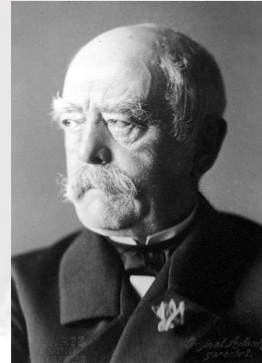


UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)



Wilhelm I - King of Prussia (1861-1888)
and German Emperor (1871-1888)



Otto von Bismarck - Minister president of Prussia (1862-1890) and
Chancellor of German Empire (1871-1890)

UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)

In 1864, Bismarck took the first step toward molding an empire. Prussia and Austria formed an alliance and went to war against Denmark to win two border provinces, Schleswig and Holstein. A quick victory increased national pride among Prussians. It also won new respect from other Germans and lent support for Prussia as head of a unified Germany. After the victory, Prussia governed Schleswig, while Austria controlled Holstein.



UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)

Bismarck purposely stirred up border conflicts with Austria over Schleswig and Holstein. The tensions provoked Austria into declaring war on Prussia in 1866.





This conflict was known as the Seven Weeks' War. The Prussians used their superior training and equipment to win a devastating victory. They humiliated Austria. The Austrians lost the region of Venetia, which was given to Italy.

They had to accept Prussian annexation of more German territory. With its victory in the Seven Weeks' War, Prussia took control of northern Germany. For the first time, the eastern and western parts of the Prussian kingdom were joined. In 1867, the remaining states of the north joined the North German

Confederation, which Prussia dominated completely.



EUROPE 1867

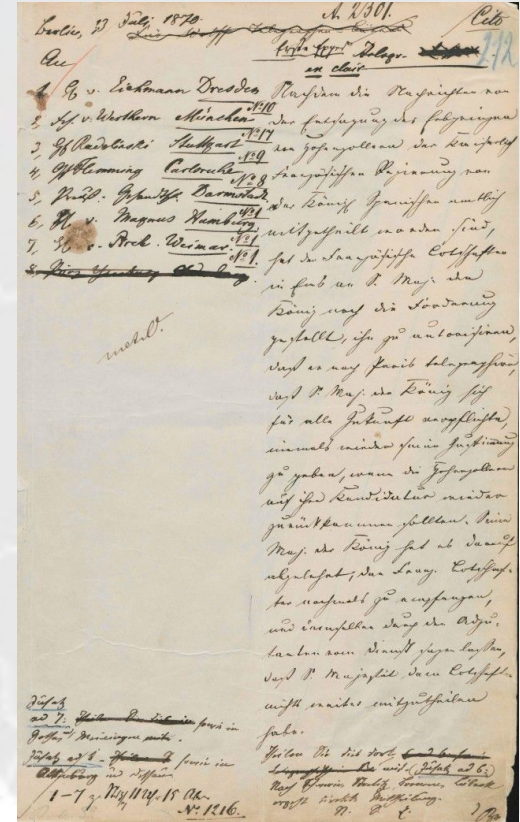
-  Prussian territorial acquisitions after the war agst. Denmark 1864 and Austria 1866
-  Boundary of North German Confederation
-  German small states
-  Boundary of K. of Hungary after transform. of Empire of Austria into the Au-Hu. Empire
-  Resurgimento: Territorial acquisitions of Piedmont-Sardinia resp. Italy 1859-1866
-  Boundary of the K. of Italy after procl. 1861



UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)

By 1867, a few southern German states remained independent of Prussian control. The majority of southern Germans were Catholics. Many in the region resisted domination by a Protestant Prussia. However, Bismarck felt he could win the support of southerners if they faced a threat from outside. He reasoned that a war with France would rally the south. Bismarck was an expert at manufacturing “incidents” to gain his ends. For example, he created the impression that the French ambassador had insulted the Prussian king. The French reacted to Bismarck’s deception by declaring war on Prussia on July 19, 1870.



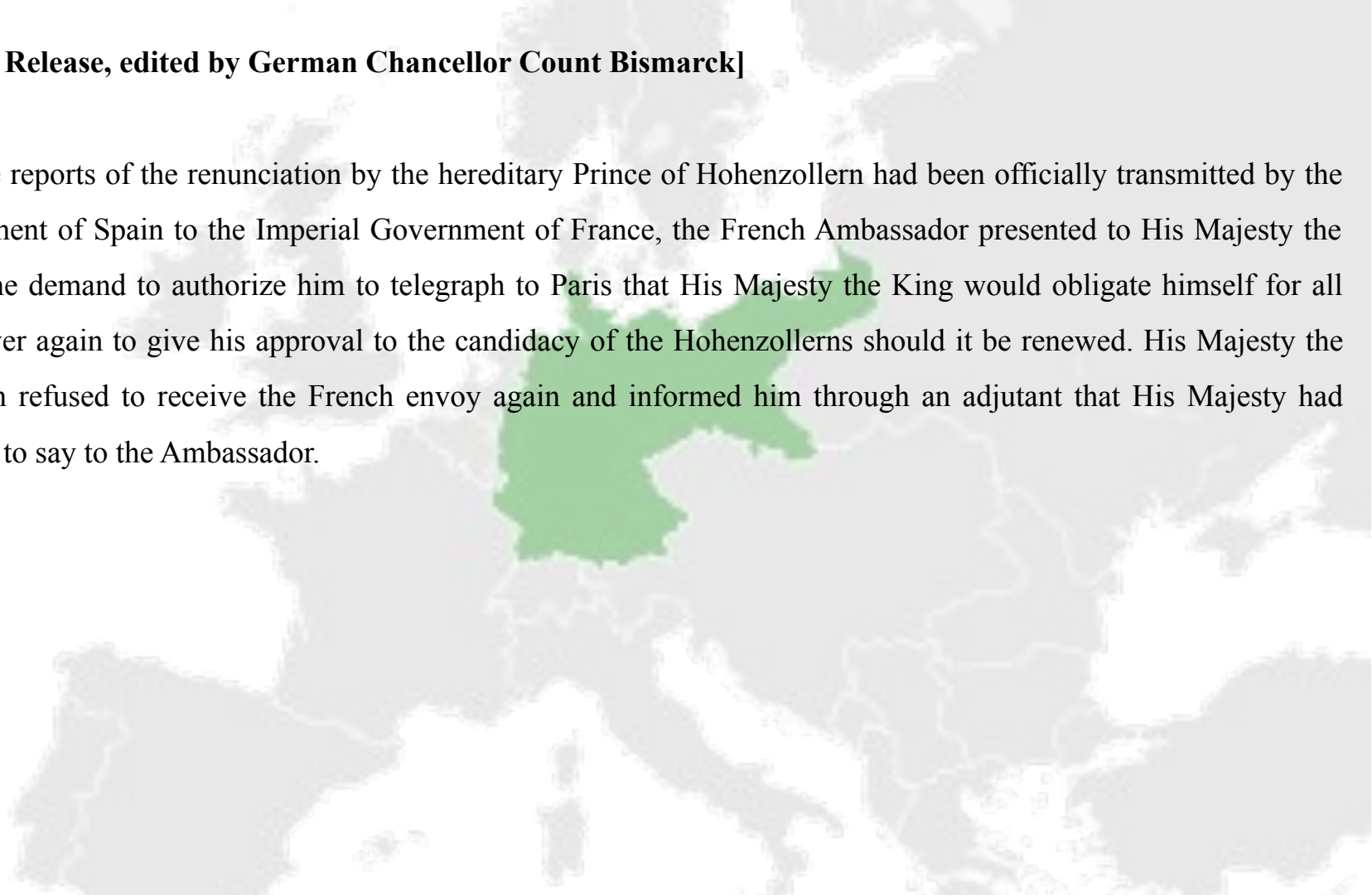
[Telegram from Privy Councilor Abeken to the German Chancellor Count Bismarck] Ems, July 13, 1870.

His Majesty the King writes to me: “M. Benedetti intercepted me on the Promenade in order to demand of me most insistently that I should authorize him to telegraph immediately to Paris that I shall obligate myself for all future time never again to give my approval to the candidacy of the Hohenzollerns should it be renewed. I refused to agree to this, the last time somewhat severely, informing him that one dare not and cannot assume such obligations à tout jamais. Naturally, I informed him that I had received no news as yet, and since he had been informed earlier than I by way of Paris and Madrid, he could easily understand why my government was once again out of the matter.”

Since then His Majesty has received a dispatch from the Prince[] [Charles Anthony]. As His Majesty has informed Count Benedetti that he was expecting news from the Prince, His Majesty himself, in view of the above-mentioned demand and in consonance with the advice of Count Eulenburg[] and myself, decided not to receive the French envoy again but to inform him through an adjutant that His Majesty had now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and that he had nothing further to say to the Ambassador. His Majesty leaves it to the judgment of Your Excellency whether or not to communicate at once the new demand by Benedetti and its rejection to our ambassadors and to the press.

[Official Press Release, edited by German Chancellor Count Bismarck]

After the reports of the renunciation by the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially transmitted by the Royal Government of Spain to the Imperial Government of France, the French Ambassador presented to His Majesty the King at Ems the demand to authorize him to telegraph to Paris that His Majesty the King would obligate himself for all future time never again to give his approval to the candidacy of the Hohenzollerns should it be renewed. His Majesty the King thereupon refused to receive the French envoy again and informed him through an adjutant that His Majesty had nothing further to say to the Ambassador.



UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)

The Prussian army immediately poured into northern France. In September 1870, the Prussian army surrounded the main French force at Sedan. Among the 83,000 French prisoners taken was Napoleon III himself. Parisians withstood a German siege until hunger forced them to surrender. The Franco-Prussian War was the final stage in German unification. Now the nationalistic fever also seized people in southern Germany. They finally accepted Prussian leadership.



UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

(1864-1871)

On January 18, 1871, at the captured French palace of Versailles, King Wilhelm I of Prussia was crowned kaiser, or emperor. Germans called their empire the Second Reich. (The Holy Roman Empire was the first.) Bismarck had achieved Prussian dominance over Germany and Europe “by blood and iron.” The new German Empire annexed from France two territories: **Alsace and Lorraine.**

