attitude on the part of both nations.

In this last quotation is shown the true reason for the delay of the ultimatum until after President Poincaré's departure from Russia - the Austrians did not wish to have their ultimatum delivered at a time when the heads of the States of France and Russia were together and when concerted action by those two powers was possible, because such action might favor Serbia and hinder Austria in her plans. Concerning this Prof. B. E. Schmitt has written that 't was natural for Count Berchtold to delay sending the ultimatum while the Tsar and his statesmen were influenced by the two "inciters", Poincaré and Isvolsky, in order to take the French and Russian Governments at a disadvantage, but by such action the Austrian Minister would certainly "incite" them. 3

The Austrian officials, after having decided to time the sending of their ultimatum to Serbia so that it could not possibly become known in St. Petersburg until after President Poincaré's departure, had the problem of ascertaining the exact time of his departure. The German Government through

3. Schmitt, Coming of the War, I, 393.
Von Jagow, the Secretary of the Foreign Office, secured this information for Count Berchtold. On July 21, Von Jagow received the report that the President's departure from St. Petersburg would be at 10:00 P.M., July 23. On July 22, Count Pourtalès, the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, reported to Von Jagow that it would be at eleven o'clock. This report Von Jagow communicated to Count Berchtold through Ambassador Tschirschky at Vienna.

On receiving this news Count Berchtold hurriedly sent a message to Baron von Giesl, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Serbia, who had the ultimatum which he was to deliver at the previously appointed time, to delay the ultimatum for an hour. This message was sent to Baron von Giesl late on July 23.

If you can possibly arrange matters, postpone the demarche to six o'clock, in which case the term of the answer must also be changed to six.

I add for your information that we wish, if it were all possible, to prevent the news of the demarche from reaching Petersburg this evening, because President Poincaré remains there until eleven o'clock to-night.

Count Berchtold, on that same day, sent Count Szécsén, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, the excuse which was to be presented to the French when they would notice the coincidence of time of the two events.

As to the coincidence of the demarche in Belgrade with the departure of Poincaré from Petersburg, it is to be remarked that we always meant to take the demarche

2. Ibid., 1:41.
3. Ibid., 153.
4. Ibid., 155.
as soon as the inquiry in Sarajevo had been concluded. This has since been the case.¹

At six o'clock in the afternoon of July 23, Baron von Giesal delivered the ultimatum to the Serbian Government.² This document stated that the Austro-Hungarian Government considered that the Serbian Government had violated its declaration of 1909 to accept Austrian annexation of Bosnia and to be a friendly neighbor to Austria-Hungary. It accused Serbia of having permitted a subversive movement which had the object of detaching a part of the Austro-Hungarian territories; the assassination in Sarajevo was cited as evidence. The ultimatum stated that the Austrian inquiry had proved that the assassins had been armed and trained to use those arms by certain Serbian officers and had been permitted by Serbian frontier officials to cross the border into Bosnia and there to kill the Archduke on Austrian territory. An apology was dictated for Serbia to make. In order that Austria-Hungary might be assured of Serbia's intentions, ten demands were made of Serbia.³

The Royal Serbian Government further undertakes:

1. To suppress any publication which incites to hatred and contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the general tendency of which is directed against its territorial integrity;
2. To dissolve immediately the society styled Narodna Odbrana, to confiscate all its means of propaganda . . . .
3. To eliminate without delay from public instruction in Serbia . . . everything that serves, or might serve, to foment the propaganda against Austria-

² Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 2, 4-9.
Hungary;
4. To remove from the military service, and 
from the administration in general, all officers 
and functionaries guilty of propaganda against 
the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose names and 
deeds the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy reserves to 
its right of communicating to the Royal 
Government;
5. To accept the collaboration in Serbia of 
representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Govern-
ment for the suppression of the subversive move-
ment directed against the territorial integrity 
of the Monarchy;
6. To take judicial proceedings against 
accessories to the plot of 28 June who are on 
Serbian territory; delegates of the Austro-hungar-
ian Government will take part in the investigation 
relating thereto;
7. To proceed ... to the arrest of Major 
Voya Tankosic and of ... Milan Tat'ganovitch ... 
who have been compromised by the results of the 
magisterial inquiry at Sarajevo;
8. To prevent ... the cooperation of the 
Serbian authorities in the illicit traffic in 
arms and explosives across the frontier, to dis-
miss and punish severely the officials on the 
frontier service ... guilty of having assisted 
the perpetrators of the Sarajevo crime by facili-
tating their passage across the frontier;
9. To furnish the Imperial and Royal Govern-
ment with explanations regarding the unjustifiable 
utterances of high Serbian officials ... who have 
not hesitated since the crime of 28 June to express 
themselves in terms of hostility to the Austro-
Hungarian Government; and, finally,
10. To notify the Imperial and Royal Govern-
ment without delay of the execution of the measures 
comprised under the preceding heads.

The ultimatum required a reply in forty-eight hours, that is, by 
six o'clock on Saturday evening, July 25. 2

Before the ultimatum had been sent Ambassador Tschirschky 
had urged moderation on Austria, but his action was displeasing 
to the Kaiser. 3 President Poincaré said that in Paris nothing

2. Ibid., 58.
3. Memoires of Raymond Poincaré, II, 151; 
cf., Kautsky, Outbreak of the World War, 61.
was known of these actions being taken in Vienna and Berlin. But Germany knew, on July 5 when Count Hoyos went to see the Kaiser at Potsdam, that some strong representation would be made by Austria-Hungary to Serbia. At that time the Kaiser promised to support Austria, even if Russia should enter the war. The Kautsky Documents do not mention such a promise.

After Serbia had received the ultimatum she appealed to the Great Powers for help and advice. M. Sazonov advised Serbia to seek British mediation and not to enter hostilities with Austria-Hungary. He had the Russian Ambassador at Vienna request Count Berchtold to give Serbia more time to answer the ultimatum. England made a similar demarche at Vienna.

The Serbian reply was delivered by M. Pashy to Baron von Giesl only a few minutes before the expiration of the time limit on the 25th of July. The reply was moderate in tone in contrast to the Austrian demands. The Serbs denied having failed to observe the declaration of March 31, 1909. The note took up the Austrian demands one at a time. Some were accepted, but each acceptance was accompanied by certain reservations. The fifth point - accepting collaboration of such agents in suppressing the "subversive movement" - was accepted by Serbia only in so far as it was compatible with the "principles of international law and the friendly relations of a neighbor state". The sixth

1. Memoires of Raymond Poincaré, II, 156.
2. Ibid., 152.
3. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 68.
5. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 42.
point of the ultimatum was rejected - that of participation of Austro-Hungarians in the inquiry into the Sarajevo crime. Serbia stated that if this reply were unsatisfactory, she was ready to accept "a pacific understanding"; and suggested submitting the entire matter to the International Tribunal at The Hague. The Serbians said that it would be logical to entrust the whole affair to the Great Powers who had had a share in the Declaration of 1909. Concerning advice for the Serbian reply Professor Schmitt has written:

If the Belgrade Cabinet received from its European friends specific advice (we have seen that the Entente Powers urged moderation and conciliation) for the redaction of its reply, the fact is not known. The hypothesis that M. Berthelot of the French foreign office provided the draft of an answer, while it may be correct, has not been proved. The Documents Diplomatiques Francais do not mention any draft by M. Berthelot, thereby upholding Professor Schmitt's statement quoted above.

President Poincaré wrote that neither the Kaiser nor his Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, when they saw the Serbian reply, could help thinking that Austria had received satisfaction. But Austria-Hungary was determined to solve the Serbian question at that time for her own safety, and Baron von Glees, her Ambassador, left Belgrade immediately after glancing through the reply to see that the ultimatum had not been accepted in its entirety as stipulated in his instructions. Two hours after answering the ultimatum, Serbia, knowing that war would follow, ordered mobilization and moved her capital to Niš.

2. Schmitt, Coming of the War, I, 531-2.
On the 29th of July, M. Vesnić, the Serbian Minister, appealed to France for help in this crisis, by requesting a shipment of artillery, and for credit.¹

After Russia had spoken of her sympathy for Serbia, Austria-Hungary, on July 26, declared to Russia that she, Austria-Hungary, had no intention of seeking territorial aggrandizement nor of limiting the integrity of Serbia. Austria-Hungary wanted merely to assure her own tranquillity. It was felt, by the Central Powers, that whether or not war could be avoided would depend on Russia's decision.² But Austria-Hungary planned to divide Serbian territory among her neighbors when conquered.³

By July 28, Austria-Hungary began mobilization against Serbia and announced in Paris that she would, on the next day, take energetic measures to have satisfaction against Serbia.⁴ On the 26th of July, Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia.⁵

1. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 205.
5. Ibid., 185.
CHAPTER IV

EFFORTS FOR PEACE

The rapid developments following the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia were leading Europe toward a general war. Germany appeared mainly interested in keeping the rest of Europe neutral while her ally, Austria-Hungary, settled the quarrel with Serbia to her own satisfaction. Immediately after Austria-Hungary had sent the ultimatum to Serbia, Russia declared that she would not abandon the Slavs in the Balkans.1 Thereupon Germany urged that the conflict be "localized", unless the other Powers wished to bring about "incalculable consequences".2

But while many events were leading toward a general European war, definite efforts were being made to keep peace. Germany realized that it would be necessary to take action at St. Petersburg "if she wished to prevent the extension of the conflict to the rest of Europe. For that reason, Baron von Schoen, the German Ambassador at Paris suggested on July 26 to M. Bienvenu-Martin that the two countries should seek to pacify Russia "if Austria-Hungary would declare that she favored no annexation of Serbian territory. M. Bienvenu-Martin, the acting French Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that this would be possible only if similar steps were taken at Vienna. This condition was refused by Ambassador von Schoen. M. Bienvenu-Martin felt that this was an effort

1. Collected Diplomatic Documents, 269.
to shift the blame for a conflict on to Russia. ¹

Also on July 26, England proposed a Four-Power Conference to be attended by the Great Powers not directly interested in the Austro-Serbian affair and its implications for Russia—namely, England, France, Germany, and Italy. ² The British Ambassador in Paris asked whether France would instruct the French Ambassador in London to represent France at such a conference; he further stated that he understood that the German Government probably would accept the suggestion. ³ The French Government on the following day gave a note to Sir Francis Bertie, the English Ambassador, authorizing Ambassador Paul Cambon to act in that capacity at the proposed conference. ⁴

Meanwhile Berlin failed to accept the British suggestion by the 28th of July on which day Austria had decided to mobilize. ⁵ On the 29th of July, the British Embassy in Paris issued a note reporting that Germany failed on July 27 to accept the British suggestion because such a Conference would amount to a "Court of Arbitration" which could be called only at the request of Austria and Russia. ⁶ Sir Edward Goschen objected to this interpretation of the Conference proposal, but Von Jagow refused to change his opinion. Von Jagow also stated that he had just been informed that M. Sazonov and Count Berchtold intended to exchange views directly, and that all other mediatory influences must await the outcome of those conversations. ⁷ Sir Edward Grey

4. Ibid., 135.
5. Ibid., 135-9.
6. Ibid., 236-7.
7. Ibid., 235-7.
next asked Germany to suggest a plan to prevent war.¹

On the afternoon of the 26th of July, M. Sazonov had an interview with Count Szápany in St. Petersburg, but the latter was unwilling to settle the controversy without first talking to Count Berchtold. M. Sazonov tried to institute direct negotiations with Vienna, but the Austro-Hungarian Government said that it was impossible to discuss the Serbian reply because Vienna had already declared that reply to be unacceptable.² On July 28, Ambassador Paléologue secured from M. Sazonov a promise to accept all the peace proposals that would be made by France and England.³

On July 29, Germany suggested that Austria accept the English suggestion about the "seizure of hostage territory" - that is, to occupy part of Serbia and then to have an armistice until the matter could be settled in some peaceful manner. Austria-Hungary delayed giving an answer to this suggestion so long that these hopes were dashed to pieces by the news of Russian mobilization.⁴

The German proposals for maintaining the peace were shown to be rather half-hearted by a dispatch sent by Count Szögyény, the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, on July 27, after his interview with the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Von Jagow, to Vienna.

Count Szögyény wrote:

The Secretary of State declared to me in strict confidence:
That the German Government had decided to acquaint Your Excellency shortly with English proposals looking toward possible conciliation.

1. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 246.
That the German Government explicitly assured us that it in no way identified itself with these proposals, that it was even quite opposed to the idea of our considering them, and that it was communicating them to us simply to comply with the request from the English that we should do so.

The Government of France, while agreeing to accept the peace plans proposed by the other Powers, had its own plan for preventing a general European war. This idea, which was energetically promoted by President Poincaré, was a plan whereby Germany might be caused to keep out of the war - thereby preventing a general European war. The French urged the English Government to declare that, in the event of a war between France and Germany, England would come to the aid of the French. They thought that such a declaration would prevent Germany from supporting Austria-Hungary so strongly and from opposing Russia so strenuously. On July 30, Sir Franc's Bertie telegraphed Sir Edward Grey:

I had audience of President of the Republic this evening in order to give him your message of congratulations on success of his visit to St. Petersburg, for which he wishes me to thank you.

... He is convinced that preservation of peace between Powers is in hands of England, for if His Majesty's Government announce that, in the event of conflict between Germany and France, resulting from present differences between Austria and Servia, England would come to aid of France, there would be no war, for Germany would at once modify her attitude.

I explained to him how difficult it would be for His Majesty's Government to make such an announcement.

On the following day Ambassador Jules Cambon at Berlin reported to Premier Viviani in Paris:

3. Ibid., 200.
Il n'y a que l'éventualité de l'intervention de l'Angleterre qui émeuve l'Empereur, son Gouvernement et tous les intérêts.1

Ambassador Paul Cambon in London wrote to Paris:

... I note that during the last few days, very powerful German influence is being exercised in Press and in Parliament by City men who are of German origin. Several members of the Cabinet are somewhat under this influence, and it is possible that Mr. Asquith dare not as yet stick his feet in the ground. Personally he is all for intervention.2

President Poincaré, in order to press the French peace plan upon the British, suggested to the French Ministers that he should write directly to King George V. His suggestion was approved by the French Government.3 The letter was despatched by special courier. In that letter, written on July 31, President Poincaré wrote to the English King:

Cher M Grand Ami - The European situation is so serious that I think it my duty to convey directly to Your Majesty the information which the French Government has received from Germany. Her military preparations, especially in the regions bordering on our frontier, are daily being increased and hastened.

... I verily believe that the best chance of peace depends on what the British Government says and does ... I am profoundly convinced that at this moment the more England, France and Russia give the impression of complete unity in diplomatic action, the more it may be possible still to look for the preservation of peace. Your Majesty will, I trust, graciously excuse this intrusion, which is prompted only by the earnest desire to see the balance of European Powers definitely readjusted.4

To this, King George, on August 1, replied:

3. Ibid., 244.
It would be a source of real satisfaction to me if our united efforts were to meet with success, and I am still not without hope that the terrible events which seem so near may be averted.

I am personally using my best endeavours with the Emperors of Russia and of Germany towards finding some solution by which actual military operations may at any rate be postponed, and time be thus given for calm discussion between the Powers. I intend to prosecute these efforts without intermission so long as any hope remains of an amicable settlement...

Since it was impossible to get a British declaration of policy at this time, the French could only hope that war might not come and that if it did come England would give military aid to France.

The Austro-Hungarian Government, by a decree of July 25, set July 28 as the date for the beginning of a partial mobilization of eight army corps and two cavalry divisions - against Serbia; but this was not a general mobilization against other European Powers.

On July 27, Premier Vivian on board the France, during his return trip from Russia, sent instructions to Ambassador Paléologue in Russia. In accordance with those instructions, Ambassador Paléologue, on July 28, told M. Sazonov that France would carry out her obligations as promised in the Franco-Russian Alliance. On July 29, the Tsar was persuaded by the Russian military leaders to agree to a general mobilization of the Russian forces, but he countermanded the order before it could be issued. These actions seem not to have been reported by Ambassador Paléologue to Paris. On July 30, the military leaders were successful in securing the Tsar's approval to Russian mobilization which would begin on July 31.

On July 30, M. Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador, appealed to Premier Vivian, who was back in Paris by that time, for aid as promised in the Franco-Russian Alliance and for recognition of the

2. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 118.
3. Ibid., 256.
declara\n\nSuch a promise was, Ambassador Isvolsky stated, particularly wel-
\ncome in the present circumstances.\footnote{Documents Diplomati\nques Fran\caises, XI, 258.} In reply to that appeal, Pe\n\nPremier Viviani, on July 30, sent a note to Russia in which he said:\footnote{Ibid., 261-2.} that the French Government would neglect no opportunity to promote peace and would fulfill her alliance obligations, but he urged the Russian Government, while taking precautionary defense measures, not to take immediately any step that might give Germany a pretext for mobilization.\footnote{Ibid., 336.} Even on July 31, Premier Viviani still seemed to believe that Russia was only taking steps for pre-mobilization;\footnote{Ibid., 356.} and it was not until in the evening of the same day that he received Ambassador Paléologue's telegram announcing the Russian general mobilization.\footnote{Austrian Red Book, III, 75-7.}

On July 31, the Kaiser wrote to the Austrian Emperor that he thought that German mobilization would take place on August 2.\footnote{Kautsky, Outbreak of the World War, 404, 429.} Germany, however, had to find some way of opening hostilities immediately after the beginning of mobilization. Therefore the German Government issued an ultimatum to Russia on July 31 at midnight stating that if Russia did not cease all war measures against Austria-Hungary and make a declaration to that effect to Germany within twelve hours, Germany must mobilize.\footnote{Ibid., 402.} On that same day Tsar Nicholas II wired to Kaiser William II that it was impossible to stop Russian mobilization which, incidentally, he said, had followed Austrian mobilization.\footnote{Ibid., 402.} Russia did not re-
fused the German demand, but she certainly did fail to accept it. Because no reply to the ultimatum had been received from Russia at noon on August 1, the German declaration of war was despatched at 12:52 P.M. and was to be delivered at 6 P.M. in Russia by Count Pourtalès.¹

Austria decided on August 1 to mobilize the rest of the army and to concentrate it in Galicia, the first day of mobilization being August 4.² No allusion was made to immediate operations against Russia, although Moltke had advised that and had promised that Germany would mobilize.³

After war had been declared on Russia, Ambassador Isvolsky asked Paris what attitude France would assume in the conflict.⁴ In his interview with President Poincaré Ambassador Isvolsky received the reply that the French ministers would surely fulfill their alliance obligations, but that a declaration of war would require parliamentary approval.⁵ President Poincaré said that he hoped to avoid a public debate on the Franco-Russian Alliance on account of England, and that he preferred that war should be declared by Germany instead of by France.⁶ The Ministry upheld this statement, but decided to wait for ten days, in order that French military preparations might be more advanced and in order to give Germany a chance to declare war on France, and then to call a meeting of Parliament. This was rather discouraging to M. Isvolsky.⁷

The German military plans for war against both Russia and

¹. Kautsky, Outbreak of the World War, 432-4.
⁵. Ibid., 272.
France at the same time required that a conflict between Germany and France be started at once.1

Germany sent an ultimatum to France at the same time as the one sent to Russia.2 The ultimatum to France informed France of the demands made of Russia and asked whether France would remain neutral in a Russo-German war. The answer must be given within eighteen hours, which meant by 1 A.M. August 1.3 President Poincaré has written a description of that interview of Ambassador von Schoen with Premier Viviani.4

... Baron Schoen, like Herr Jagow, said nothing about declaring war on Russia if she did not demobilise; he only foreshadowed war as a possibility, and he asked Viviani whether in such an event France would remain neutral. The question had not been unforeseen, and Viviani and I had agreed that if it were put, it would be wiser not to say offhand that France would do her duty as an Ally. Every moment which did not accentuate international differences might be a moment gained - for peace. The Prime Minister simply ejaculated: "Let we hope there will be no proceeding to extremities, and give me time to think the thing over". Baron Schoen said he would come for the answer early the next afternoon; it was a thinly veiled yet quite courteous ultimatum.5

The German Government had prepared Ambassador von Schoen to say that, in case France should promise to remain neutral, Germany demanded that France give up the fortresses of Toul and Verdun as a pledge of neutrality to Germany during the Russo-German war. Baron von Schoen was relieved that the French refusal to declare her neutrality made it unnecessary for him to make the contingent demand.6

3. Ibid., 404.
5. Ibid., 250.
6. Ibid., 252.
Bethmann Hollweg's telegram was, of course, in code, and the secret addendum was coded in particularly difficult cypher. During the War the final section of the telegram, which had been intercepted and preserved, was deciphered, and the secret it revealed was sent out into the world as evidence that Germany had intended to sacrifice the French people whatever they did for the maintenance of peace.

Premier Viviani replied that "France would be guided by her interests." Premier Viviani notified the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, on August 1, of his interview with Ambassador von Schoen and said that he believed that Germany wanted a war with France.

L'attitude d'Allemagne prouve qu'elle veut la guerre. Et elle la veut contre la France. Hier, lorsque M. de Schoen est venu demander au quai d'Orsay quelle attitude la France comptait prendre en cas de conflit russo-allemande, l'ambassadeur d'Allemagne, bien qu'il n'ait directement entre la France et l'Allemagne aucun conflit et que nous ayons employé depuis le début de la crise et employons encore tous nos efforts en vue d'une solution pacifique, a ajouté qu'il me prit de présenter au président de la République ses hommages et remercements et demandait que l'on voulût bien prendre "des dispositions pour sa propre personne"; nous savons également qu'il a déjà mis en sûreté les archives de l'ambassade. Cette attitude de rupture des relations diplomatiques, sans conflit direct et bien qu'une réponse négative précise ne lui ait pas été faite, est caractéristique de la volonté arrêtée de l'Allemagne de faire la guerre à la France.

On August 1, at 3:55 P.M. French mobilization was ordered. A notice of this mobilization was sent by Premier Viviani to Ambassador Paul Cambon in London on the same day.

Notre décret de mobilisation est donc une mesure essentielle de préservation. Le Gouverne-

4. Ibid., 410.
ment l'a accompagnée d'une proclamation, signée du Président de la République et de tous les Ministres, et dans laquelle il explique que la mobilisation n'est pas la guerre, qu'en l'état actuel c'est, pour la France, le meilleur moyen de sauvegarder la paix et que le Gouvernement de la République multipliera ses efforts pour faire aboutir les négociations.

On August 1, at 5 P.M., Kaiser William II, in the presence of Moltke and Tirpitz, signed the document ordering mobilization. France made every possible attempt to avoid any incident that might cause the beginnings of hostilities with Germany. Furthermore France, in order to secure British aid, must prove that she was not the aggressor. Therefore the French left, in their own territory, a neutral zone ten kilometers wide (although in places less) along the Franco-German frontier. This was done to insure that no act by French troops would precipitate war with Germany. Premier Viviani wrote to the French ambassadors:

It is vitally necessary for the Government to know that every delay of twenty-four hours in calling

1. Documents Diplomatiques Français, XI, 419.
2. Kantak, Outbreak of the World War, 475.
up the Reservists and in sending the Télégramme de Couverture will have for its effect a set-back in our forward concentration, that is to say, an initial loss of 15 or 20 kilometres of territory with each day of delay. The Commander-in-Chief cannot accept this responsibility.

Even after it had been strategically necessary to abandon, on August 2, the practice of leaving a ten kilometer zone, which had been declared on July 30, undefended by French troops, the French army was still ordered to create no incidents of war.

In view of these systematic incursions General Joffre now asked us to cancel the order as to the 10 kilometre line. The Government waited a few hours before agreeing, and it was not until the afternoon that the restrictions were cancelled and complete liberty as to movements of troops was accorded to the Commander-in-Chief. Even then the General, in issuing his orders that evening to the Army Commanders, added that for reasons alike national and diplomatic, it was imperative to leave to Germany the entire responsibility for hostilities.

Thus is shown the fact that France was determined not to be responsible for the war, that the declaration of war was a step that must be taken by Germany - and not France. President Poincaré stated:

... it would be better for Germany to declare war on us than for us to declare war on Germany.

France did not want to declare war because it might lose for her the aid of England, and it followed that it was up to Germany to recall her ambassador first.

German troops invaded French territory several times before a state of war existed between those two countries. Some of these invasions may have been accidental, but others proved

2. Ibid., 275.
to have been ordered by German officers.

Une patrouille allemande a pénétré en territoire français à Jorcheroy. L'officier qui la commandait a brûlé la cervelle à un soldat français et a été tué par les camarades de celui-ci.

Une patrouille fouillant les voix a pris deux uhlans qui viennent d'être amenés à Belfort.

In his Memoirs President Poincaré wrote:

... On the 3rd three German mounted men were caught at Coincourt, Rechicourt and Reméville, and on one of them, an officer, was found a patrol order which told him to go as far as St. Nicholas du Port. On the same day, before the declaration of war, an aeroplane threw six bombs over Lunéville.

On the third of August, Ambassador von Schoen handed to Premier Viviani the German declaration of war.

Les autorités administratives et militaires allemandes ont constaté un certain nombre d'actes d'hostilité caractérisés commis sur territoire allemand par des aviateurs militaires français. Plusieurs de ces derniers ont manifestement violé la neutralité de la Belgique survolant le territoire de ce pays. L'un a essayé de détruire des constructions près de Wesel, d'autres ont été aperçus sur la région de l'Eiffel, un autre a jeté des bombes sur le chemin de fer près de Karlsruhe et de Nuremberg.

Je suis chargé et j'ai l'honneur de faire connaître à V. Exc. qu'en présence de ces agressions, l'Empire allemand se considère en état de guerre avec la France du fait de cette dernière Puissance.

Ma Mission diplomatique ayant ainsi pris fin, il me reste plus qu'à prier V. Exc. de vouloir bien me munir de mes passeports et de prendre les mesures qu'Elle jugerait utiles pour assurer mon retour en Allemagne avec le personnel de l'ambassade ainsi qu'avec le personnel de la légation de Bavière et de consulat général d'Allemagne à Paris.

The German excuse for declaring war on France was the alleged violation by France of German territory. Germany claimed that French aviators had thrown bombs near Nuremberg, but there was...

1. Documents Diplomatiques Français, XI, 487.
no proof that the aeroplanes were either military or French
nor that any bombs had been thrown. The other German story was
about an aeroplane raid over Wesel in which the aviator had been
brought down, but no corpse was ever found. But Ambassador von
Schoen did not mention these fantastic stories sent to him by
Foreign Secretary von Jagow. Concerning this President Poincaré
wrote:

... Why on earth did not the Ambassador make
use of this information in his letter? Did he suspect
its fantastic character? He has explained in his Memoirs
that the telegram was so illegible that it could not be
entirely deciphered, and this explanation has given rise
to many suppositions.1

French sentiment was now unified against Germany. Even some
of the royalist leaders wanted to fight for France against Germany.
Among them were the Duc de Guise, Prince Roland of Bonaparte, and
the Duc de Vendôme. President Poincaré wrote that he would have
been willing to accede to these requests but that the Cabinet thought
it impossible without public discussion, which might be injurious
to French national unity.2 Concerning these royalist requests
President Poincaré stated:

... these letters only go to prove that any
French dissensions which existed yesterday have been
altogether sponged away today; it is indeed a unified
people which stands up under the Tricolour flag to
speak effectively with a hulking enemy.3

President Poincaré sent, on August 4, to the Houses of Parliament
his message, requested by the Cabinet and delivered by Premier
Viviani, and it was approved and applauded by the Senators.

2. Ibid., 295.
3. Ibid., 296.
France had just been the object of violent and premeditated attack, which is an insolent defiance of the laws of nations. Before any declaration of war had been sent to us, even before the German ambassador had asked for his passports, our territory had been violated.  

France was at war with Germany, but Germany had not yet invaded Belgium, however she had invaded Luxembourg on August 2. England tried to prevent. Upon hearing of German mobilization, England took identical steps at Paris and at Berlin. On July 31, the English Government asked whether the French and German Governments would "undertake to respect the neutrality of Belgium", so long as no other Power violated it. The French Government replied in the affirmative, but the German Government made no direct reply, feeling that it might disclose their plan of campaign. The British Minister in Brussels asked whether the Belgian Government would do everything in its power to maintain its neutrality: a statement which led Belgium to look forward to British intervention if her neutrality were violated. Belgium replied that she would defend her own territory.

The German war plans, which had been made far in advance, called for war on both the western and eastern fronts. These plans, for a quick and decisive blow against France and then a war against Russia, had first been made by General Count Schlieffen, who was on the general staff, in 1894. This plan had been definitely accepted by German military leaders from 1912 on.

2. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 442.  
6. Ibid., 240, 286.
Therefore, it was necessary to begin military operations against France at the same time as those against Russia. In order to begin operations against France it was necessary for German troops to cross through Belgium. The Belgian Government realized its possible danger from a German attack and took steps to try to assure her safety. On the 31st of July, M. Klobukowski, the French Minister in Brussels, wrote to Premier Viviani saying that the Belgian Government had asked whether France would respect the neutrality of Belgium and that he had replied that France would do so. Such assurance was confirmed on August 1 by the French Government.

France offered aid to Belgium when her forces would be ready and Belgium replied with thanks but did not then appeal to the Powers.

On August 1, Germany delivered her ultimatum to Belgium. This note said that Germany had learned that France was going to advance through Belgian territory against Germany. Germany, therefore, must advance through Belgium, and she promised, 'if Belgium would remain neutral and permit this, to guarantee Belgian rights and independence after the war and to pay Belgium for any damage done. If Belgium resisted, she would be treated as an enemy; a reply was demanded within twelve hours. On August 3, Belgium asserted her neutrality and said that she would use all her power to repel the passage of German troops.

On the 2nd of August, the German armies invaded Luxemburg.

King Albert of Belgium, on August 3, asked King George for

2. Documents Diplomatiques Francais, XI, 277.
"diplomatic intervention": Sir Edward Grey, on the same day, promised intervention if Belgian neutrality were violated. On the 4th of August, Belgium, too, was invaded by the German armies on their way to fight against France. Warfare on the western front had begun.

From the moment that France began to feel the probability of a general European war in which France would take part, French diplomacy was directed toward learning whether she could count upon English support. On July 30, Ambassador Paul Cambon reminded Sir Edward Grey of the agreement of 1912 that England had undertaken to join with France if the peace of Europe were threatened. This threat, said the French, now existed because Germany was beginning her military preparations. At that time the British Foreign Office was unable to make a statement, due to Cabinet dissenion. On the next day, such an answer was made by the British Ambassador in Paris.

The letter of President Poincaré to King George V was politely received on July 31, but the King's reply stated that England could not yet take a stand.

On July 31, Premier Viviani received the following despatch from Ambassador Paul Cambon in London:

L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne ayant demandé ce matin à Sir E. Grey si l'Angleterre observerait la neutralité dans le conflit qui semble imminent, Sir E. Grey a répondu "que l'Angleterre

France notified England of the German ultimatum and the severing of diplomatic relations between France and Germany. Ambassador Cambon told Sir Edward Grey that France was exposed to attacks on land and on sea, the latter because, in agreement with England, France had concentrated her naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea. But the reply made was that the British Government, since public opinion was not yet crystallized, could not make a definite statement to France.

On August 1, Sir Edward Grey informed Ambassador Cambon that France had a chance to promise Germany to remain neutral, and that therefore the situation was different from the Morocco incidents. Hence England need not assist France, but this did not mean an absolute refusal by England to give any assistance whatever to France. England had at that time decided against sending an expeditionary military force to the continent. But a change of attitude was possible.

On the morning of August 2, the situation was still doubtful and the British Cabinet refused to sanction intervention. In the afternoon Sir Edward Grey made the following promise of conditional support to Ambassador Paul Cambon:

I am authorised to give the assurance that, if the German Fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British Fleet will give all the protection in its power. This assurance

is, of course, subject to the policy of the Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding the Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German Fleet takes place.¹

But the Cabinet was unable to promise to intervene if France were attacked by Germany; that decision was for Parliament to make.

On the morning of August 3, news of the German ultimatum to Belgium reached London. The Cabinet then decided to mobilize. Sir Edward Grey told Parliament that England would stand behind France and Belgium, and his speech was applauded.²

On August 4, Sir Edward Goschen, the British Ambassador, called upon Von Jagow. He stated that the entry of German troops into Belgium had decided the British Government to demand a satisfactory reply by midnight, or else England would do everything possible to guarantee Belgian neutrality which had been guaranteed in the treaty to which both nations had agreed. Since no promise was forthcoming from Germany, Sir Edward Goschen demanded his passports when the time limit was up.³ On August 4, Ambassador Paul Cambon reported from London:

"Le Gouvernement britannique n'a reçu aucune réponse de Berlin au sujet de la neutralité belge, mais il a appris de source indirecte, et le renseignement a été confirmé par l'ambassade d'Allemagne à Londres, que Sir Ed. Goschen avait reçu ses passeports ce soir. En conséquence, l'Amirauté a prévenu les escadres anglaises que la guerre commençait ce soir à 11 heures."⁴

And so France was now to have the aid of England in her war against Germany. The war which was to last for more than four years had begun for France, England, Belgium, Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, and it was then in full blast.

¹ Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III, 501.
² Kautsky, Outbreak of the World War, 574.
³ British Documents, XI, 314, 351.
⁴ Documents Diplomatiques Français, XI, 563.
In this study of the rôle played by President Poincaré in the negotiations between June 28 and August 4, 1914, it is now possible to arrive at something approaching a definitive conclusion regarding responsibility. But first it is appropriate to consider the judgments of some of the most authoritative writers who deal with the subject.

Since the outbreak of the war, and more particularly since the peace treaty was made, many persons have given long and hard study to the documentary material appearing from various government archives to determine the degree of guilt or responsibility of this, that or the other government for having brought about the War in 1914. Article 231 of the Versailles treaty, the so-called "war guilt" clause, may be said to have set off the post-war campaign to discover the truth. While German scholars have been especially active in this work, naturally, in order to clear their own country of the blame, eminent scholars of many nations have contributed their bit to our knowledge of today. Some of the writers quoted below are American historians, for example, Professors Schmitt and Fay, who have made painstaking studies of the causes of the World War, having begun their work even during the conflict. M. Renouvin and M. Bloch are well-known French historians on the
subject. There are also some former officials, political opponents of President Poincaré, and others. Each author has formed a definite opinion about the responsibility of President Poincaré.

Sidney Bradshaw Fay, Professor of History at Harvard, in his *Origins of the World War*, 1930, has made some pertinent remarks.

... At first, during the War, writers sought to fix the "guilt" for having caused this unparalleled "crime" upon a few single individuals—chiefly the Kaiser, the Pan-Germans, and the Austrian and German militarists. Then, with the publication of more complete documents which began in 1919, it was seen that the Entente thesis of the sole responsibility of Germany and her allies was no longer tenable, and writers who demanded a "revision" of the Treaty of Versailles tended to go to the other extreme of fixing the "guilt" upon Entente leaders—MM. Izvolski, Poincaré, Sazonov, and even upon Sir Edward Grey. Finally, with the growing realization that all the Powers were more or less responsible, and with the increased attention which came to be given to the underlying causes of the War, more judiciously and historically minded persons were less inclined to accept the easy solution of explaining the War on the scapegoat or personal devil theory—that is, of the "guilt" of this or that individual. They fell back on the truer explanation that the War was caused by the system of international anarchy involved in alliances, armaments, and secret diplomacy. But, after all, the "system" was worked by individuals; their personal acts built it up, and caused it to explode in 1914. In the discussion of the future, it will be the work of the historian to explain the political, economic, and psychological motives which caused these individuals to act as they did. He will also cease to talk about "war guilt"; since no person in authority was guilty of deliberately working to bring about a general European War. But he will still continue to discuss the "responsibility" which each statesman must bear for acts which ultimately contributed to the catastrophe.

He has given the following opinion of President Poincaré's writings about the war in the period from 1926-1931.

To be sure, M. Poincaré, in the fourth volume of his memoirs, has made a skilful and elaborate plea, to prove "La France innocente". But he is not convincing. It is quite clear that on his visit to Russia he assured the Tsar's Government that France would support her as an ally in preventing Austria from humiliating or crushing Serbia. President Poincaré, upon his return to France, made efforts for peace, but his great preoccupation was to minimize French and Russian preparatory measures and emphasize those of Germany, in order to secure the certainty of British support in a struggle which he now regarded as inevitable.

Concerning President Poincaré'scritics and his responsibility for the war, Mr. Fay has written in 1930:

M. Poincaré's most severe critics have been his own countrymen — Fayet, Judet, Fabre-Luce, Converset, Nothart, Victor Margueritte, Lazare, and a host of lesser lights. They have charged him with getting rid of cautious ambassadors like M. Georges Louis in St. Petersburg and M. Crozier in Vienna to make way for a chauvinist like M. Delcassé or puppets like M. Paleologue and M. Dumaine, in order that he might be more free to work with Izvolski in bringing about a war which should recover Alsace-Lorraine for France and secure Constantinople and the Straits for Russia. Many of his replies to their criticisms are sound. He manages to explain away some of the incriminating remarks that Izvolski attributes to him. But in many other cases he seems to take refuge in the practice of throwing dust in the reader's eye by diverting attention from the main point to minor matters.

... He believed a European war "inevitable"; in tightening the Entente and in making promises to Russia he did in fact tend to make it inevitable. Heretofore his responsibility.

Herman Lutz, the Official Historian of the Bavarian Parliamentary Committee on War Responsibility in 1925, in his Lord Grey and the World War, 1926, has written:

... Certainly the broad masses of the French people were anxious for peace and had no
desire for a war for revanche; but not so a number of the prominent persons in power. Among the latter first place belongs to Delassé, Poincaré, and Paléologue. They and those who thought with them naturally took care not to give public expression to their secret desires, hopes, and aims. Poincaré also admitted that there was no direct way out; for this reason he fed the Russo-French Alliance "on the Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans", fixing his gaze always on "the hole in the Vosges".

... For no less a person than Poincaré himself bore witness after the war that "During my school years my spirit, oppressed by the defeat, unceasingly crossed the frontier which the Treaty of Frankfurt had imposed on us, and when I climbed down from my castles in the air I saw no reason for existence for my generation but the hope of recovering the lost provinces." He has stated that President Poincaré's visit to Russia, although his conversations there remain unknown, served to incite Russia to be firm with Austria-Hungary. But I have found no documentary evidence of this contention.

Alfred Fabre-Luce, a former French diplomat who was one of President Poincaré's countrymen and politically hostile to the President and whom the latter accused of falsification and misrepresentation of documents and statements, voiced his opinions in *The Limitations of Victory*, in 1926.

Most of those who returned Poincaré to power believed that the antagonism between German Imperialism and France's resentment must inevitably be fought out some day. They thought it necessary to make open preparations for the sanguinary struggle by strengthening their armaments and alliances. They were of opinion that strong policy might, in a few years, create the conditions necessary to ensure a French victory, and, as it had to be faced, they

2. Ibid., 234-5.
hoped that the conflict might take place at a
favourable moment. When the day came, they
thought less of taking advantage of any goodwill or hesitation shown by Germany, in the
interest of peace, than of over-throwing her
the moment she made a mistake. Nor did they
forget that the day on which war broke out
would also be the awaited day of revanche.
They associated plans of conquest with France's
defensive policy, which were kept dark until
hostilities were opened, but were then reckon-
ed amongst the objects of the war.1

It may be that the above opinion is biased by the author's
political dislikes. Concerning President Poincaré and Ambassador
Ievolovsky he wrote:

. . . Ievolovsky's reports were published in
Moscow, and they attributed incautious remarks to
Poincaré; but Tsarist Russia had perished and
Ievolovsky was no more. By sacrificing the dead it
was still possible to save the French Government:
President Poincaré no longer tried to prove the joint innocence
of the Allies, as before but blamed the Russian
ambassador.2

He said about President Poincaré's trip to Russia:

There was, consequently, no possible doubt as
to Poincaré's attitude in Petersburg between the 20th
and 23rd of July. Without having the least idea
of the nature of the Austrian demands, or of Germany's
intentions, he took up a position of firm opposition
to which he gave a definite character, and from which
he did not, as a matter of fact, recede in the slight-
est degree to the end. Such a policy assumes that the
adversary's will is a blind force, inscapable of chang-
ing or deviating from its course, and thus does away
with all temptation to develop a pacific tendency.
From that time onwards, there was very little chance
of averting the war, and, moreover, Poincaré had left
Russia carte blanche to let it loose whenever she
liked, seeing that two days after his departure
Falésologue, acting on his instructions, promised
Sazonov unconditionally that, from the moment the
Austrian ultimatum was delivered, France would fulfill
all the obligations of her alliance. . . .3

1. Fabre-Luce, The Limitations of Victory, 119.
2. Ibid., 22.
3. Ibid., 182-3.
This conclusion is not borne out by the documents available.

Erich Brandenburg, the German historian who has taught at Heidelberg and Leipzig, in his book From Bismarck to the World War, 1927, has said that President Poincaré and Isvolsky worked to bring about the war. He has used almost entirely German sources and seems not to have been familiar with the works of Professors Schmitt, Fay and Renouvin, and he could not have had any acquaintance with President Poincaré's own account, which was published in the following year.

With France and Russia the case was quite different, I do not doubt that the great body of the people even in these two countries were desirous of peace. In the ruling circles, both in Paris and St. Petersburg, there were two parties; the one wanted peace if it could be maintained consistently with honour, the other wanted war. In France the latter combined with those who cherished the idea of revanche, which had never died out. Poincaré and Delcassé were its great protagonists. Since the clash with Germany in Morocco and the founding of the Entente, this party had greatly strengthened its influence; and finally, with Poincaré as leader it had assumed the real management of affairs. In Russia the Czar was the head of the peace party; for a long time the war party was without any real leader. Wide military circles and all those who favoured Pan-Slav ideas supported the war party at St. Petersburg. In Iswolski, after his personal reverse in the Bosniak crisis, they found a zealous champion. As Ambassador in Paris, this vain and vengeful man fell wholly under the sway of the Delcassé and Poincaré group and rendered it the greatest service by his personal influence. His despatches from Paris, the publication of which in a German translation has now been completed, show clearly to anyone who is not blinded by prejudice, by what cautious and subtle methods Iswolski, in conjunction with Poincaré, prepared for the war. He knew how to get rid of refractory elements like Georges Louis, the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, how to bribe the press and make use of it, and how to exploit the insatiable vanity of Poincaré. It is really difficult to say which of the two led and which followed. There is no doubt as to their close co-operation. Iswolski cannot repeat too often what good luck it is that Poincaré, and not
some other less reliable and less skilful politician, stands at the head of France. This viewpoint seems to me to have a purely nationalist prejudice, since the author has failed to consult all the documentary material available.

In The International Anarchy, 1926, G. Lowes Dickinson, an English author, has said that Ambassador Isvoisky was particularly elated by M. Poincaré's elevation to the Presidency, and that he wrote to Russia how fortunate such an event was for Russia and told on what friendly terms he was with the new President. Mr. Dickinson has quoted two remarks that were attributed to President Poincaré early in 1914, by M. Judet, a Frenchman whose personal and political dislike for President Poincaré are shown in his writings and who was banished from France for a number of years.

"In two years the war will take place. All my efforts will be devoted to preparing for it."

"Whatever be the issue, small or great, which may arise in the future between Russia and Germany, it will not pass by like the last. It will be war."

Pierre Bernus, the foreign editor of the Journal des Débats and correspondent of the Journal de Genève, in his article on President Poincaré in the Encyclopædia Britannica, has said:

... In power, he endeavoured to cement the friendships and strengthen the alliances of France. At a later stage, his enemies at home and abroad criticised him severely for his policy; yet it is hardly reasonable because a man is sufficiently far-seeing to apprehend a storm and make preparation for it, to accuse him of wishing to hasten it. He claimed that he did his utmost to avert war, holding that the way to prevent the conflict was for those powers against whom the menace was directed to present a powerful and united front, thus making it imprudent to attempt any act of aggression.

1. Brandenburgh, From Bismarck to the World War, 520.
Camille Bloch, the French historian and professor at the Sorbonne who is the director of the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine at Musée de la Grande Guerre and who helped edit the Documents Diplomatiques Français, has stated his opinions and conclusion on the question in his book, The Causes of the World War, which was published in 1935. He first states the question:

The question must arise as to whether any change of attitude occurred at the time of the visit to St. Petersburg and whether the French statesmen can be accused of urging a more aggressive attitude upon their Russian colleagues, in an ever more precarious European situation. Did President Poincaré, as has been alleged, "strengthen the hands" of the partisans of strong action on the part of Russia against Austria? Was there then (as has been believed) some kind of agreement between the leaders of French and Russian policy, of which Paléologue, the French ambassador, was aware and the import of which he exaggerated?*

M. Bloch has been unable to find any evidence that President Poincaré influenced Russia toward war.

We now come to the document which bound the two governments, namely the communique in which the conversations of the previous days were officially summed up, and of which a preliminary draft had been made by Paléologue. It affirmed the "perfect concordance" of "views" of the two Governments and their "intentions for the maintenance of European equilibrium, especially in the Balkan peninsula".

When it was submitted to the French visitors, this draft struck them as committing France too far "in following Russian policy in the Balkans". They therefore modified it in accordance with the desire, expressly enunciated by Poincaré and Viviani, to "leave the future unmortgaged", to "underline our pacific intentions", and to "further safeguard our liberty of action"—phrases which were the very opposite of any encouragement to war. The final version of the communique thus arrived at simply affirmed the two Governments' "complete community"

2. See above, page 16.
of "views about the various problems which regard for general peace and European equilibrium create for the Powers, especially in the East." There is to be found in it no indication of that "anything but calming" influence which the Austro-Hungarian ambassador attributed in advance to the President of the French Republic, at a moment when he was already aware of the text of his own Government's ultimatum to Serbia. The communiqué reveals no more than an effort to prevent Russia alone undertaking any Balkan adventure, or rashly involving her ally.1

In 1912, President Poincaré, during his visit to Russia, had learned the true nature of the Balkan pacts which appeared to be offensive as well as defensive, a fact which differed from the reports by Russia.2 Therefore the French Government wanted to insure itself against being carelessly drawn into a war.

M. Bloch has given his conclusion in his "General Summary", part XII:

In the conversation which had taken place a few days earlier in St. Petersburg between Poincaré (the French President), Viviani (the Premier), Nicholas II and Sazonov, it is impossible to find any proof that the French statesmen urged the Russians to declare war.3

M. Bloch has carefully used the documents and writings concerning the World War origins from the various countries involved.

Theodor Wolff, the editor of the Berliner Tagblatt during the World War and up until the advent of the Nazi regime, has given some arguments favorable to President Poincaré in his book written in 1936, The Eve of 1914.

French writers have contended that at bottom Poincaré was impressionable and weak. They have painted him as a conqueror quite without resolution of character, looking hesitantly on all sides before every decision . . . . How did this man of

hesitations succeed in treading such lofty and dangerous paths?...

But there must be some explanation of the fact if a man who neither shines amid the common graysomeness through his personality, nor is able to win hearts through the warmth of his own, appears again and again to a great number of his compatriots to be the obvious, almost the indispensable manager of their affairs. . . . In a book called Les Princes Lorrains Albert Thibaudet has indicated the bond that united the French people, or at all events the French bourgeoisie, with Poincaré. This exceptionally industrious worker, this watchful official, . . . this lawyer crammed with knowledge of the codes . . . was, in a country which since the great Revolution . . . had seen the expounders of the law at its head, . . . a representative of the general average of its citizens . . . . The sober-minded and economical French father of a family recognized Poincaré as more closely akin to himself, and . . . he believed that he found in Poincaré the reliability for which . . . he was fundamentally concerned.1

. . . . People say "in case of emergency" when they do not want to particularize any definite emergency. So it certainly was with Poincaré. A man of his type does not deliberately want and work for war, but may continually dwell on the idea of the inevitability of a war until at last he firmly believes in it and then, in order not to fail through inadequate preparations chooses a path "in case of emergency" which even without an emergency is full of danger. It seems to me that Alfred Fabre-Luce is much too confident in his assumption of a definite purpose in the Poincaré of 1912 when he writes: "In every international issue Poincaré weighs his chances. If he meets with adverse winds, he waits for a better opportunity". Poincaré, however, thought that war could no more be prevented than a volcanic eruption. And as the soothsayers were so sure of their message they took no thought for means of cooling men's hot heads, but prepared opinion "in case of emergency".2

2. Ibid., 127.
President Poincaré travelled a great deal about the country . . . The word "peace" was to be found in every one of his speeches, but always he unfurled the flag of a "great and strong" France and let it be understood that he, or France, would not shrink in emergency from a decision by arms. He spoke as Thiers had spoken in 1840 against the too pacific Guizot: "Si la France recule, elle descend de sa rangée" - "If France shrinks back she loses her proud place."1

. . . . It has been stated that he said in Dunkerque that "It would be a misfortune if war were avoided, for we shall never again be able to wage war under such favourable circumstances as now". He denies having made any statement of the sort, and at his wish eye-witnesses have attested the fact and disposed of the malicious fable.2

. . . . In General Joffre's Mémoires there is a report of discussions at the beginning of 1912. The French General Staff had received news once more of the intended German invasion of Belgium, and Joffre spoke at length on the question whether the French army should march into Belgium "at the very beginning of the operation", in order to forestall the enemy. He himself, Millerand, the Minister of War, and Delcassé, Minister of the Navy, were in favor of forestalling, but Poincaré, the Prime Minister, disagreed. The French entry into Belgium, he said, must at least have the justification of an actually imminent German invasion.3

2. Ibid., 564.
3. Ibid., 627.
George Peabody Gooch, the British historian, has given the following opinion of President Poincaré in his History of Modern Europe, 1922.

... the election of Poincaré as President in January proclaimed the new spirit of confidence. The atmospheric change was recorded and analysed in a series of dispatches from the Belgian Minister in Paris. "... To say that the French nation has become bellicose would be going too far ... The men at the head of affairs are sincerely pacific, but their action is excessive. It is good to restore to a nation its dignity, but dangerous to foster its chauvinism. They began by military parades and marching through Paris ... It must have pleased Poincaré, the Lorrainer, on the first day of his office to assert his resolve to hold the flag erect. In these troubled moments there is the danger of his presence at the Élysée. One hopes his cool and practical mind will save him from all exaggeration."

The main cause of the conflict lay in the Near East, and its authors were Germany and Austria on the one side, Russia and Serbia on the other ... But for a quarter of a century the destinies of France had been linked with those of Russia, and, when the long-expected crisis arrived, she took her place at the side of her partner with as little hesitation as Germany at the side of Austria. She had no desire for war, and took no step to precipitate it. But she had never abandoned the hope of recovering the Rhine provinces, and for that reason could not be included among the "satiated Powers" who are the most effective champions of peace. The catastrophe long feared by Jaurès, who was assassinated by a Nationalist on the eve of war, had come to pass and France was dragged into a desperate conflict by the ambitions of her ally. To have declined the summons would have constituted disloyalty to her treaty obligations, increased the contempt for a "decadent Power" which was entertained beyond the Rhine, and have left her defenceless against the victorious Teuton.

Pierre Renouvin, the noted French historian on the causes of the World War, has written in his Immediate Origins of the War,

2. Ibid., 557.
in 1928:

... Of course, after M. Poincaré’s visit to St. Petersburg, and after the reassuring statements made by M. Faizologue, Russia knew that France would live up to “the obligations of the alliance”. And, according to the reports from her Ambassador in London, regarding the personal sympathies of Sir Edward Grey, she knew that she might also count on a friendly attitude on the part of England. It is entirely possible, and even quite likely, that this knowledge about the other members of the Entente served as a kind of encouragement at St. Petersburg. Neither France nor England had raised any fundamental objection to the idea of Russian partial mobilization. But did that mean that she was now free to proceed to more extensive measures? The English Ambassador had advised Sazonov to avoid going as far as general mobilization, and the French Ambassador expressed the desire of the Paris Cabinet, on the thirtieth, that Russia should guard against taking any measure which might furnish the pretext for a reply on Germany’s part. Sir Edward Grey and M. Viviani thus certainly did not want Russian general mobilization.1

Bernadotte E. Schmitt, the eminent American historian, has expressed the following opinion concerning the responsibility of President Poincaré, in his Coming of the War, 1930:

... If a definite judgment of French policy must be reserved until the publication of the French documents is completed, there is at present but little evidence to support the view that the French statesmen were seeking a favorable opportunity for revanche. On the other hand, the evidence leaves no doubt that French opinion and French statesmen were ready to accept war if the necessity were presented. “France does not desire war, but is not afraid of it,” said M. Poincaré in a speech at Nancy late in 1912: and his words were reported by the German ambassador in Paris as an accurate reflection of the French temper. “France”, he remarked to M. Izvolski, “is incontestably disposed to peace, and neither seeks nor desires war; but the intervention of Germany against Russia would immediately modify this state of mind”; and he was convinced that “parliament and public opinion would, in such case, entirely approve the decision of the government to lend armed support to Russia.”2

1. Renouvin, Immediate Origins of the War, 342.
2. Schmitt, Coming of the War, 1, 66.
In the report of the proceedings of the American Historical Association Convention of December, 1938, there are a few paragraphs about the discussion of Professors Schmitt and Fay.

That the question of the origins of the World War still holds the interest of many American historians seemed to be indicated by the very large attendance at the session at which Sidney B. Fay and Bernadotte E. Schmitt discussed its present status. Both speakers declared in the main that they stood by the essential findings as presented in their respective published works on the origins of the war. . . . Mr. Fay turned to the present status of the "war guilt" question in different countries . . . . the speaker indicated some of the changes he would now make in revising his Origins of the World War. In particular, he would give more attention to economic and psychological causes. . . .

This printed report does not mention any revision of Mr. Fay's conclusions concerning President Poincaré, but he is reported, on good authority, as saying on that occasion that he now recognizes that he was too severe in his judgment of M. Poincaré when writing his book and that, in preparing a revision, he expects to deal more leniently with M. Poincaré's acts. 2 It is certain that his revised opinion is in some considerable degree the result of his examination of the documentary publication of the French Government, the appearance of which was held to be the chief basis for the present review of the evidence on M. Poincaré's rôle in the pre-war negotiations.

In his series of volumes entitled Au Service de la France, which was translated as the Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, Presi-

1. Report entitled "History and Historians at Chicago", in American Historical Review, LXIV, (April, 1939), 490-1.
2. Reported by Professor A. D. Beeler, April 28, 1939.
dent Poincaré has given his version of the controversy. Concerning this series of books, Mr. Wolff has written:

... We have the picture of a man who has written down, preserved, and set in order his whole record, the great events and with no less care the little ones, and who is able to say at any moment: "Here in front of you is the whole story of my life and my actions; my documents are in perfect order!" - and constantly he brings forward his evidence from his documents. A French politician who has had glimpses into the private life of the great has told me that every night before going to sleep Poincaré conscientiously wrote up his diary ... But more precious to him than rubies is his meticulously neat record when he is defending himself against his adversaries and critics. One can feel at every stage his sense of triumph when, thanks to this perfection of organization, he is in a position to produce evidence in black and white to bring an opponent to confusion.1

President Poincaré has stated that the Triple Entente diplomats tried in every possible way to prevent the War, whereas the Central Powers did not know how or would not do so.2 He has ably dealt with an accusation that he failed to follow up a certain proposal that might have prevented or retarded the war by quoting a letter of M. Berthelot to the effect that French politicians did everything possible in 1914 to avert war.3 President Poincaré has written, concerning Ambassador Isvolsky's insinuations:

Of course in Paris, according to Isvolsky, there was a chief of state, puffed up with vanity and for whom the witness of the Russian Ambassador was sufficient to determine historians to agree with him as to their judgment. But anyhow this megalomania President could do nothing by himself; he had no right either to sign a decision without the countersign of a Minister, or in any way to put himself in the place of the responsible Government, or to say: 'I will proclaim a "state of siege" or I will put my adversaries in prison'.

3. Ibid., 259-61.
And his Ministers were men of peace, quite aware of their responsibilities, and quite able to restrain or repudiate him if he stepped out of his own part.¹

Concerning his return to France after his journey to Russia, President Poincaré has stated:

A little after 8 A.M. on the 29th we disembarked at Dunkirk, and among those assembled to greet us there are a few who say, "Why did you not come back sooner now that Europe is so anxious and France in possible danger?" One of my interviewers went a little further in telling me, "We have had enough of this! It's the same thing over and over again! It would be better to finish with it once and for all." To him I can only reply, "For the love of heaven don't talk so; we must strive to avert war."²

He has said that he was especially careful to be neutral in his conduct during the prewar negotiations.

My position as President was just now in many respects painfully passive; I presided over Cabinet Councils, I conferred with the Ministers who came to see me and read all the telegrams and reports which they brought. But intensely loyal as all the Ministers were in letting me know everything that was going on, I felt that they were constitutionally responsible and that full freedom of action must be left to them. This only made me a prey to every emotion, and through the long hours of those long days I was constantly having to hold myself in tightly, lest I should do anything to add to the troubles of others, while over and over again I asked myself if Europe were really going to be plunged into a bloody war just because Austria was bent on noisily rattling Germany's sword.³

¹ Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, 11, 291.
² Ibid., 214.
³ Ibid., 242.
Before stating my conclusion about the responsibility of President Poincaré during the days immediately preceding the outbreak of the World War, it is first necessary to define my interpretation of the meaning of the word "responsibility". The term "responsibility" may be viewed, in this case, either as a conscious attempt to bring about a World War, or as a responsibility for acts which, while not premeditated in order to incite war, may have been links in the chain of events which led toward that war. In respect to the former interpretation, the documents and writings which I have consulted on this subject have not, in my opinion, given conclusive evidence that President Poincaré actually plotted to incite a war against the Central Powers. As for the latter interpretation of the word "responsibility", it seems to me, there may be found considerable room for difference of opinion.

President Poincaré believed that some day there would be a war between France and Germany. He could foresee this as the result of the various alliances, ententes, and "incidents" that had occurred since 1871. He did not intend that France should be caught napping again; he did intend that France should be thoroughly prepared, by means of the three-year military service law and her Alliance and Entente, for such a conflict. The wisdom of such a course was shown in the outcome of the World War.
On his trip in Russia, President Poincaré felt that it was necessary to reaffirm the solidarity of the Franco-Russian Alliance - which had been made by President Carnot and Alexander III. But such a routine reaffirmation which, in the communiqué, spoke of a hope for peace in Europe was not necessarily an act to incite Russia toward war. It was a step taken in the direction of keeping peace in Europe. However, even a seemingly innocuous statement may have been interpreted as a promise, a carte blanche. Russia, since the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 when France did not support her ally, (although the Alliance did not call for aid in such an eventuality), was not entirely sure of her ally. In 1905 it seemed possible that the Tsar might be won over to the side of Germany. Therefore, it was more necessary than usual for the French Government to reaffirm adherence to the provisions of the Alliance. Such statements may have been considered by Russian jingoists as promises of aid in any eventuality. Therein lies a certain degree of responsibility.

After he had returned to France, President Poincaré supported every attempt made to avert war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. He saw to it that advice was sent to Russia to avoid, if possible, giving Germany an excuse for declaring war. France tried to avoid breaking off relations with Germany. But even if France had promised to remain neutral in the event of a Russo-German War, there was the contingent proposition to the German ultimatum which would have been proposed next. Certainly no sovereign state worthy of the name could have given up two valuable fortresses on demand for occupation by another Power as a gage of its neutral-
ity. Such a proposition was impossible, and it was so intended by its authors. The German ultimatum could not have been accepted in all its parts by a France which expected to remain sovereign in her own territory.

President Poincaré played his part in such a way as to give no offense to England in order to retain for France British aid in a possible war. He accepted the British proposals for averting war. He asked for a British declaration of future aid to France in the event of a Franco-German war because he believed that such a declaration would dissuade Germany from entering the war. Such a result was of course problematical. France, after concentrating her fleet in the Mediterranean Sea, as provided in her 1912 agreement, asked for protection by the English fleet along her vulnerable Atlantic Ocean-North Sea coastline. This, too, seems only a natural request. France certainly tried to get England on her side, not against her.

President Poincaré believed in preparedness and worked toward that end, but some of his actions toward that end may have unconsciously led toward the beginning of the World War. His responsibility was, in my opinion, not a premeditated scheming to bring about a general European war. His responsibility was the responsibility of any government head who believed in the theory that in order to have peace it was necessary to prepare for war and also in the doctrine of the inevitability of war.


Fabre-Luce, Alfred. The Limitations of Victory. New York, 1926.


How the War Began in 1914, the diary of the Russian Foreign Office. London, 1925.
Lloyd George, David. War Memoirs of David Lloyd George.


Schmitt, Bernadotte E. The Coming of the War, 1914. 2 vols.


II. ARTICLES

Report entitled "History and Historians at Chicago", in American Historical Review, LXIV, (April, 1939), 490-1.