OTTO VON BISMARCK DOC

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Before you start reading, please keep in mind that I'm not a historian, just someone who loves history. Also, note that this isn't a formal document. If you want to fully understand Bismarck's feats, I encourage you to read more about him from credible sources. AND DO NOT treat this document as the definitive guide on how to scale Bismarck. Lastly, this document doesn't reflect the full extent of my knowledge of him. I create these just for fun and to spark your own interest in studying these topics.



Purple– Strategy, Planning, Tactics
Blue – Thinking, Observation, Analysis
Light Blue - Logical Reasoning
Light Blue – Foresight. Trap Evasion
Red – Deception
Orange – EI
Green – Manipulation, SI

EARLY LIFE:

THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND BISMARCK's EARLY DISPLAY OF MANIPULATIVE TRAITS:

To better understand Bismarck, it's important to note his deep resentment toward his mother, not just because she was abusive but also emotionally distant and unaffectionate. He blamed her for the abuse he suffered at school, which led him to become cold and detached. Bismarck confessed to often deceiving her through falsehoods, using these deceptive tactics to avoid confrontation.

He even passed this mindset onto his older brother, Bernhard, who ended up adopting the same approach in dealing with her.

The phrase, *"The Kniephof establishment is more susceptible to lies and diplomacy than to soldierly coarseness,"*

make of the fact that Bismarck confessed that 'as a small child I hated her; later I successfully deceived her with falsehoods' or that he urged Bernhard to do the same: 'Don't write too crudely to the parents. The Kniephof establishment is more susceptible to lies and diplomacy than to soldierly coarseness'?[28] How had she frightened the child so thoroughly that he dared not tell her the truth? We do not know.

Suggest that from an early age, Bismarck recognized that using manipulation and deception was more effective in handling his parents than being straightforward and honest. This early behavior indicates the emergence of Bismarck's manipulative and Machiavellian characteristics, which would later become hallmarks of his political approach.

BISMARCK'S CHARISMA IN GOTTINGEN:

At Göttingen, Bismarck's social abilities and charisma were prominent. Motley highlighted his keen understanding of how to achieve dominance through leadership, a trait that defined both his student life and future goals. Bismarck knew how to assert control through his strong personality, and this often led to clashes with authority figures.

Bismarck, not of Motley. How remarkable both men must have been, the one to inspire, and the other to write, a biography or a biographical novel about the young man. Even at 18 Bismarck had a special aura. Motley makes it absolutely clear that this young man 'in precocity of character, in every respect,... went immeasurably beyond any person I have ever known.'

Motley saw another important attribute in his friend, he saw 'a very rational sort of person... I see that this is the way to obtain superiority and that I intend to lead my companions here, as I intend to lead them in after-life.' Bismarck's urge to rule and dominate others by the force of his personality stood out even at the age of 18. Later in his political career he chose conflict over compromise in most situations, as if conflict had a cleansing or clarifying property by drawing the lines between friends and foes more sharply or defining the possible courses of action.

(Charisma, Social Intuition)

THE POLYGLOT BISMARCK:

Otto von Bismarck was a polyglot, fluent in English, French, Italian, Polish, and Russian.

Bismarck had two siblings: his older brother Bernhard (1810–1893) and his younger sister Malwine (1827–1908). Others saw Bismarck as a typical backwoods Prussian Junker, an image that he encouraged by wearing military uniforms. However, he was well educated and cosmopolitan with a gift for conversation. Bismarck also knew English, French, Italian, Polish, and Russian.[3]

(Intelligence)

BISMARCK'S VAST KNOWLEDGE:

Otto von Bismarck possessed a wealth of knowledge. He gained legal expertise through his studies and, as a Junker, he extensively read about various subjects, acquiring significant insights into agricultural science, economics, estate management, and soil chemistry. Throughout his life, he continued to expand his understanding, particularly in the field of politics.

(Knowledge)

EARLY YEARS AS A POLITICIAN



BISMARCK'S ENTRY INTO POLITICS

Let's begin with Bismarck's first step into politics, which occurred when the Prussian government announced plans to change the justice system on large estates.

At that time, wealthy landowners, known as Junkers, were allowed to run their own courts on their estates.

As a Junker himself, Bismarck was opposed to these changes, seeing them as a threat to his authority. To address this, he proposed a compromise that would reduce his power, but not completely, offering a safer option:

His proposal included:

- Abolishing individual estate courts.
- Establishing local judicial districts.
- Allowing landowners to elect a district judge, similar to how they already elected other local officials.

Bismarck subsequently started to share his plan with other landowners. In early 1847, he spoke at several meetings, took part in county diets, and addressed various assemblies to advocate for his idea, even beginning to implement it in some of the courts.

liamentary politician. He had rushed around, talked to his constituents, got them to sign on to his suggestions, drafted resolutions, and eventually convinced them to adopt his radical reform proposals, which, as Gerlach noticed at once, amounted to 'abolition' of the traditional right to a patrimonial court.

Despite being regarded as overly radical, Bismarck's exceptional political acumen in convincing others, even early in his career with his daring proposals, deserves recognition. Even Ludwig von Gerlach found the proposal interesting, albeit a bit extreme. Ultimately, this experience yielded a positive outcome: Bismarck secured a seat in the United Diet and gained significant recognition. He conveyed his enthusiasm to his wife, Johanna, stating that he was "overflowing with politics." In this moment, he uncovered his true vocation and showcased his abilities as a parliamentary politician.

When Bismarck wrote to Johanna on 8 May 1847 that he had been elected a deputy to the United Diet, he described it as if it had happened without his agency. The Magdeburg electors 'quite unusually elected me to the first position though I am new in the county and was not even an alternate deputy'.[6] The truth was, as we have seen, very different. He had run a campaign to get his reform proposals for local patrimonial courts accepted which had made him very well known indeed to the Magdeburg and other electors.

tive. Gerlach wrote shrewdly on the margin:

Something which in time becomes feasible through a process of reconciliation, can be left for the moment to one side. The majority of estate judges and the most influential defenders of patrimonial justice would see this proposal as abolition.[4]

(Influence Building, Communication, Abstract Reasoning)

BISMARCK'S CONFRONTS THE LIBERALS

The United Diet established by the king was intended to be traditional; however, it unexpectedly began transforming into a parliament due to the influence of bourgeois and aristocratic liberals. This shift was detrimental for Bismarck, as these groups opposed his beliefs. In response, he delivered a speech in 1847, which was controversial. In this speech, Bismarck challenged a fundamental belief held by Prussian liberals regarding the 1813 uprising against Napoleon, known as the "Prussian Rising." While liberals viewed this uprising as a struggle for freedom, Bismarck argued that it was solely about expelling foreign occupiers, rather than promoting liberal ideals. The speech revealed several aspects of his approach:

- He displayed contempt for other parliament members.
- He employed dramatic gestures and violent rhetoric.
- His language was vibrant, yet casually delivered.
- He favored conflict over consensus.

all the characteristics of his later speeches in the Landtag and the Reichstag: complete contempt for the members of these bodies, dramatic gestures, violent ideas couched in sparkling prose but delivered in easy conversational tones. He consistently chose conflict over consensus and saw in such clashes what Clark calls a 'clarifying element'. Erich Marcks agrees:

This speech highlighted Bismarck's talent for provocative showmanship.

Many were offended, and some protested by shouting.The controversy he sparked excited the opposition, indirectly creating a polarized environment. **Following this speech, he gained significant notoriety and fame, as he intentionally challenged popular beliefs to establish his reputation.**

Interestingly, Behind closed doors, Bismarck downplayed the event, asserting he only spoke the truth and misrepresenting its significance, despite it being a major controversy. This highlights his tendency to rewrite history, a defining trait of his character.

Although many people were offended by the speech and criticized Bismarck's actions, he quickly emerged as a leader among the ultra-conservatives within days of delivering it. This demonstrates an impressive ability to build influence.

Within a few days Bismarck had taken a leadership position among the ultra-conservatives, as he explained in a letter to Johanna four days after his maiden speech. He first apologized for not going to Reinfeld, the estate of his in-laws, the Puttkamers, where his fiancée pined for him, over Whitsun

I have succeeded in gaining influence over a large number, or in any case several, deputies from the so-called Court Party and the other ultra-Conservatives, which I use as far as I can to keep them from bolting and attempting clumsy jumps to the side which, now that I have spelled out my direction unmistakably, I can do in the least suspect way.[25]

(Communication, Indirect + Mass Manipulation, Influence Building, Info Control)

In a letter to Johanna, Bismarck offers insights on the situation he sparked, noting that the deliberations had become "very serious" because the opposition turned everything "into a party matter." This shows he understood the political polarization he had caused and how it would clearly define positions moving forward. Bismarck also acknowledges gaining both friends and enemies, recognizing that making enemies wasn't a problem as long as he was gaining influence. This is reinforced when he mentions how people who once ignored him were now seeking his favor, receiving "well-meaning squeezes from unknown hands."

In general I am well and calmer than before, because I have taken a more active part than before…the deliberations have become very serious because the opposition makes everything into a party matter. I have made myself many friends and many enemies, the latter more inside, the former more outside, of the Landtag. People, who before did not want to know me and others whom I do not yet know, overwhelm me with courtesies, and I get many well meaning squeezes from unknown hands… The political assemblies after the Landtag in the evening are a little wearing; by nightfall I come back from my ride, and then go right to the English House or into the Hotel de Rome, and get so deeply involved in politics that I never get to bed before 1.[26]

The author states that Bismarck "loved the power to manipulate others" and frequently used the word "intrigue" in his correspondence.

too hard, and riding too fast. Above all, he loved the power to manipulate others. The word 'intrigue' pops up again and again in his private correspondence. And then there were other opportunities in his new position of prominence, and the handsome, blonde, 32-year-old giant knew how to value them. On 22 June 1847 he wrote to Johanna, 'The day before yesterday we were with our friend the King and I was very spoiled by their Highnesses.'[27]

This suggests that Bismarck was not just interested in policy, but in the game of politics itself. He enjoyed outmaneuvering his opponents and exercising influence behind the scenes.

(Emotional Understanding, Influence Building)

BISMARCK VS THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

During this part, Bismarck doesn't achieve complete success, but he does accomplish some notable feats.

Let's quickly set the scene: Europe is experiencing a wave of revolutions, and Prussia is caught up in it. The king makes a critical mistake by withdrawing his soldiers from Berlin, effectively conceding to the revolutionaries who demanded government reform.

Bismarck opposed the revolutionaries' move and felt irritated when they displayed their German republic flags. Despite discontent from key figures like Roon, he resolved to confront the situation. He rallied local farmers to drive off the revolutionaries and join the fight in Berlin. This initiative showcased Bismarck's resilience and organizational skills. Ultimately, however, the farmers weren't needed, as the king had enough soldiers and didn't want them to engage.

dered to the mob. Roon, stationed in Potsdam, considered emigration. Bismarck instinctively reached for his sword. Two days later, on 20 March, a delegation from Tangermünde arrived in Schönhausen and demanded that the black-red-gold flag of the German Republic be raised on the church tower. Bismarck 'asked the peasants whether they wanted to defend themselves. They answered with a unanimous and vigorous Ja and I recommended to them to drive the city-dwellers out which with the enthusiastic help of the women they rapidly did.'[55] On 21 March Bismarck hurried to

calmly, said: 'Send us none of your peasants, we don't want them. We have quite enough soldiers… What can we do after the King has commanded us to play the part of the vanquished? I cannot attack without orders'.[56]

However, what truly matters is Bismarck's intentions and initiative

(Mental Fortitude, Persuasion)

Bismarck's most notable feat during the 1848 European revolution must be his keen insight of the revolution. Even though he was located far away in Brandenburg (a part of Prussia), Bismarck maintained a clear view of the developments in France. He perceived that the 1848 French Revolution did not possess the power and legitimacy of the earlier revolution in 1792 and would ultimately fail (which it did). What led him to this conclusion?

His reasoning stemmed from several factors:

1. Historical comparison: He keenly recognized that the driving forces behind the 1792 French Revolution—like "the guillotine and republican fanaticism"—were missing in the current scenario. This indicates that he employed associative thinking to draw parallels between past events and his present circumstances.
2. Emotional Understanding: He understood that successful revolutions require more than just dissatisfaction; they need a passionate ideological drive, which he found lacking in this case.
3. Political acumen: Bismarck recognized that as long as Paris maintained a stable government, the likelihood of war remained low. *He grasped the importance of financial stability in preserving political power.*
4. Analytical approach: Instead of being swept up in revolutionary enthusiasm, he maintained a cool, realistic assessment of the situation.

As long as the present government in Paris can hold on, I do not believe there will be war, doubt that there's any urge to it. If it is undermined or even overthrown by socialist movements, which is entirely foreseeable, it will have or its successor no money and nobody will lend it any, so that a state bankruptcy or something similar must occur. The motives of 1792, the guillotine and the republican fanaticism, which might take the place of money, are not present.[63]

Tocqueville in the streets of Paris had also noted—that the French Revolution of 1848 was an imitation of 1792 or, in Tocqueville's memorable phrase, 'the whole thing seemed to me to be a bad tragedy played by actors from the provinces.'[64]

(Prediction, Deductive Reasoning, Emotional Understanding, Risk Assessment, Associative Thinking, Analytical Thinking)

EXPLANATION OF BISMARCK'S STRATEGIES IN THE 1848 REVOLUTION

During the 1848 revolution, Bismarck recognized a chance to enhance his political influence.

The following describes strategies Bismarck used to elevate his status and draw nearer to authority during this revolutionary period.

1. Bismarck became a member of the Camarilla, a group of conservative advisors with close ties to the King. This association allowed him to network with influential figures who would later assist in his rise to power after the revolution subsided.
2. During the revolution, a secretive conservative organization known as the "Society for King and Fatherland" emerged with the goal of subtly influencing local communities. Bismarck became a member of this group and participated in their newspaper, "Kreuzzeitung." One significant action he took was suggesting the inclusion of more personal advertisements, as he recognized their value to rural readers. Bismarck observed that women were particularly attracted to the paper for personal announcements like births, marriages, and obituaries. He contended that if these notices were omitted, women would likely discourage their husbands from buying the paper, which could result in decreased sales—an impressive demonstration of emotional understanding.

there are not enough ads. In our rural remoteness ads are a necessity. The women cannot exist without them and in any case the survival of a newspaper rests on the fees from advertising. New papers can help themselves by reprinting the notices in the established papers and so by means of appearance eventually create the reality of an important information paper… Births, deaths, weddings announcements must be taken over from the Spener-Vossische in my view in full, if necessary without phrases. You cannot imagine how many women read papers only for the notices and if they do not find them, forbid their husbands to buy the paper.[74]

3. Bismarck recognized the necessity of gaining Gerlach's support. He noted that Gerlach was a highly influential conservative, viewed almost like a saint, with his words in the newspaper regarded as truth. Bismarck also observed that Gerlach's brother, Leopold, had a close relationship with the king and frequently dined with him. He assessed that aligning with them could provide him a pathway to higher political positions, so he decided to stay close to them despite their differing viewpoints.

In the autumn of 1848, Bismarck needed Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach, who helped to set up and direct the camarilla as a political force. Gerlach wrote a column called *Review* every month in the *Kreuzzeitung* and the *Reviewer* became the most widely read and most influential voice on the Right. He never failed to startle readers as in his October 1848 column in which he argued, 'we cannot oppose Revolution only with repressive and security measures, we must always have ideas of justice.'[77] Since his brother Leopold had coffee in private with the King every day, Bismarck reckoned that the brothers Gerlach would be his road to power, and they were.

This highlights Bismarck's pragmatism; he prioritized decisions that would benefit him over strict adherence to his ideologies.

What made it crucial to implement these strategies at that specific time?

The execution of those strategies during the tumultuous period surrounding the 1848 revolutions in Germany was crucial for several reasons.

First we must contextualize the situation surrounding the German Revolution of 1848, particularly the formation and subsequent struggles of the German National Assembly. This assembly, which emerged from the revolutionary fervor of the time, began to falter under immense pressure from powerful neighboring states like Russia and Britain. As its authority weakened, societal fractures became apparent, leading to widespread unrest among the populace. The culmination of this discontent was tragically evident when a mob murdered two members of the assembly, highlighting the volatility and desperation of the situation. Otto von Bismarck's predictions regarding the revolution proved accurate. He foresaw that the revolution would ultimately achieve little, a point I have already discussed. This failure created a sense of uncertainty in Prussia. Questions arose about the future of the monarchy: Would the King continue to work with the liberal groups seeking reform, or would he move toward a more authoritarian style of governance? This indecision marked a crucial moment, as the King seemed more likely to separate himself from the liberals. **Bismarck's strategies were especially effective during this chaotic time of the revolution because he skillfully took advantage of**

the existing uncertainty. He understood that the revolutionary movement was destined to fail, which gave him the opportunity to support conservative groups. By doing so, he was able to strengthen his ties with the monarchy and position himself as a key player in the political landscape of the time.The King, struggling with his own uncertainty, even considered giving Bismarck an important government position. Although he ultimately did not take this step, the mere consideration of it indicated Bismarck's growing importance in the king's eye. This idea is further reinforced by Bismarck's apparent expectation of being appointed to a prominent government position soon.

In summary, Bismarck's strategic maneuvers during this critical juncture of the German Revolution were instrumental in navigating the uncertainties of the time. His foresight and political acumen allowed him to capitalize on the failures of the revolution, aligning himself with the monarchy and conservative forces. This laid the groundwork for his eventual rise to power, demonstrating the profound interplay between strategy, timing, and political dynamics in shaping historical outcomes.

1848–9. The day after Bismarck wrote to Hermann Wagener, 26 August 1848, under pressure from Britain and Russia, the Prussian government, whose army had been fighting a quixotic campaign against Denmark for the liberation of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, agreed to sign an armistice with Denmark without consulting the German National Assembly, whose agent in theory Prussia had been. This betrayal of the national cause made clear the evident fact that Frankfurt as capital of the new Germany had no executive force of its own. When on 16 September the National Assembly in Frankfurt ratified the armistice—they could hardly do otherwise—rioting broke out in the street and two deputies, Auerswald and Lichnowsky, were murdered by the mob. The Prussian army entered the city and restored order.[83]

The loss of prestige in the National Assembly affected the Prussian National Assembly in a similar way. On 11 September 1848 the Liberal Prussian Auerswald-Hansemann ministry resigned. The King hesitated. Could he do away with liberals altogether? Bismarck went to Berlin where Count Brandenburg, indifferent to such anxieties, declared himself ready to take the presidency of the Council, and then the difficulty was to find him fit and acceptable colleagues. A list presented to the King contained my name also: as General Gerlach told me, the King had written in the margin 'only to be employed when the bayonet governs unrestricted.' Count Brandenburg himself said to me at Potsdam: 'I have taken the matter in hand, but have scarcely looked into the newspapers; I am unacquainted with political matters, and can only carry my head to market. I want a mahout, a man in whom I trust and who tells me what I can do. I go into the matter like a child into the dark, and except Otto Manteuffel [then at the head of the Ministry of the Interior], know nobody who possesses previous training as well as my personal confidence.[88]

(Emotional Understanding, Strategy Forecasting, Anticipation)

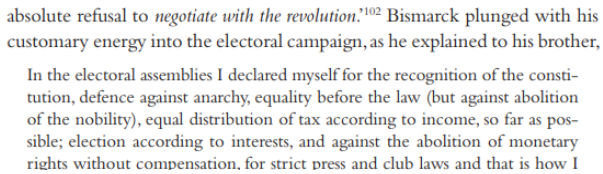
LANDTAG ELECTIONS

The Landtag was the lower house of the Prussian parliament, established after the failed revolution of 1848 as part of a bicameral system alongside the House of Lords.

Otto von Bismarck **recognized** the potential of the newly formed Landtag to shape Prussian politics in favor of conservative and monarchical principles, prompting him to participate in the elections. Bismarck approached his campaign with great enthusiasm, actively attending electoral assemblies and engaging directly with voters. He clearly articulated his conservative views, appealing to those who prioritized stability and the preservation of traditional values.

In his private letters, Bismarck expressed confidence in his ability to mobilize his supporters and counter the opposition.

Bismarck's campaign focused on winning conservative support by addressing their concerns and warning against revolutionary change. His connections with the conservative elite and strong leadership reputation helped him gain significant backing. On February 5, 1849, he was elected to the Prussian Landtag, showcasing his effective organization and persuasive political skills.



absolute refusal to *negotiate with the revolution*.'[102] Bismarck plunged with his customary energy into the electoral campaign, as he explained to his brother,

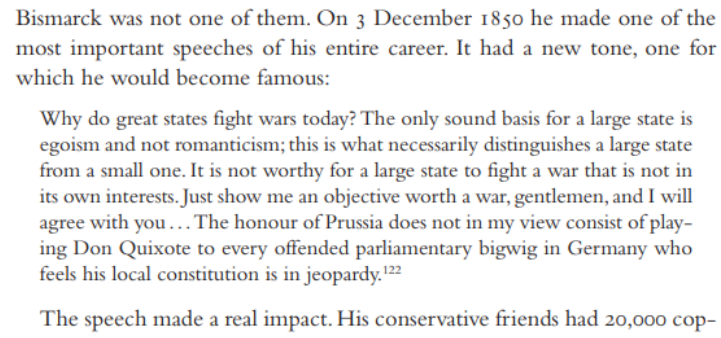
> In the electoral assemblies I declared myself for the recognition of the constitution, defence against anarchy, equality before the law (but against abolition of the nobility), equal distribution of tax according to income, so far as possible; election according to interests, and against the abolition of monetary rights without compensation, for strict press and club laws and that is how I

On 5 February 1849 Otto von Bismarck was elected to the Prussian Landtag from Teltow, in Brandenburg. Heinz von Kleist was elected from Belgard. General Leopold von Gerlach noted in his diary: 'Of the reliable

(Leadership, Communication, Influence Building, Persuasion)

1850 SPEECH

In December 1850, Bismarck delivered a significant speech that could be seen as the beginning of his philosophy of Realpolitik. He argued that wars should be fought solely for self-interest rather than romantic or ideological reasons, focusing on Prussia's security and power. Bismarck demonstrated a keen understanding of human psychology, acknowledging that leaders often act out of personal ambition and national pride. He recognized the importance of calculated risks in statecraft, showing readiness to engage in war when it benefited Prussian interests while knowing when to avoid conflict to maintain stability.



Bismarck was not one of them. On 3 December 1850 he made one of the most important speeches of his entire career. It had a new tone, one for which he would become famous:

> Why do great states fight wars today? The only sound basis for a large state is egoism and not romanticism; this is what necessarily distinguishes a large state from a small one. It is not worthy for a large state to fight a war that is not in its own interests. Just show me an objective worth a war, gentlemen, and I will agree with you . . . The honour of Prussia does not in my view consist of playing Don Quixote to every offended parliamentary bigwig in Germany who feels his local constitution is in jeopardy.[122]

The speech made a real impact. His conservative friends had 20,000 cop-

(Risk Calculations, Strategic Thinking, Emotional Understanding)

BISMARCK THE DIPLOMAT

Bismarck's efforts eventually bore fruit when he was appointed as Prussia's diplomatic representative to the German Confederation, an alliance of 39 sovereign states. This position validated his prior endeavors and marked a significant milestone in his political career.



Bismarck's Growing Influence and His Wife

Bismarck's growing influence culminated in his promotion to Privy Legation Councillor, significantly improving his financial status and making him one of Prussia's wealthiest individuals. This advancement required more of his time and attention. However, Bismarck had a wife who was strict with him. Cleverly, Bismarck exploited his wife's deep religious convictions to his advantage. He falsely claimed that his promotions and increasing power came effortlessly, despite the considerable work he actually put in. This deception was aimed at creating the impression that he was blessed with divine luck.

Bismarck went so far as to describe himself as "God's soldier," asserting that he was obligated to go wherever God directed him.

> Weigh the anchor of your soul and prepare yourself to leave the home port. I know from my own feelings how painful the thought must be to you to leave, how sad your parents are. But I repeat I have not with a syllable wished or sought this appointment. What ever happens, I am God's soldier and where he sends me I must go.[3]

He argued that if his success was part of God's plan, his wife would have no choice but to accept it.This manipulation demonstrates Bismarck's keen understanding of human emotions and his willingness to exploit perceived weaknesses to achieve his goals. While this example only involves his wife, it foreshadows a pattern of behavior that Bismarck would repeatedly employ throughout his career, as we'll see in the rest of this document.

(Deception, Influence Building, Coverage)

Austrian Spies in Frankfurt Countering

When Bismarck served as an ambassador in Frankfurt, he had to navigate his relationship with the Austrians, which frustrated him. In letters to Hermann Wagener, he expressed that he could see through the joyful yet insincere facade of the Austrians, who he believed were merely

looking to exploit and deceive others while plotting behind the scenes. Bismarck also discovered that Austrian spies were systematically intercepting and opening his correspondence—a common tactic in international diplomacy at the time, but one that particularly annoyed him. To counter this issue, Bismarck cleverly asked Wagener to send his letters under a pseudonym, "Wilhelm Hildebrand," which was the name of his servant, in order to avoid scrutiny from spies.

> The Austrians are constantly engaged in intrigue behind a mask of jolly bonhomie…and are always trying with smallish matters of form to cheat us, which so far has been our entire occupation. The envoys from the little states are caricatures of old-fashioned, be-wigged diplomats who immediately put

(Emotional Perception, Misdirection)

Count von Thun und Hohenstein

To make matters worse for Bismarck in Frankfurt, he encountered Count von Thun und Hohenstein, an Austrian aristocrat ambassador, who would become his rival. Bismarck's first instinct was to psychoanalyze Thun.

Count von Thun und Hohenstein perfil:

In his analysis, Bismarck characterized Count von Thun as cynical and highly critical. He described him as a blend of bluntness, arrogance, and sly cunning, labeling him as insincere—pretending to be naive while skillfully maneuvering behind the scenes. In comparing Thun to others present, Bismarck noted that he belonged to a group of men who prioritized their social status over the pursuit of political objectives.

> He is a mixture of rough-hewn bluntness, which can easily pass for honest openness, aristocratic *nonchalance* and slavic peasant cunning. He always has 'no instructions' and on account of ignorance of the business he seems to be dependent on his staff and entourage…Insincerity is the most striking feature of his character in his relationship to us…There isn't a single man among the diplomats of any intellectual significance. Most of them are self-important pedants filled with little business, who take their letters patent and certificate of plenipotentiary power to bed with them and with whom one cannot have a conversation.[16]



(Emotional Perception, Psychological Insight)

Betraying Manteuffel (Double Game Strategy)

During this period, Bismarck had been employed by Otto Theodor Freiherr von Manteuffel, which proved advantageous as Manteuffel regarded him as a friend and aided his ascent to power. However, Bismarck was ambitious and sought greater influence, wanting to maintain a close relationship with Gerlach even while working for Manteuffel.

As previously mentioned in this doc, Gerlach was a crucial figure for Bismarck, wielding significant influence that Bismarck wanted to utilize for his own benefit.

His ruthless and relentless ambition came out in a constant stream of private letters to General Leopold von Gerlach on domestic Prussian matters which he hoped the General would discuss during his daily chat over coffee and cake with the King. The private talk between the King and his General Adjutant made Leopold von Gerlach the most powerful subject in the kingdom. Bismarck's actual superior as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs was Otto Theodor Freiherr von Manteuffel (1805–82), a dry, reac-

He aimed to retain Gerlach's trust despite his loyalty to Manteuffel, leading him to adopt a **"Double Game Strategy"** to avoid jeopardizing that trust.

Double Game Strategy:

As Prussian envoy, Bismarck was expected to submit regular, formal reports on the diplomatic situation in Frankfurt to Manteuffel. However, he devised a secret maneuver: instead of sending these reports directly to Manteuffel, he first sent them to Gerlach. This allowed Gerlach to review the dispatches and alter or influence their content before Manteuffel saw them. Gerlach could add suggestions or frame the reports to reflect his political views, which meant Bismarck's communications were shaped by another influential figure, enhancing his favor with Gerlach's faction.

newly reconstituted Bund. During his years in an ambassadorial capacity, Bismarck corresponded regularly around and behind the back of the Minister, his formal chief. Active disloyalty to Manteuffel seems not to have deterred him. By 1853 this double game had become a system as a letter of 25 February 1853 to Leopold von Gerlach makes clear. Manteuffel had requested that Bismarck submit two formal ambassadorial reports monthly on the first and fifteenth of every month. Manteuffel had not made his name as a financial expert for nothing. Bismarck offered to send his dispatches—but *first* to von Gerlach:

I will send you these as originals with a plea to send them right back via Cologne and commend this indiscretion of mine to your most careful precautions since any discovery of this would have a disturbing effect on my relationship to Manteuffel. That would be not only officially but personally disagreeable since I have a sincere affection for his person and would be ashamed if he were to think that I played him false, even if it were, as here, without foundation.[19]

The primary aim of this strategy was to gain Gerlach's trust and secure his influence. By allowing Gerlach to participate in shaping the reports, Bismarck was fostering a sense of loyalty and collaboration, showing that he valued Gerlach's insights. The more trust he built with Gerlach, the more support he could expect from him, especially given Gerlach's connections to the king.

Although this strategy carried the risk of damaging his relationship with Manteuffel if discovered, Bismarck believed the potential rewards outweighed those dangers.

*Note: **Indirect Manipulation** is a key element of Bismarck's strategy. By allowing Gerlach to influence the reports, Bismarck indirectly manipulated both Gerlach and Manteuffel. He cultivated Gerlach's trust while subtly shaping Manteuffel's perceptions through altered reports. This indirect approach allowed him to exert influence over both without challenging either party.*

(Strategy, Info Control, Influence Building, Indirect Manipulation)

DIPLOMATIC SUBTERFUGE

Since we've touched on the topic of Gerlach, let's explore it further. Bismarck would write letters to Gerlach, even referring to himself as Gerlach's "diplomatic adopted child." The smart part? Bismarck understood that his thoughts would ultimately reach the King via Gerlach. So, while appearing to merely correspond with a mentor, he was effectively presenting his ideas to Prussia's ruler. This indirect approach allowed Bismarck to begin influencing the King and establish his reputation, all while honing his own political skills.

(Indirect Manipulation)

REFUSAL TO JOIN THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

Context: After the Russo-Turkish War, Austria, Britain, and France formed the Triple Alliance to counter Russia. They extended an invitation to Prussia to join. While Bismarck, known for his pragmatism, might have been expected to suggest joining for Prussia's immediate benefit, **he surprisingly advised against it.**

Why?

He believed that if Prussia were to join, it would appear as if acting out of fear, which would expose its vulnerability. Bismarck stressed that Prussia must not display fear, as doing so would invite others to take advantage of its weaknesses. Instead, he urged Prussia to project strength and confidence to earn the respect of other nations.

In a letter to his friend Leopold von Gerlach, **Bismarck outlined his diplomatic strategy:** he aimed to instill fear and uncertainty in Prussia's rivals, ensuring they could never predict Prussia's next move. This unpredictability would grant Prussia leverage in negotiations. He argued that acting with confidence would secure respect from other nations, while showing fear would only encourage them to make greater demands. Bismarck also advocated for forming alliances with any country or liberal forces when it served Prussia's interests.

> The text of the Treaty of 2 December arrived the day before yesterday . . . I would absolutely not join the coalition, because everybody will see that we did it out of fear and conclude that the more they frighten us, the more they get from us. Decorum alone forbids it in my view . . . The moral is that in all German cabinets from the tiniest to the greatest, fear is the only thing that determines decisions; each is afraid of the other, all are afraid of France . . .[46]

> Three days ago I got a letter from Manteuffel which made me very happy. He too thinks that we should not join the 2 December . . . As long as we show relaxed self-confidence, the others will have respect for us. As soon as we betray fear, they will use this ignoble weakness and try to increase and exploit it . . . In order to fill the Federal states with sufficient fear, as they have of Austria, we have to show ourselves capable, if others make us desperate, to join with France and even Liberalism. As long as we behave well, nobody takes us seriously and then all go where the threat is greater . . .[47]

Here for the first time Bismarck shows an aspect of his technique: create fear and uncertainty in a crisis, so that opponents cannot be certain how Prussia will act, and be absolutely unscrupulous in the choice of means.

This reveals Bismarck's remarkable understanding and self-awareness. He was pragmatic but also knew when not to be, to avoid appearing weak or cowardly—an impressive feat.

(Emotional Understanding, Self Awareness, Emotional Realization, Strategy Forecasting, Abductive Reasoning)

The situation became complicated when the other German states, except Prussia which abstained, expressed interest in joining the Triple Alliance and received invitations to do so. Bismarck had anticipated this development. He had studied and understood the smaller states' diplomatic tendencies, which were characterized by pragmatism and opportunism. These states prioritized their own security and survival above all else, aligning themselves with whichever major power arrangement best served their interests at any given moment. In this case, that meant the Triple Alliance. As a result, it was logical that the remaining German states would now seek to align themselves with this alliance. However, the German states at the end didn't join the Triple Alliance.

And this is why…

Bismarck's primary goal has always been to diminish Austrian influence over the German states. The prospect of German states aligning themselves with an alliance that included Austria was unfavorable for Bismarck. It would be as if Austria were leading and controlling these states, influencing their actions within the alliance. While Bismarck had successfully kept Prussia out of the alliance, he now faced the challenge of preventing the other German states from joining as well. To achieve this,

Bismarck devised an intriguing approach that I have termed the **"Neutrality Strategy."**

To grasp this strategy, we must first understand an important observation made by Bismarck. He noticed that the smaller German states, despite leaning towards joining the Triple Alliance, were apprehensive—not because of the direct threat from a war with Russia, but because of the indirect dangers it posed. Mobilizing their armies to fight Russia would leave them exposed, particularly to France, a powerful and ambitious nation under Napoleon III. These states feared that while they were engaged with Russia, Napoleon III might seize the opportunity to invade their territories, causing destruction.

Bismarck cleverly recognized this fear and exploited it.

He proposed a change in the mobilization strategy; Instead of concentrating solely on preparing for a conflict with Russia, as Austria wanted, he suggested that the German Confederation should also prepare for potential threats from any other direction, including France. This proposal gave the impression that Bismarck was supporting Austria in persuading the German states, but in reality, he was fueling their fear. It was as though he was warning them: **"You can help Austria,**

but remember that by doing so, you'll be left vulnerable, alone, and might lose everything to a foreign power." This pushed the smaller German states towards a stance of neutrality. Rather than committing to one side, they chose to focus on defending themselves from any possible threat.

the Commission are today. On 30 January 1855 the Bund rejected Prokesch's motion to mobilize and the Austrians withdrew it. Bismarck's counter-motion used the word 'neutrality' and, in reply to a further Austrian request of the Bund to mobilize, Bismarck agreed but added the clause that mobilization must be a deployment 'in every direction' (that is, mobilization against France), which removed the anti-Russian thrust and comprehensively outmanoeuvred the Austrians. Bismarck had used the fear of the small

Austria today seems to have been put under a ban by the Bund, and there are loud boasts that they have tamed it under Prussia's lead and they must force it to negotiate. 'Armed neutrality' as a rule against France and Austria is now praised as the *ni plus ultra* of diplomatic wisdom, and that we helped to bind us ourselves that way is the stuff of laughter.[53]

By doing this, Bismarck effectively undermined Austria's goal of forming an anti-Russian alliance, leaving Austria diplomatically isolated and without the coalition it needed.

(Psychological Warfare: Emotional Inducement, Indirect Manipulation, Strategy, Observation)

Bismarck, ever pragmatic, sought to align with Napoleon III as he saw him as a useful tool. The Gerlach brothers criticized this, accusing Bismarck of compromising his conservative values. Bismarck's reply revealed a growing ideological rift. He compared himself to a duck shedding water, implying he could engage with figures like Napoleon III without being morally corrupted. This metaphor illustrated Bismarck's belief that he could navigate complex diplomatic waters while maintaining his core principles and resisting manipulation.

You scold me that I have been to Babylon but you can hardly expect from a diplomat eager to learn the rules this sort of political chastity . . . I have to get to know the elements in which I have to move from my own direct observation when the opportunity arises. You need not fear for my political health. I have a nature like a duck and water runs off my feathers and there is a long way between my skin and my heart.[63]

(Manipulation Resistance)

Bismarck was transferred to St. Petersburg, which felt like a form of exile. This occurred during the "start of a new era," when Prince Wilhelm I came to power following the king's death. In Russia, Bismarck was left to stagnate for a time, but he would eventually return. During his stay, he impressed Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna with his charisma, and their connection went beyond typical diplomacy. The Russian royal family grew fond of him, granting him special access. In a letter to a colleague, Bismarck mentioned being treated almost like a family envoy

Prussia: 'It was so enchanting as we escorted the high lady in Peterhof on board, that I had an urge, in uniform as I was and without luggage, to leap on the ship to travel with her.'[20] In general Bismarck's correspondence gives the impression that the Russian royal family took a shine to the brilliant Prussian ambassador. Bismarck claimed in a letter to a colleague that he was the only diplomat allowed in the Imperial family, 'which gives me the status of an envoy to the family'.[21]

(Charisma).

PRIME MINISTER.



HOW OTTO VON BISMARCK BECAME PRIME MINISTER OF PRUSSIA

The path to Otto von Bismarck's appointment as Prime Minister of Prussia was a labyrinthine affair, interwoven with political upheaval and constitutional crisis. The catalyst for this tumultuous period was the military reforms proposed by Albrecht von Roon, which incited the ire of liberal factions and ignited a powder keg of ideological conflict. In Bismarck's absence, the political landscape teetered on the brink of instability. The May 1862 elections in the Landtag (Prussian Parliament) served as a stark illustration of the shifting tides, with liberals securing a resounding victory, claiming 133 seats. Conversely, the moderate "Constitutionals," staunch supporters of King William I's government, saw their representation plummet from 91 to a mere 19 seats. While this electoral upheaval signaled a pronounced leftward shift, it's crucial to note that structural impediments—namely, the inequitable voting system and the bourgeois nature of the liberal movement—precluded any genuine revolutionary threat. Nevertheless, the political tremors were sufficient to render Roon's military reforms virtually untenable. The conservative echelons, epitomized by figures like Edwin von Manteuffel, were gripped by the specter of revolution. King William I, finding himself at an impasse, contemplated abdication and seemed poised to capitulate to the parliamentary majority's opposition to his cherished army reforms. As Prussia teetered on the precipice of political calamity, Bismarck astutely recognized that the King's predicament would necessitate his return to power. This sentiment was echoed most fervently by Roon, who, along with other influential figures, lobbied the King to elevate Bismarck to the position of Minister-President. Roon, in particular, viewed Bismarck as the sole historical figure capable of navigating and resolving such a complex political imbroglio. The denouement of this political drama arrived in September 1862, when Bismarck was officially installed as Prime Minister of Prussia. This appointment marked not an end, but a beginning—the commencement of a new, intensified chapter in Prussian and, indeed, European history.

BLOOD & IRON

Bismarck would deliver his renowned "Blood and Iron" speech during his debut public address as Prime Minister. He chose to present this speech to the Budget Committee of the Landtag, which was considered the stronghold of his political opponents.

Full Speech:

http://mrippolito.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/48112948/BloodandIron.pdf

The speech reveals Bismarck's reasoning and his political perspective through the lens of Realpolitik. He dismisses liberalism and other weak solutions as inadequate to restore Prussia's greatness, maintain order, or unify Germany. In his view, such “stupid” approaches would only lead to chaos and unnecessary revolution—something he has believed for over 14 years, even before the failed 1848 Revolution.

“That was the mistake of 1848 and 1849.”

Bismarck had many reasons for disliking these kinds of solutions, but they can be summed up in a key moment in his speech when he says

"The great independence of the individual makes it difficult in Prussia to govern with the constitution," and *"We are perhaps too ‘well-educated’ to support a constitution; we are too critical; the ability to assess government measures and records of the public assembly is too common."*

Here Bismarck basically understands that Prussia's highly independent citizens make it difficult to govern under a constitution. Their lack of obedience and self-reliance results in excessive criticism. And when Bismarck says "too well-educated," he is understanding what seems to be a paradox and its cause. He Comprehends that Prussia's population is overly educated to effectively support a constitution, which is contradictory since, in theory, an educated society should be better suited for constitutional governance. However, Bismarck recognizes that over-education leads to excessive criticism, resulting in political instability as people constantly question and challenge government decisions. In essence, he sees constitutional governance as difficult to implement in Prussia because the critical mindset of its people leads to division and dysfunction.

Although Bismarck doesn't say this explicitly, this view is proven when he compares Prussia to France.

"In France, things are different; there this individual independence is lacking."

He suggests that France, with a more centralized government and obedient citizens, has been far more successful than Prussia up to this point.

What alternatives did Bismarck propose? What was his solution? He succinctly expressed this with the phrase

"iron and blood."

This well-known statement embodies Bismarck's belief that German unity would not be achieved through negotiation or liberal ideals, which he criticized, but rather through the application of force.

- **Blood:**

Represents the military conflicts and the commitment to fight, shed blood, and make sacrifices for the greater goal of national unification.

Bismarck articulated this nationalist perspective when he stated.

- *"Germany does not look to Prussia's liberalism, but to its power,"* highlighting his view that it was Prussia's military and political strength, not democratic principles, that would inspire other German states to unite.
- *"Prussia has to coalesce and concentrate its power,"* indicating the necessity for Prussia to act decisively in order to unify Germany. His vision of nationalism rested on the idea of a strong, centralized state founded on military prowess and strategic timing.
- *"Prussia's borders according to the Vienna Treaties are not favorable for a healthy, vital state,"* expressing a nationalistic desire to expand and reshape Prussia's borders to better align with its rising influence. This reflects a broader vision of nationalism that seeks not only political unity but also territorial adjustments to create a stronger, more viable state.

Bismarck's nationalist intentions can be traced back even further, to 1859, when he said,

Bismarck ignored that advice. The last thing he wanted was an alliance with moderate conservatives. He had another ally in mind which would have shocked Leopold von Gerlach. Bismarck proposed to play the Bonapartist game, as he said in the summer of 1859 to the nationalist liberal Victor Unruh:

> Prussia is completely isolated. There is but one ally for Prussia if she knows how to win and handle them . . . the German people! I am the same Junker of ten years ago . . . but I would have no perception and no understanding if I could not recognize clearly the reality of the situation.[74]

Bismarck had seen that the 'masses' in France voted for order not radicalism and had given Louis Napoleon Bonaparte an overwhelming mandate. Would not the German people play the same role in Bismarck's scheme to strength the position of Prussia? He intended to use nationalism as he had used the camarilla, to achieve his goals. He had come to understand that

> politics is less a science than an art. It is not a subject that can be taught. One must have the talent for it. Even the best advice is of no avail if improperly carried out.[75]

This statement underscores Bismarck's genuine commitment to nationalism, further illustrating the significance of "blood."

And by Invoking "blood," Bismarck obviously also highlighted the inevitability of war. **German unity and strength could not be achieved through dialogue or peaceful means, but rather through struggle and conflict.**

- **Iron:**

Iron is a bit more simple to explain, it symbolized industrial and military power—specifically, the strength of weaponry, industry, and technological advancements.

But by Combining both Meanings: "Blood and Iron"

It encapsulates Bismarck's fundamental argument, that military force and the readiness to make sacrifices were crucial in shaping nations and resolving political disputes, especially regarding German unification.

This speech and this specific phrase represents his dismissal of the liberal notion that political and constitutional reforms alone could achieve national objectives, insisting instead on the necessity of <u>strong leadership, military power, and conflict as the true path to success.</u>



(Strategy Forecasting, Overall Reasoning. EQU, Thinking: Critical & Associative)

<u>Easing King William I's Fears</u>

Bismarck's famous "Blood and Iron" speech had a profound impact, stirring both shock and anger among many Prussian liberals. As public outrage grew, King William I became increasingly anxious and paranoid. His wife, Queen Augusta, who opposed Bismarck, only added to his distress by angrily reminding him, "I TOLD YOU SO." Despite the tension,

Bismarck remained calm. He approached the King and soothed his deep anxiety. William expressed fears of a grim future, envisioning both himself and Bismarck being executed outside the Berlin Opera House. He even likened their potential fates to historical figures like Polignac, Strafford, and Louis XVI, who all met tragic ends.

Bismarck replies with a grim yet valorous argument that effectively calms the King's fears:

Even if they were to die, it would be in service of a higher cause—protecting the King's divine authority and honor.

He portrays their potential deaths as a noble sacrifice for the monarchy, tapping into the King's sense of duty and pride. This speech invigorates the King, transforming him from a fearful man into one ready to defend his realm. Bismarck's manipulation is clear—he taps into the King's emotions, framing the crisis as both a grave threat and a noble struggle, resonating deeply with the King's identity as both a monarch and a soldier.

I had some difficulty in discovering from the curt answers of the officials the carriage in the ordinary train, in which the King was seated by himself in an ordinary first-class compartment. The after-effect of his intercourse with his wife was an obvious depression, and when I begged for permission to narrate the events which had occurred during his absence, he interrupted me with the words: 'I can perfectly well see where all this will end. Over there, in front of the Opera House, under my windows, they will cut off your head, and mine a little while afterwards.' I guessed, and it was afterwards confirmed by witnesses, that during his week's stay at Baden his mind had been worked upon with variations on the theme of Polignac, Strafford, and Lewis XVI. When he was silent, I answered with the short remark, '*Et après, Sire*?' '*Après,* indeed; we shall be dead,' answered the King. 'Yes,' I continued, 'then we shall be dead; but we must all die sooner or later, and can we perish more honourably? I, fighting for my King's cause, and your Majesty sealing with your own blood your rights as King by the grace of God;... Your Majesty is bound to fight, you can not capitulate; you must, even at the risk of bodily danger, go forth to meet any attempt at coercion.'

As I continued to speak in this sense, the King grew more and more animated, and began to assume the part of an officer fighting for kingdom and fatherland.[130]

(Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Management)

Strategy to Modify Military Service Duration to Two Years

During his tenure as Prime Minister, Bismarck needed to persuade the king to agree to a significant change: a two-year military service period. To effectively influence the king, Bismarck devised a clever strategy that primarily relied on indirect manipulation.

Bismarck's Tactics with Different Governmental Bodies:

1. **The House of Lords**: In this chamber, Bismarck deliberately presents a bleak scenario regarding the potential consequences if his proposed actions are not implemented. This

fear tactic aims to create anxiety among the lords, thus pressuring them to support his plans.

2. **The Second Chamber**: Bismarck employs a dual strategy here. At times, he portrays himself as firm and resolute, showcasing his strength and principles. However, he also suggests that he is willing to compromise, creating a sense of flexibility. This oscillation keeps the members of the second chamber uncertain, allowing him to maintain an image of being both strong and reasonable without committing to any specific compromise.

By influencing these two governmental bodies to become anxious, he creates an environment where the king feels pressured to concede. If the lords are alarmed, they might advocate for the king to make concessions to avoid conflict.

3. **German Cabinet:** The final part indicates a tactic to manipulate perceptions among German political leaders. By implying that the king is struggling to manage this nationalist agenda, Bismarck aims to create a narrative that positions the king as being under internal pressure, thus influencing how other states perceive the situation.

By suggesting that there's internal dissent, he aims to make the king feel he must act decisively or risk losing control of his government.

The passage characterizes Bismarck as a master manipulator, akin to a "consummate confidence man." This analogy highlights his skill in deceiving and influencing others by adopting various personas suited to different situations. He had the ability to shift his behavior "from scene to scene," adjusting to diverse contexts to achieve his objectives. This suggests that Bismarck had a keen understanding of social dynamics, enabling him to don a façade that would persuade each distinct social group. Essentially, Bismarck demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence, allowing him to craft a persona tailored to manipulate others effectively. This reflects a remarkable degree of strategy and overall manipulation.

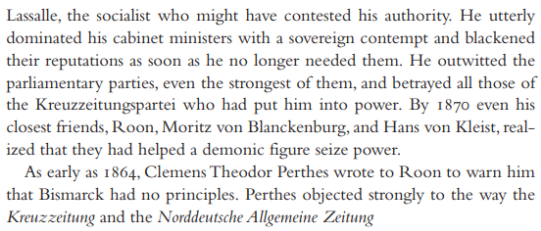
We drank a lot of champagne, which loosened even more his naturally loose tongue. He exulted about pulling the wool over everybody's eyes. Partly by himself and partly by others, he is seeking to get the king to concede the two-year service period. In the House of Lords he paints the reaction he plans in colours so black that, as he puts it, the lords are becoming anxious about the conditions he says he will bring about if need be. Before the gentlemen of the second chamber he appears at one moment very unbending but in the next hints at his desire to mediate. Finally, he intends to make the German cabinets believe that the king is hard put to restrain the Cavourism of his new minister. There is no denying that until now people are impressed by his spirit and brilliance. *C'est un homme!*[132]

(Strategy, Castling, Tactics, Indirect Manipulation, Fabrication, Psychology)

BISMARCK AND HIS BETRAYAL'S

In one section, it illustrates Bismarck's readiness to betray former allies once they ceased to be useful to him. It mentions how he would manipulate and discredit his parliamentary supporters,

such as the conservative Kreuzzeitung party, the very party that had helped him ascend to power. Bismarck is a complex figure - capable of kindness in his personal life, but utterly Machiavellian in the political sphere. His political strategy is characterized as devoid of loyalty, focused solely on maintaining and expanding his own power.



Lassalle, the socialist who might have contested his authority. He utterly dominated his cabinet ministers with a sovereign contempt and blackened their reputations as soon as he no longer needed them. He outwitted the parliamentary parties, even the strongest of them, and betrayed all those of the Kreuzzeitungspartei who had put him into power. By 1870 even his closest friends, Roon, Moritz von Blanckenburg, and Hans von Kleist, realized that they had helped a demonic figure seize power.

As early as 1864, Clemens Theodor Perthes wrote to Roon to warn him that Bismarck had no principles. Perthes objected strongly to the way the *Kreuzzeitung* and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*

The passage indicates that by 1864, even some of Bismarck's closest associates, like Clemens Theodor Perthes, had begun to recognize his fundamentally unprincipled nature in politics.

(Manipulation)

BISMARCK'S AURA

Albrecht von Stosch, a visitor to the Foreign Ministry, described how the staff spoke of Bismarck with "holy awe," reflecting the deep respect and near reverence they held for him, despite his demanding nature.

(Aura)

THEORY OF CONSTITUTIONAL GAPS

Bismarck's approach, particularly toward liberals, would be increasingly confrontational. He would cleverly exploit gaps in the constitution to justify unilateral actions, all in the name of the Crown. This tactic became known as the "theory of constitutional gaps."

- **Article 27 Loophole**

In one instance, he drafted an edict aimed at restricting press freedom to strengthen his power and influence, **despite Article 27 of the Prussian constitution, which protected freedom of expression and prohibited censorship.**

However, Bismarck identified a loophole: the constitution allowed press freedom to be limited by law, and the Press Law of 1851 gave the government the authority to control printed media. On June 1, 1863, King Wilhelm I signed a press edict that sought to suppress opposition press through bureaucratic orders, removed the possibility of legal recourse, and made the cabinet the sole body for appeals.

In the Ministry, Bismarck had drafted a press edict which limited the freedom of the Prussian press but had not found a formula which would work. Although Article 27 of the constitution forbade censorship and guaranteed freedom of expression, there was an escape clause: 'every other restriction upon freedom of the press shall be made only by way of legislation' and there was a Press Law of 1851 which gave the government power to license and control all media of printed expression. On 1 June 1863 the King signed a press edict to silence the opposition press by bureaucratic

(Analytical Thinking, Logical Manipulation)

- **Budget Loophole**

The core issue was military reform - King Wilhelm I wanted to modernize and expand the army, but needed budget approval from the liberal-dominated Landtag (lower house of parliament). The liberals, who favored a more citizen-based militia system and were wary of increasing royal power, refused to approve the military budget. Bismarck's ingenious solution hinged on a technical gap in Prussia's constitution: while it required the Landtag to approve budgets, it didn't explicitly state what would happen if no budget was approved. Bismarck argued that in such cases, the previous year's budget would automatically continue.

This interpretation allowed him to:

1. Keep funding the army using the last approved budget from 1861
2. Effectively bypass parliamentary opposition
3. Complete military reforms despite lacking formal legislative approval

What made this strategy particularly clever was that it maintained a veneer of legality - Bismarck wasn't openly violating the constitution, just exploiting its ambiguities. This approach helped him achieve his military objectives while avoiding a complete constitutional crisis.

Despite the initial distrust of the king and crown prince and the loathing of Queen Augusta, Bismarck soon acquired a powerful hold over the king by force of personality and powers of persuasion. Bismarck was intent on maintaining royal supremacy by ending the budget deadlock in the king's favour, even if he had to use extra-legal means to do so. Under the constitution, the budget could be passed only after the king and legislature agreed on its terms. Bismarck contended that since the constitution did not provide for cases in which legislators failed to approve a budget, there was a "legal loophole" in the constitution and so he could apply the previous year's budget to keep the government running. Thus, on the basis of the 1861 budget, tax collection continued for four years.[24]

AUSTRIAN INFLUENCE EVASION

In the summer of 1863, Bismarck found himself in a challenging political landscape orchestrated by Austria regarding the future of the German Confederation (The Bund).

To put in context, at this time, Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria had recently secured a notable victory against Russia, which boosted the confidence of his empire. So capitalizing on this momentum, Austria proposed VOLUNTARY reforms to the German Confederation.

surprise. The Austrian 'success' in facing down the Russians over Poland encouraged Anton Schmerling (Anton Ritter von Schmerling (1805–1893)), the ex-revolutionary of 1848 now 'State Minister' of the Habsburgs, to propose a reform of the Bund as a preparatory stage to the voluntary unification of Germany under Austrian auspices. On 3 August 1863, while

However, these reforms were actually a strategic move to unite Germany under Austrian leadership—a move Bismarck staunchly opposed. So on August 3, when Emperor Franz Joseph summoned the German princes to a Congress of Princes in Frankfurt. All the major German monarchs agreed to attend… except for Prussia's King Wilhelm.

Why?

The pressure on King Wilhelm to attend was immense. However, Bismarck recognized that the Austrian emperor's call for the congress was an attempt to rally the German princes around Austria's vision for German unity. Bismarck understood that Prussia's attendance would likely lead to its marginalization in the future unification of Germany. This posed a direct threat to his goal of ensuring Prussian, rather than Austrian, dominance in German affairs. As the congress approached, Bismarck, in a dramatic effort to sidestep this trap, convinced King Wilhelm to refuse the invitation, emphasizing that Prussia's future leadership in Germany was at stake. Persuading the king was no easy feat, especially when the King of Saxony and 30 other princes formally invited him to attend. The struggle between Bismarck and Wilhelm was so intense that it left both men physically and emotionally drained, highlighting the critical nature of this moment. In the end, Bismarck succeeded in persuading the king not to attend. This decision marked not only a personal victory for Bismarck but also a crucial turning point in the broader issue of German unity.

At Gastein, on August 2, 1863, I was sitting under the fir-trees in the Schwarzenberg gardens by the deep gorge of the Ache. Above me was a nest of titmice, and watch in hand I counted the number of times in the minute the bird brought her nestlings a caterpillar or other insect. . . . Queen Elizabeth [widow of Frederick William IV—JS], whom we met at Wildbad on our journey from Gastein to Baden, was urgent with me to go to Frankfort. I replied: 'If the King does not otherwise decide I will go and perform his business there, but I will not return as minister to Berlin.' The prospect seemed to disturb the Queen, and she ceased to contest my view. It was not an easy task to decide the King to stay away from Frankfort. I exerted myself for that purpose during our drive from Wildbad to Baden, when, on account of the servants on the box, we discussed the German question in the small open carriage in French. By the time we reached Baden I thought I had convinced my master. But there we found the King of Saxony, who was commissioned by all the princes to renew the invitation to Frankfort (August 19). My master did not find it easy to resist that move. He reflected over and over again: 'Thirty reigning princes and a King to take their messages!' Besides, he loved and honoured the King of Saxony, who moreover of all the princes had personally most vocation for such a mission. Not until midnight did I succeed in obtaining the King's signature to a refusal to the King of Saxony. When I left my master, both he and I were ill and exhausted by the nervous tension of the situation; and my subsequent verbal communication with the Saxon minister, von Beust, bore the stamp of this agitation. But the crisis was overcome.[40]

If Bismarck had failed, Austria would likely have solidified its control over the German states, significantly undermining Prussia's ambitions for leadership. This would have led to Bismarck's resignation, leaving Prussia without its most adept strategist and putting the future of German unification under Prussian guidance at risk. By preventing the king from succumbing to Austria's

trap, Bismarck established the groundwork for Prussia's eventual dominance, paving the way for the unification of Germany under Prussian rule.

> ment of Bismarck's entire career. If he had failed then, as he explained to the Dowager Queen Elizabeth, he could not have remained as minister. In this crucial confrontation, the ultimate fate of Germany rested on the mysterious power of Bismarck's 'sovereign self' and on no other, not office, not command of armies, not prestige. The 'shallow Junker' of Treitschke exerted the force of that self on the King and it worked in August 1863 and continued to work until the day twenty-five years later that William I, by then German Emperor and King of Prussia, died. My explanation of how it worked may not convince the reader; that some mysterious personal power worked on the King cannot be denied. Had Bismarck resigned then because the King felt a duty to attend the Congress of Princes, the history of Germany and the world would have run a different course; that too cannot be denied.

(Analytical Thinking, Trap Evasion, Persuasion, EQM)

The Austrians were gaining the upper hand, and Bismarck narrowly avoided falling into one of their traps. It was now time for a counterattack. Bismarck devised a strategy to put Austria at a significant disadvantage. Here's how it unfolded:

A group of German leaders, including 24 kings and princes, proposed reforms to the German Confederation. They approached King William I of Prussia, asking him to join their reform efforts to increase their influence.

Once Bismarck received this information, he imposed a set of conditions, which included one crucial demand: **the establishment of a national assembly elected by universal suffrage (giving all men the right to vote).**

> a true national assembly which emerges from direct participation of the entire nation. Only such a representative system will grant Prussia the security that it has nothing to sacrifice which will not benefit the whole of Germany. No artificially conceived organism for the Federal departments can exclude the move and counter-move of dynastic and particular interests, which must find a counterweight and corrective in a national assembly.[42]

This would ensure that decisions benefited all of Germany, not just the small states or powerful rulers.

Though this demand seemed harmless, it was devastating for Austria, because of two key reasons:

1. rsal suffrage posed a significant threat to Austria's dominance over the German Confederation (Bund). Austria depended on the support of the smaller German states to maintain its influence, but allowing the entire population to vote would diminish the power of these smaller states, leading to Austria's loss of control. In other words, granting voting rights to the people would strip the small states of their influence and end Austria's

supremacy.

2. Bismarck also knew Austria couldn't accept universal suffrage. Austria ruled over a multi-ethnic empire with Hungarians, Czechs, and other nationalities. Allowing universal suffrage would threaten Austria's control, as these groups would demand more power and autonomy. By making universal suffrage a condition for reform, Bismarck essentially blocked Austria from participating fully in the reforms, weakening Austria's position in the German Confederation and allowing Prussia to take the lead.

> The threat of universal suffrage for the German people finished the Austrian project. If the nation spoke, it would put an end to the power of the small states in the Bund and, in addition, universal suffrage in the Habsburg lands would empower the subject nationalities in their struggles for representation and autonomy. No Austrian government could accept universal suffrage in the nineteenth century and none did. Here again we see Bismarck's tactical adroitness. By playing off people against princes, nationalities against the Habsburg monarchy, he put Prussia—that is, Bismarck—at the perfect point of leverage. If the princes cooperated, the people would threaten them less, if not, more.

(Trap Setting, Strategy, Indirect Manipulation, Forecasting)

PLAYING SOCIALIST AGAINST LIBERALS

Another strategy Bismarck employed to undermine the liberals was to pit different political parties against one another. For instance, he formed an alliance with Ferdinand Lassalle, a charismatic socialist leader. Bismarck recognized that both he and Lassalle shared a common adversary, the Progressive Party, which advocated for free trade and liberal principles associated with "Manchestertum" (drawn from Adam Smith's free-market theories and Manchester liberalism) and opposed Bismarck's ideas.

> free trade and *Manchestertum*. 'What could be for Bismarck more desirable than if the Progressives lost mass support for the party especially in the lower strata of society . . . So the government found the movement [Lassalle's socialists] not unwelcome on tactical grounds and even in principle was by no means opposed to all its points.'[43]

Bismarck selected Lassalle for his remarkable public speaking abilities, as he was arguably the most skilled mass communicator in Prussia, able to blend political realism with romantic rhetoric. Yet, Bismarck was also perceptive to the complexities of their relationship. He viewed Lassalle as a strategic instrument to undermine the liberal bourgeoisie by engaging the working class. Simultaneously, Bismarck understood that Lassalle saw him as a pathway to further his socialist ambitions and champion the workers' plight. Bismarck, highly pragmatic, recognized the reciprocal advantages of their partnership, each seeking to leverage the other's influence to promote their own political objectives, despite their ideological differences.

LOTHAR BUCHER



Lothar Bucher was arguably one of Bismarck's most significant allies, and the way Bismarck recruited him is quite fascinating. Bucher was a radical democrat, so it's surprising that despite their opposing ideologies, Bucher became one of Bismarck's most trusted confidants.

Bismarck recognized Bucher's talents, even though his legal knowledge was outdated. He saw potential where others didn't. Despite Bucher's democratic leanings, Bismarck was understood that once Bucher joined his camp, he would realize the futility of trying to undermine the state from within. Bismarck is believed to have said:

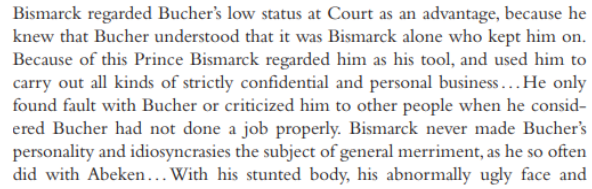
"Take the case that he comes to us as a fanatical democrat, like a worm to bore its way into the state structure and to blow it up, he would soon see that he alone would be destroyed in the attempt.

offers various versions of how Bucher came to work for Bismarck. One came from Robert von Keudell who claimed the credit. According to Keudell, Bismarck said of the possibility that Bucher might work for him:

> We all cook with water and most of what happens or will happen gets into the press. Take the case that he comes to us as a fanatical democrat, like a worm to bore its way into the state structure and to blow it up, he would soon see that he alone would be destroyed in the attempt. Let that possibility be.

Essentially, Bismarck understood that while Bucher might initially try to disrupt things from the inside, he would quickly recognize that it was a losing battle and would only harm himself if he tried. Bismarck believed that once Bucher started working for him, he'd abandon his revolutionary ideas and instead focus on supporting Bismarck's own agenda. Bismarck had a keen understanding of human nature. He likely saw Bucher's ideological frustration as an opportunity. He didn't need Bucher to completely change his beliefs, but instead saw a way to channel Bucher's revolutionary energy toward serving the state rather than opposing it. Bucher's

shift wasn't necessarily an abandonment of his principles, but rather a redirection of his efforts toward Bismarck's goals.


Bismarck regarded Bucher's low status at Court as an advantage, because he knew that Bucher understood that it was Bismarck alone who kept him on. Because of this Prince Bismarck regarded him as his tool, and used him to carry out all kinds of strictly confidential and personal business…He only found fault with Bucher or criticized him to other people when he considered Bucher had not done a job properly. Bismarck never made Bucher's personality and idiosyncrasies the subject of general merriment, as he so often did with Abeken…With his stunted body, his abnormally ugly face and

In this way, Bismarck transformed a radical democrat into a crucial ally.

(Individual Manipulation, EQU, EQP)

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN CRISIS:

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN STRATEGY

Bismarck's management of the Schleswig-Holstein crisis is probably one of his greatest feats in Strategy.

Here's a quick overview of the crisis, but I recommend reading more about it yourself for a deeper understanding. https://www.britannica.com/event/Schleswig-Holstein-question

In November 1863, after the death of King Frederick VII of Denmark, Bismarck faced a diplomatic challenge related to a succession dispute over the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which is central to this event.

These regions were mainly German in culture and population but were ruled by Denmark. Despite this, they enjoyed a degree of autonomy and were part of the German Confederation.

Why?

You see, there had already been a conflict between the Germans and Danes over Schleswig and Holstein, especially during the First Schleswig War, where Prussia fought Denmark. Although Prussia eventually withdrew from the war, which led to a Danish victory, the outcome was more of a stalemate. The war resulted in the London Protocol of 1852, which is very important. Pay close attention to this, as Bismarck would later use its terms to his advantage.

The London Protocol of 1852 established two key points:

1. **Territorial Integrity**: Denmark could keep Schleswig and Holstein, but it had to acknowledge their distinct status.

2. **Mediation Role**: The protocol allowed powers like Britain to mediate disputes regarding these duchies if conflicts arose.
3. **Leadership:** Recognize the **Christian of Glucksburg**, as the rightful rulers.

These points are important because they meant that, despite being under Danish control, Schleswig and Holstein could maintain their unique status and engage in German political matters, including participation in the German Confederation.

Now that we've covered the basics, let's discuss why there was a crisis in the first place:

When King Frederick VII of Denmark ruled both Schleswig and Holstein, he violated the London Protocol by introducing the November Constitution. This constitution aimed to integrate Schleswig into the Danish kingdom, reducing its autonomy. Naturally, this angered the Germans, fueling their nationalism and resentment. However, just as the constitution was about to be enforced, King Frederick VII of Denmark died unexpectedly. He left no male heirs, which created an issue since the Germans followed Salic law, where only male heirs could inherit the throne. Although Christian IX, a relative of Frederick, was appointed king, the Germans considered him illegitimate because he wasn't a direct male heir. Additionally, Christian IX intended to renew the unpopular November Constitution, which angered the Germans even more. For them, this effectively meant that Schleswig and Holstein had no legitimate king at the time.

Enter the Duke of Augustenburg, who, according to Salic law, was the rightful heir to the two territories. On top of that, he was of German descent. The young Duke (who called himself Frederick VIII) was very popular in Germany because of this. Many people backed him as the legitimate ruler of Schleswig and Holstein, which was significant. He was also 34 years old, attractive and connected to the Prussian royal family, which adored him and backed his claim to rule Schleswig and Holstein instead of Christian IX. It all seemed perfect, right?

Well, not for Bismarck.

Bismarck's Risk Calculations:

Even though Augustenburg was of German descent and many in Germany would likely support him in the Schleswig-Holstein succession dispute, Bismarck did not. Bismarck was a pragmatic and Machiavellian leader who prioritized Prussia above all else; he didn't feel any loyalty to Germany as a whole.

You could say he was somewhat selfish. He believed that if anyone was to benefit from this crisis, it should be Prussia and no one else. He also had 2 other reasons for not supporting Augustenburg as well.

1. He understood that supporting Augustenburg would lead to the creation of a new, independent middle-sized state that could oppose Prussia in the future. Such a state would

be susceptible to Austrian influence, posing an additional challenge to Bismarck's vision of Prussian dominance.

2. He understood that if he went along with the Germans' desires, he would encounter resistance not only from Denmark but also from Russia and England. While he wasn't entirely against the idea of war—since his future strategy would involve conflict—he didn't see the point in going to war just to install someone else on the throne. This new ruler might even, out of fear of Prussian power, end up opposing Prussia in the Diet.

that situation; worst—a victory for the Bund and the small states in favour of the Duke of Augustenburg which would add another impossible middle-sized state always ready to vote against Prussia. That by the autumn of 1866

the superiority of the Prussian army. Moreover, and this was the point which affected him most, what good would come to Prussia even if she were successful in this war? "I cannot regard it as a Prussian interest to wage war in order in the most favourable result to establish a new Grand Duke in Schleswig-Holstein, who out of fear of Prussian aggression would vote against us at the Diet."

His policy, therefore, was clearly marked out for him: he must refuse to recognise the claims of Augustenburg; he must refuse to break the Treaty of London. This, however, would not prevent him from

This illustrates Bismarck's ability to foresee potential future events. For him, Augustenburg was simply not an option.

(Risk Calculations, Foresight, Abductive Reasoning)

So, what were Bismarck's goals and main strategy in the Schleswig and Holstein Crisis ?

His goal was to benefit Prussia or at least avoid creating an enemy by allowing Augustenburg to take control of the duchies.

Bismarck had two main options:

1. Seize control of the two duchies for Prussia during the conflict.
2. If annexing them right away wasn't possible, he was open to letting the duchies stay in a personal union with Denmark.

Denmark to abide by the London Treaties of 1852, that suited Bismarck admirably. There were three options in principle: best—annexation of both

Duchies by Prussia; tolerable—the status quo with the Duchies in personal union with Denmark because he knew he could always stir up trouble in that situation; worst—a victory for the Bund and the small states in favour

Bismarck, being a strategic thinker, decided to choose both options. Well, more like he devised a strategy that would enable him to choose option 2 (which was likely the safer choice) while also keeping the possibility open to pursue option 1 if luck and circumstances permitted.

The first thing we need to understand is that this Strategy unfolded in two phases:

Phase 1: Preventing Augustenburg from taking the throne
Since Bismarck opted for the second option, he needed to convince the German Parliament not to support Augustenburg's claim to the throne. If this failed, he would have to find a way to suppress any growing support for Augustenburg.

Phase 2: Issuing an ultimatum to secure neutrality or advantage
Since Bismarck didn't intend to back Augustenburg, this means he would instead recognize Christian IX as the legitimate ruler of Schleswig and Holstein, but with a condition.

This is where his second option came into play.

He would demand that Christian IX refrain from renewing the unpopular November Constitution. If Christian complied, the situation would remain neutral. However, if Christian refused, Bismarck would have won the crisis.

How?

When making the demand, Bismarck also plans to set a threat: should Denmark reject his terms, Prussia would declare war. This would transform the dispute from a succession issue into a conflict of conquest, allowing Prussia to wage war and seize Schleswig and Holstein, preventing both Augustenburg and Denmark from controlling the territories—ensuring they fell to Prussia instead.

Although we've covered a broad overview of Bismarck's first two strategic phases, I'd like to examine them more thoroughly. Let's analyze each phase in detail, focusing on his specific tactics and methods.

Phase 1: Preventing Augustenburg from taking the throne

The German Parliament wanted Augustenburg to claim the throne and pressured Prussia to denounce the Treaty of London (which was the only agreement keeping Schleswig and Holstein under Denmark's control). Bismarck, however, refused and shared his view with the King of Prussia, suggesting that they should be the ones to annex the territories. The king thought Bismarck was crazy and questioned his sanity. Since Bismarck couldn't convince the small German states nor anyone in Prussia, he needed another tactic.

This is where Austria comes in.

What I didn't mention earlier is that several countries had signed the London Protocol, including Austria. This meant Austria was also bound to it.

Prussia and Austria were among the Powers who signed the Treaty of London, but the Diet of Frankfort was not bound by it. At the same time, Denmark had entered into certain engagements pledging itself to preserve the separation between Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark, and also not to oppress the German people in Schleswig. The Danes did not keep their engagement; despising the Germans, they renewed the old policy, attempted to drive back the German language, and

Bismarck cleverly realized that Austria would likely oppose Augustenburg too because of it, and he was right. Austria's minister, Rechberg, even though he often clashed with Bismarck, supported him this time. By partnering with Rechberg, Bismarck ensured that both Austria and Prussia would demand Denmark's compliance with the treaties. This allowed him to suppress any nationalist movements that could jeopardize Prussia's interests. Bismarck's policy was therefore to refuse Augustenburg's claim and uphold the Treaty of London. With Austria's support in the German Diet, he easily outmaneuvered the smaller German states that supported Augustenburg. By doing this, he also removed any justification for England to interfere in the Schleswig-Holstein issue. His stance made Prussia appear as a defender of international law and a stabilizing force in the region.

Bismarck ran into the King's opposition and immediately blamed the woman who embodied all the malign forces in the royal household, Queen Augusta.

Bismarck, as always, had a second strategy in mind. After the failure of the Frankfurt Congress of the Princes, Baron Rechberg, who had become Austrian Foreign Minister on 17 May 1859, decided in exasperation to work with, not against, Prussia, 'with the remark that an understanding with Prussia was easier for Austria than for the middle states'.[96] Bismarck had clashed bitterly with Rechberg in Frankfurt and the two had been about to go to the woods for a duel at one point. Rechberg had a reputation for temper and was widely known as a *Kratzbürste* (scratch brush), that is, snappish and quick-tempered, but Bismarck got used to him. 'On the whole

vindicate it from Christian, the alien usurper. Bismarck would not hear of this; he still maintained his policy that Prussia should not denounce the London Convention, should recognise the sovereignty of Christian, and should demand from him as lawful ruler of all the Danish possessions the repeal of the obnoxious November Constitution. In this he was still supported by Austria; if the Danes did not acquiesce in these very moderate demands, the Germans should enter Schleswig and seize it as a security. Then he would be able when he wished to free himself from the Treaty of London, for war dissolves all treaties.

The advantage of this plan was that it entirely deprived England of any grounds for interference; Prussia alone was now defending the London Convention; Prussia was preventing the Diet from a breach of treaty; the claim of Denmark was one in regard to which the Danes were absolutely wrong. Bismarck had therefore on his side Austria, Russia, probably France, and averted the hostility of England. Against him was German public opinion, the German Diet, and the Prussian Parliament; everyone, that is, whom he neither feared nor regarded. So long as the King was firm he could look with confidence to the future, even though he did not know what it would bring forth.

Phase 2: Issuing an ultimatum to secure neutrality or advantage

Now that the succession dispute was finally resolved, Bismarck could move on to the second phase of his strategy: giving Denmark an ultimatum. Although the German Confederation, along with Prussia and Austria, agreed to let Denmark handle the succession and follow the London Protocol, Denmark had to do something in return—repeal their November Constitution. which stripped autonomy from the Germans in Holstein and Schleswig. Now here is where Bismarck's political maneuvering came into play.

You see, Bismarck's strategy was designed so that he couldn't lose. As mentioned before he had two options: 1) annex both territories or 2) let Denmark keep them, which he was also content

with. After completing the first phase of his strategy and settling for the second option, he had technically already succeeded. From this point onward, anything he did would work in his favor.

So now, Bismarck decided to push for the first option—annexing both Schleswig and Holstein. Remember after all, his ultimate goal was to achieve both options.

Bismarck handled this situation cleverly, using the London Protocol to his advantage. When he demanded that Denmark repeal the November Constitution, he set such a short deadline that it was nearly impossible for Denmark to meet it. The ultimatum required the Danish King to revoke the Constitution by January 1, but the King couldn't do so without the approval of the Rigstad (the Danish parliament). The problem was that the Rigtrad had already been dissolved, and a new assembly couldn't be formed in time, putting the King in a no-win situation. But Bismarck wasn't finished yet; he added another layer to this tactic to ensure the King wouldn't revoke the November Constitution. He made the King feel psychologically secure, even if he didn't comply, by giving the King the impression that he would receive support from England. You see, one of the rules of the London Protocol was the "Mediation Role," allowing powers like Britain to mediate disputes over the duchies if conflicts arose. But was this actually the case? No, not really. Remember Bismarck, in the first phase of his strategy, upheld and defended the London Protocol, removing any grounds for England to intervene in the Schleswig-Holstein issue. By doing this, Bismarck made Prussia appear as the defender of international law and a stabilizing force in the region. He was controlling the narrative, and Britain couldn't challenge a country that was positioned as upholding international law. Bismarck had outsmarted everyone. His two tactical layers ensured that the Danish king not only hesitated to revoke the constitution due to a false sense of security but also couldn't meet Bismarck's demands in time, even if he saw through the manipulation. This made Bismarck's strategy not only shielded but also so resilient that it was nearly impossible to counter. And even if, by some chance, the Danish king had managed to revoke the constitution on time, it wouldn't have mattered—Bismarck had already won by preventing Schleswig and Holstein from falling into Augustenburg's hands. Everything Bismarck did afterward was just a gamble to gain more.

> the Federal troops from Holstein. Bismarck had considered this contingency, and guarded himself against it. Many years later Beust put the question to him. "Oh, I was all right," he answered; "I had assured myself that the Danes would not give in. I had led them to think that England would support them, though I knew this was not the case." He had, however, even a surer guarantee than this; the ultimatum presented to Denmark was couched in such a form that even if he would the King could not comply with it. The requirement was that the Constitution should be revoked before the 1st of January. By the Constitution the King could not do this of his own prerogative; he must have the assent of the Rigsrad. This assent could not be obtained for the following reasons: the Rigsrad of the old Constitution had been dissolved and had no longer a legal existence; a new assembly could not be summoned before the 1st of January—there was not time. If an assembly were summoned after that date, it must be of course summoned according to the new Constitution. To do this, however, would be to bring the obnoxious Constitution actually into force, and would mean, so to speak, a declaration of war against Prussia. If the King wished to give in he must have time; he must be allowed to summon the new assembly, lay before it the German demands, and require it to declare its own revocation. The English Government, still anxious to keep the peace, represented to Bismarck the dilemma in which he had placed the Danes. Lord Wodehouse, who was in Berlin in December, requested that at least more time should be allowed. Bismarck refused to listen to the request.

In the end, no matter what Denmark did, Bismarck would come out on top.

Conclusion:

Everything had fallen perfectly into place as Bismarck had intended. His manipulation led to such success that not only did he quash the Augustenburg succession, but he also skillfully turned the Schleswig-Holstein crisis into a full-scale conquest by declaring war on Denmark for failing to meet his demands. And no, Bismarck's impossible demands were not just opportunistic; they were part of his long-term strategy. He had foreseen this outcome from the start. This can be proven not only by his alliance with Austria, which Bismarck knew would be advantageous in case of war, but also by the many times he expressed that war was the only way to benefit Prussia during the crisis. He mentioned this repeatedly in letters and even told the king. So, the way everything unfolded was no coincidence—Bismarck had foreseen it all and was confident he would emerge victorious. And he did. On October 30, 1864, Prussia and Austria won the Second Schleswig War, settling the issue of who would claim the territories. What began as a succession question had now become a conquest. Truly remarkable.

> His policy, therefore, was clearly marked out for him: he must refuse to recognise the claims of Augustenburg; he must refuse to break the Treaty of London. This, however, would not prevent him from bringing pressure to bear on the new King of Denmark, as he had done on his predecessor, to induce him to abide by his treaty engagements, and, if he did not do so, from declaring war against him.

> It is certain that the Danish business can only be solved in a way which we would wish by a war. One can find a pretext for such a war any time… We cannot get out of the disadvantage of having signed the London Protocol

(All Strategy Categories, Trap Setting, Info Control, Emotional Inducement, EQU, Foresight, Contingencies,)

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN CLAIMS

Although Bismarck successfully achieved his goals through his strategy to resolve the Schleswig-Holstein crisis, he faced an unexpected setback beyond his control: the Austrian minister Rechberg was replaced by Alexander von Mensdorff-Pouilly. Mensdorff-Pouilly, who was anti-Prussian, saw through Bismarck's actions and, in an effort to thwart him, decided to ally with Augustenburg and lend him support.

Bismarck, aiming to stall any outcome favorable to Austria or Augustenburg, countered with a proposal that was virtually impossible for them to accept. His approach was to propose the creation of a new state in Schleswig-Holstein under Augustenburg, *but* only on terms that would secure Prussian control over key strategic and economic assets.

Bismarck’s demands were as follows:

- **Kiel**: The port city would become Prussian territory.

- **Rendsburg**: The fortress, crucial for regional defense, would also be Prussian.
- **Infrastructure**: Prussia would oversee and own the construction of a canal.
- **Military Integration**: The Duchies' army would be fully absorbed into the Prussian military, with soldiers swearing allegiance to the Prussian King instead of their own Duke.
- **Customs and Finance**: The Duchies would join the Prussian Customs Union, aligning their financial systems with Prussia's.

These demands were so extensive that Austria couldn't support them, nor could Augustenburg accept them.

Strategic Deliberate Delay: Now, let me explain Bismarck's strategy. He employed impossible demands to prolong the negotiation process significantly, which ultimately worked to Prussia's advantage. Each delay allowed Prussia to strengthen its position in the administration of the Duchies, increasing its influence over time. As the negotiations continued, Prussia became more entrenched in the area, making it harder for Austria or Augustenburg to assert any claims. As Bismarck predicted, Austria ultimately rejected the terms. And, by drawing out the process, Bismarck had made it even harder for Augustenburg to lay claim to the territory, gradually establishing Prussian influence in the region. Now, Prussia and Austria truly shared joint governance of the Duchies.

favour of that policy to which Bismarck would never consent. It remained for him to propose an alternative. Prussia, he said, could only allow the new State to be created on condition that large rights were given to Prussia; what these were would require consideration; he must consult the different departments. This took time, and every month's delay was so much gain for Prussia; it was not till February, 1865, that Bismarck was able to present his demands, which were, that Kiel should be a Prussian port, Rendsburg a Prussian fortress; that the canal was to be made by Prussia and belong to Prussia, the management of the post and telegraph service to be Prussian and also the railways; the army was to be not only organised on the Prussian system but actually incorporated with the Prussian army, so that the soldiers would take the oath of allegiance not to their own Duke but to the King of Prussia. The Duchies were to join the Prussian Customs' Union and assimilate their system of finance with that of Prussia. The proposals were so drawn up that it would be impossible for Austria to support, or for the Prince of Augustenburg to accept them. They were, in fact, as Bismarck himself told the Crown Prince, not meant to be accepted. "I would rather dig potatoes than be a reigning Prince under such conditions," said one of the Austrian Ministers. When they were officially presented, Karolyi was instructed to meet them with an unhesitating negative, and all discussion on them ceased.

Strategy Shielding: Also, here comes an example of strategic shielding: Bismarck not only stalled by negotiating the demands but also did by introducing another potential heir to the throne of Schleswig and Holstein—Brandenburg. Despite Brandenburg's claim being generally recognized as weak and unfounded, it was a calculated move. By bringing Brandenburg's claim into the discussion, Bismarck forced the Diet into an even longer, complicated legal debate over who had legitimate rule over the Duchies. Bismarck never intended to argue seriously that Brandenburg had a real right to them; he knew it would fail. But his real purpose was to slow the Diet's decision-making even more. If they agreed to consider all claims, it would lead to lengthy legal procedures and bureaucratic delays. This drawn-out process would take months, allowing Bismarck to maintain control of the situation and increase Prussian influence in the Duchies in the meantime.

(Strategy Castling, Direct Manipulation, Tactical Response, Prediction)

Now, some might wrongly view Bismarck's strategies following the Schleswig-Holstein crisis as evidence of flaws in his original strategy, suggesting it wasn't as invincible as portrayed. However, this view is mistaken. The diplomatic steps Bismarck took after the crisis were only crafted to preserve Prussia's moral standing and avoid needless tension with the German Diet, particularly with Austria, which was now uncooperative. Bismarck recognized a key truth: the German Diet held limited power. Even when it issued formal decisions, it lacked the means to enforce them. To Bismarck, the Diet's resolutions were essentially ineffective, unable to change the political realities on the ground.

> decent not to do this till the claims of the rivals had been duly weighed. In the months that must elapse many things might happen. In the meantime the Diet would be helpless. When it had come to a decision he would then be able to point out, as he had already done, that they had no legal power for determining who was the ruler of any State, and that their decision therefore was quite valueless, and everything would have been again exactly as it was before. Austria supported the motion of

(Coverage)

GASTEIN TREATY

After the prolonged turmoil of the Schleswig-Holstein crisis and the contentious claims surrounding it. Everything came to an end, when Bismarck issued an ultimatum to Austria—a move that stirred considerable controversy. Austria had been backing Augustenburg's claim, so Bismarck's demand was that Austria cease this support or face Prussian military action. This ultimatum was highly provocative, with the potential to trigger a war. It's possible Bismarck understood the risks but also knew Austria was unlikely to go to war.

You see, when this ultimatum was issued, Austria's most effective response would have been to declare war on Prussia, positioning itself as the defender of Germans against Prussian oppression. Yet, they chose not to.

Why?

This decision was influenced by several factors:

- The Austrian Emperor hesitated, affected by his own reservations.
- Austria was also grappling with political and financial challenges domestically, making it difficult to fund a large-scale war.
- Additionally, Austria was concerned about Italy. If Austria went to war with Prussia, Italy might seize the opportunity to invade Venetia, an Austrian-held region in northern Italy. Even without a formal alliance, Italy would likely attack Austria from the south if conflict erupted.

There were, however, serious reasons against this. The Emperor was very reluctant to go to war, and, as so often, the personal feelings of the rulers had much to do with the policy of the Government. Then the internal condition of Austria both politically and financially was very unsatisfactory; it would have been necessary to raise a loan and this could not be easily done. There was also the constant danger from Italy, for Austria knew that, even if there were no alliance, as soon as she was

It's likely that Bismarck was aware of this, which may explain why he proposed such a bold ultimatum; he aimed to get Austria to withdraw its support for Augustenburg.

In the end, Austria did stop supporting Augustenburg, and with some pressure, Bismarck secured Austria's agreement at the Gastein Convention. According to the treaty, the joint administration of Schleswig and Holstein would be dissolved, with Austria taking **administrative** control of Holstein and Prussia taking Schleswig.

(Emotional Manipulation, Deductive Reasoning, Negotiation)

THE PLAN TO UNIFY GERMANY:



First, we need to understand that while this plan is consistent, it's not a step-by-step blueprint from start to finish. The core idea remains unchanged, but elements like tactics and strategies will adapt to the circumstances as needed. It's unrealistic to create a rigid plan that won't evolve and expect it to work.

- **The Foundation of the Plan**

Let's start by examining the aims of the plan. These aims can actually be traced back to a period before Bismarck became prime minister. The aims for this plan were established while Bismarck served as ambassador in St. Petersburg. This information comes from Benjamin Disraeli, who learned about the plan during a meeting with Bismarck at the residence of the Russian Ambassador, Brunnow. During this encounter, Bismarck outlined the goals and structure of his plan. Although Disraeli's memory recall may not capture everything that was discussed, we do know that Bismarck intended to:

- Reorganize the army, regardless of the Landtag's support
- Take advantage of the first opportunity to engage in war with Austria
- Dissolve the German Confederation
- Establish Prussian supremacy over the smaller German states

> I shall soon be compelled to undertake the conduct of the Prussian government. My first care will be to reorganize the army, with or without, the help of the Landtag…As soon as the army shall have been brought into such a condition as to inspire respect, I shall seize the first best pretext to declare war against Austria, dissolve the German Diet, subdue the minor states and give national unity to Germany under Prussian leadership. I have come here to say this to the Queen's ministers.

For the understanding of this plan, I will use specific colors to categorize the following text along with their new definitions:

- **Light Purple:** Main Plan (the overall vision of the plan thought from beginning to end)
- **Purple:** Sub-Main Plan (elements of the main plan that are developed based on current circumstances; these are extended plans within the main plan)
- **Magenta:** Short-Term actions or Adaptations to the Sub-Main Plan (these are immediate strategies or tactics created in the moment)

Let's begin with the first step on Bismarck's checklist:

Reorganize the army, regardless of the Landtag's support

Bismarck would have implemented this immediately upon returning from his position as ambassador in St. Petersburg and taking on the role of prime minister. Specifically, he would carry out this task right after delivering his famous "iron and blood" speech. What's particularly noteworthy about this step in his plan is that it would mark his first political action. Why is this significant? It highlights that Bismarck anticipated his rise to the position of prime minister. Even though there were clear indicators suggesting he would play a crucial role following the turmoil caused by the liberal factions in Prussia, it's still impressive how confident he was in his future leadership. Instead of needing time to adjust to his new position or develop policies on the fly, Bismarck stepped into the role of Prime Minister with a clear vision and pre-planned objectives. He didn't waste time wondering what to do or trying to find his footing - he had already mapped out his course of action and moved decisively to implement it. This shows Bismarck was not just reacting to events, but thinking several steps ahead, even before officially assuming power. Now, how did Bismarck achieve the first step in his plan? First, we need to remember that during this time the liberal faction was opposed to wars and resisted any reforms or budget for the army. And at the time, the liberal faction held significant power in the Landtag, meaning the king had to collaborate with them to establish a budget. This created a deadlock, as the king couldn't reform the army due to the Landtag's opposition. If he attempted to negotiate

with them, they would simply reject his proposals. When Bismarck arrived, he resolved this deadlock by exploiting loopholes in the system. I've explained this in more detail in the document, but here's a brief summary of his strategy and the loophole he discovered: Bismarck understood that the constitution did not specify what to do if a budget was not approved, creating a "legal loophole." By interpreting the constitution this way, he decided that if the Landtag refused to approve a new budget, he would simply use the previous year's budget. This allowed him to bypass the need for legislative approval. This approach enabled Bismarck to **"REORGANIZE THE ARMY, REGARDLESS OF THE LANDTAG'S SUPPORT,"** as stated in the title of this first step. While this strategy might seem like something a rebellious child would do—essentially disregarding the Landtag—it was quite clever. Bismarck wasn't technically violating any norms; he merely identified and exploited a loophole. He had everything meticulously planned for how to tackle this initial step, which is truly impressive.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN WAR WITH AUSTRIA

Now we turn to the second step of Bismarck's main plan. However, a problem arises: Bismarck was uncertain about where the "advantage of going to war with Austria" lay. He had reformed the army with his initial actions and began making planning coverages (which will be explained later), and he knew how to attack Austria and secure a victory. Still, he didn't know when or how to create this conflict. Austria was indeed his rival, which made war possible, but he needed to wait for the right opportunity. So because of this, we can deduce that Bismarck simply allowed the course of events to guide him toward this opportunity. While it's possible he had a plan in mind for creating a conflict, it seems unlikely. Using Occam's razor principle, we have to simply conclude that Bismarck was simply waiting for an opportunity that would heighten tensions with Austria… And this opportunity would present itself during the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1863, following the unexpected death of King Frederick VII of Denmark.

✦ THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN CRISIS ✦

The Schleswig-Holstein crisis would provide Bismarck with the opportunity he needed to devise a plan for his main plan to go to war with Austria. Bismarck recognized this chance during the crisis. Initially, Bismarck did not even realize that this crisis would become a part of his main plan. When the conflict arose over the question of succession—whether Christian IV or Augustenburg should inherit—Bismarck might have been expected to back Augustenburg. However, as you may remember, he devised a different approach that sidelined Augustenburg entirely, positioning himself to potentially take control of the two duchies. Achieving this by allying with Austria, whose foreign minister at the time was Rechberg **(an important figure to remember for later events)**, with the goal of reducing Augustenburg's influence. Once this was accomplished, he issued an ultimatum to Denmark, demanding the repeal of the November

Constitution. However, as you may recall, Bismarck built a planning contingency into this strategy: if this contingency failed, he would end up in a neutral position, where he wouldn't gain but also wouldn't lose anything. If the contingency succeeded, however, he and his ally Austria would be able to gain control over the two duchies. And as you may remember, this contingency hinged on placing exceedingly high demands on Denmark, specifically requiring the repeal of the November Constitution within an impossible deadline—virtually ensuring Denmark's non-compliance and leading to war. Everything unfolded exactly as planned, which is remarkable. Even though Bismarck's approach to resolving this situation was mostly strategic, it was his final planning contingency—crafted so that Denmark had no possible recourse—that was truly impressive, making him unstoppable… But only against Denmark. You see, even though Bismarck was close to achieving his goal, where he would administer Schleswig, an unexpected setback was on the horizon: Rechberg's replacement. Despite their rivalry and mutual dislike, Bismarck and Rechberg were allies, with Rechberg taking care not to cause trouble for Bismarck. However, when Minister Alexander von Mensdorff replaced Rechberg, everything changed… Unlike Rechberg, Mensdorff was openly anti-Prussian, disliked Bismarck intensely, and supported Augustenburg, presenting Bismarck with a serious issue. Suddenly, an ally became a looming enemy—certainly problematic. Or was it? You see, with Austria now nearby and potentially hostile, this situation transformed from a problem into an opportunity. Bismarck would have realized that this was the chance he had been long waiting for, the perfect moment to, as the title of this step suggests, **"TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN WAR WITH AUSTRIA."** For Bismarck, Mensdorff wasn't just an adversary to exploit for sparking conflict. Mensdorff was also an inexperienced diplomat. While Mensdorff had a solid education, wealth, and military experience as a cavalry general, his lack of diplomatic skill made him susceptible to Bismarck's manipulation, despite his strong opposition. Bismarck planned to use this weakness to spark future conflicts. So the initial action Bismarck took, upon noting this opportunity, and given Mensdorff's support for Augustenburg, was to inform Mensdorff of his intention to annex Schleswig. He did this indirectly by treating Schleswig as if it were already part of Prussia, and directly by making King Wilhelm I publicly declare on May 29, 1865, his desire to annex it. During this period, Bismarck remarked, "Sooner or later a war would come; at the moment the international situation was favorable." Which meant that Bismarck was fully aware he could use the situation to incite a war. **And this also strongly implies that this moment was likely the starting point of Bismarck's execution of a plan to heighten tensions with Austria, paving the way for war.**

✦ THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR SUB-PLAN ✦

1. **STEP ONE [Bismarck's preparations for the Austro-Prussian War]**

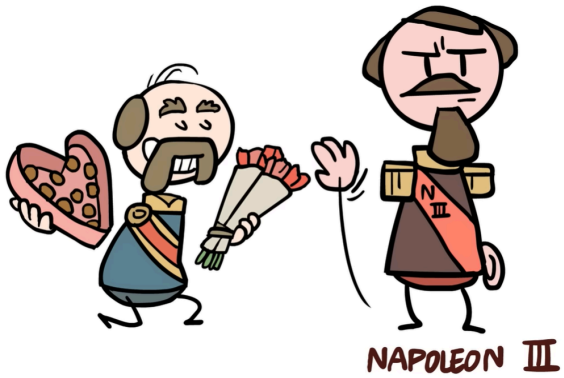


Bismarck, to initiate his plan to create a war with Austria, took two significant actions in August 1865: 1) First, he arranged financial preparations for the impending war, securing 28.8 million thalers with the assistance of Dagobert Freiherr von Oppenheim by selling state railway shares to the Cologne-Minden Railway Company. This ensured that Prussia had war funds without needing parliamentary approval. 2) Next, Bismarck would take his second step by creating the Gastein Treaty, he did this by proposing to Austria to jointly administer Holstein and Schleswig. At this time, Austria, led by Minister Mensdorff, was still attempting to hand control of Holstein to Augustenburg. Bismarck, in response, developed a strategy that I've already explained in this doc, but basically, he proposed allowing Augustenburg to govern, but under terms that granted, Prussian strict control over the states. These terms, as you may recall, were deliberately made to be unacceptable to both Austria and Augustenburg, enabling Bismarck to delay negotiations while gradually increasing Prussian influence in the states. And to all this, Bismarck would have issued an ultimatum demanding Austria withdraw its support for Augustenburg or face military action. Although this ultimatum risked war, Austria, weakened by political and financial issues, chose not to escalate. This opened the way for Bismarck to negotiate the Gastein Treaty, which divided the administration of the duchies—Prussia took Schleswig, while Austria managed Holstein—securing Prussia's control over Schleswig.

Now, let's give a bit more insight into these two actions Bismarck took in August 1865, particularly in terms of how they align with his plan… These actions were not merely about preparing for the Austro-Prussian War but about laying the groundwork that would provoke and sustain it. 1) The first action, in which Bismarck secured funding, not only reveals his effort to gain a strategic advantage in case of conflict but also indicates his intent to instigate this war. And interestingly enough, Bismarck's efforts to obtain funds date back to June of that year when he sought support from August von der Heydt. Although that attempt didn't go as planned, it reinforces the notion that Bismarck was setting up for a confrontation with Austria well before August. This action, combined with his previous statements, confirms that Bismarck was meticulously orchestrating events from this point forward. As noted, this step was both **"preparing for the Austro-Prussian War"**☑ and **"preparing the Austro-Prussian War."☑.** 2) The second action, the Gastein Treaty, can be somewhat complex to interpret. Although it appeared to be a resolution to the tensions, it was, in reality, only a temporary fix—something

Bismarck knew, and likely intended. This treaty served multiple purposes: one key objective was to tarnish Austria's standing with other German states, particularly Bavaria. Austria had been regarded as the protector of a unified Germany, unlike Prussia, which was perceived as greedy, aiming to take control of Schleswig and Holstein. So when Austria negotiated with Prussia, resulting in the Gastein Treaty, it felt like a betrayal to the smaller German states. However, the main purpose of the treaty—and what Bismarck truly intended—was to buy time. The moment wasn't right for war yet, as Bismarck had only recently secured funding and still needed to solidify his diplomatic "coverages" for the conflict (to be discussed later). Diplomatic preparations were incomplete, so the Gastein Treaty provided a temporary "peace" but one that Bismarck fully intended to disrupt in future. Furthermore, he was seeking a better pretext for war than the issue of the duchies; framing the conflict around them would risk making him appear as the aggressor. It's likely that Bismarck intended to use the Gastein Treaty as the very catalyst for war, as would later prove to be the case. In short, the Gastein Treaty allowed Bismarck to gain time to prepare for the Austro-Prussian War. **"Preparing for the Austro-Prussian War"☑.** And, it provided an alternative way to initiate the conflict without centering it on the duchies, enabling him to avoid appearing as the aggressor. **"Preparing the Austro-Prussian War"☑.**

2. **STEP TWO [Bismarck's coverages for the Austro Prussian War]**



It was time for action in Bismarck's realm. After carefully setting the stage for the war he'd envisioned, Bismarck now focused on provoking Austria into making a blunder that would paint them as the aggressors, thus causing a war. But first, he needed to review his multiple coverages he had planned for this very moment. As mentioned earlier, Bismarck had a plan to confront Austria, though he hadn't known exactly when or how the opportunity would arise. Now, with the chance before him, he could finally leverage the situation he'd been waiting for. This brings us to the next step in Bismarck's plan: his carefully laid coverages, which some of them he had been working on for years in anticipation of this moment. Before diving into how Bismarck personally reviewed these coverages, let's first clarify what these "coverages" actually entailed. Essentially, these coverages were Bismarck's efforts to ensure that every country with the potential to interfere in a conflict with Austria would remain neutral. Let's begin with the first one: **Russia.** Bismarck had been securing Russian neutrality long before this moment, largely

through diplomacy and fostering sympathy. Early on, even before becoming Prime Minister, Bismarck began aligning Prussia with Russia; as an ambassador, he helped withdraw Prussia from the Triple Alliance of 1841 (Previously mentioned in this doc), which had pitted Austria and other countries against Russia. This action helped Bismarck establish favor with Russia well in advance. His efforts continued, notably in 1863, when Bismarck backed the Alvensleben Convention—a treaty where Prussia allied with Russia to suppress a Polish rebellion. Bismarck's support for this treaty was aimed at strengthening ties with Russia and ensuring they would not side with Austria if a conflict erupted. In essence, Bismarck secured Russian neutrality by nurturing sympathy and highlighting their shared adversary, Austria… Now, let's discuss Bismarck's second coverage: **France.** France would be among the most challenging countries to keep neutral. It's important to remember that, at the time, France was a major superpower led by Napoleon III. Although he wasn't as shrewd as his famous uncle, Napoleon III was still highly intelligent—arguably second only to Bismarck himself—and would ultimately become Bismarck's greatest rival. Napoleon often saw through Bismarck's actions, making him a difficult opponent for Bismarck to contend with. Bismarck was well aware of how formidable an opponent Napoleon III could be. Early on, just as he had sought an alliance with Russia, he also pursued diplomatic coverage from France. In 1856-1857, he actively sought to align with France, recognizing how useful Napoleon III and France could be in achieving Prussian goals. Bismarck reportedly told Gerlach, "France only interests me as it affects the situation of my Fatherland, and we can only make our policy with the France that exists." This is notable since Prussia was largely anti-French at the time, highlighting Bismarck's forward-thinking and pragmatic approach.That year, Bismarck traveled to Paris to discuss a potential alliance, marking a crucial step toward aligning himself with Napoleon III. From this point onward, Bismarck made efforts to maintain either an alliance or neutrality with Napoleon III, frequently visiting Paris. During the Schleswig-Holstein crisis, Napoleon III even offered Bismarck support in exchange for territory on the left bank of the Rhine. Although Bismarck declined, this offer indicates that France was more closely aligned with Prussia than with Austria… Now, while it initially seemed as though France would remain entirely neutral and uninvolved, Napoleon III was actually cautious and somewhat suspicious, especially after viewing the Gastein Treaty, which he viewed negatively. Recognizing this, Bismarck adjusted his diplomatic approach. In 1865, during the early stages of his preparations for the Austro-Prussian War, reached out to Goltz, the Prussian ambassador in Paris, to find out if there was an alliance between Austria and France. Even though there wasn't evidence of it, Bismarck needed to be sure, so he traveled to Biarritz, a favorite vacation spot for the French Emperor. Here, Bismarck, known for his charm and intellect, managed to impress the French court, being described as "a truly great man, free from sentiment and full of esprit" (meaning cleverness or wit). At this meeting, Bismarck sought to reassure Napoleon III and subtly manipulate him into supporting Prussia should a conflict arise. He shared his vision of Prussia leading a unified northern Germany, giving the impression that Prussia's ambitions aligned with Napoleon's vision for Europe. Bismarck also hinted that France might receive territorial compensation if it aided Prussia. Notably, these promises were left

vague and informal, with no formal agreements or written commitments—a clear example of Bismarck's sophistry. Napoleon III was ultimately deceived to remain neutral in any potential Prussian-Austrian conflict, though he remained somewhat skeptical in the end… Now, let's discuss Bismarck's third coverage: **Italy.** Until this point, he hadn't considered using Italy as a counter to Austria. However, after devising the Gastein Treaty Strategy, he recognized Italy's value. Bismarck sent word to Usedom, the Prussian Minister in Florence, to gauge Italy's willingness to join Prussia in a war against Austria—a notable example of his "Planning Applicability". And he began to study Italy's position, realizing that Italy had its own grievances with Austria, especially regarding Venetia, which could make them a valuable ally. For additional context, Venetia was a pivotal region influencing much of the diplomacy of the period. Italy, a newly unified kingdom, was eager to seize control of Venetia, which remained under Austrian rule, viewing it as essential to complete its unification. Bismarck, understanding this, proposed a formal alliance to Italy around July 1865, offering to join forces in a war against Austria to secure Venetia… Finally, let's discuss Bismarck's last coverage: **Britain.** While it may not be entirely accurate to label Britain's neutrality as a "coverage", it's essential to note that Bismarck was well aware that Britain would likely stay out of continental conflicts. Britain would voice some protest, but considering the political landscape, it was clear they wouldn't take any real action. Aligning with Austria, for instance, would have been a poor strategic choice. Moreover, Britain was following its policy of "splendid isolation," concentrating on its colonial empire and naval supremacy rather than European affairs. This made British neutrality almost a given, sparing Bismarck the diplomatic efforts he had to invest in managing other powers, such as France under Napoleon III and Russia.

- **Bismarck's Contingency**

Now that we've covered Bismarck's coverages, let's discuss the contingency plan he put in place to secure these alliances. Bismarck was not someone who would take chances with something so significant. So after reinforcing his ties with France, he promptly turned his attention to securing his alliance with Italy. You see, Bismarck was carefully assessing the situation, going through a detailed thought process and evaluating potential risks. Bismarck worried that Italy might not stay fully loyal to its alliance with Prussia and could be influenced by Napoleon III. Why? Although Bismarck had "secured" an agreement with Napoleon, it was built on bluff and deception, making the alliance unstable from the start. Despite Bismarck's years of effort to ensure France's neutrality, France still shared a religious bond with Austria, as both were part of the Catholic faction. Furthermore, Bismarck was well aware that Napoleon III had his own ambitions in Italy. Napoleon III had previously supported Italian unification and had even promised Venetia to Italy, which worried Bismarck. He feared that Napoleon III might offer Venetia as a strategic incentive to persuade Italy to remain neutral or possibly even side with Austria. And there was also the risk that Austria could offer Venetia to Italy in a counter-alliance against Prussia. Additionally, the Italians were wary of Bismarck, fearing he might exploit their alliance to his benefit and then abandon them if it suited his aims. This concern arose from the

Treaty of Gastein, where Bismarck had previously shown a willingness to negotiate with Austria, only to now pursue war against them. Italy, therefore, distrusted Bismarck's pragmatism and believed he could easily betray them if necessary. Bismarck had carefully considered these potential scenarios. Despite his well-established coverages, he understood they could collapse if someone outmaneuvered him. While he trusted Russia due to their shared hostility toward Austria, the other coverages were vulnerable to strategic or secret deals that could leave Prussia isolated. To counter this significant risk that threatened his plans, Bismarck knew he needed a strong contingency plan… So let's explain this Contingency; Bismarck's careful contingency planning involved a two-layered strategic treaty with Italy. The first treaty would be established at the beginning of 1866, followed by a second one in April of the same year. 1) The first one, at the beginning of 1866 was a commercial treaty, which Bismarck pursued with an understanding of its unique strength. A commercial treaty is a formal agreement between nations that sets mutually advantageous trade terms. Unlike a typical alliance centered on diplomatic or military support, a commercial treaty creates a deep economic interdependence, establishing a bond of mutual reliance. This economic link fosters greater loyalty and trust, as each country's prosperity becomes increasingly connected to the stability and success of the other. The benefits of trade, job creation, and economic growth provide incentives to preserve good relations, with both sides invested in the agreement's continuity for continued economic benefits. This type of interdependence often makes a commercial treaty a more stable and enduring bond than a traditional alliance, which may be affected by shifting political priorities. By securing this commercial treaty, Bismarck was reinforcing his alliance with Italy on a level that went beyond simple mutual interest. 2) In April, Bismarck's next step was to establish a formal military alliance with Italy. The terms of this alliance were straightforward yet strategically significant: should Prussia enter into war with Austria within a three-month period, Italy would also commit to declaring war against Austria. Additionally, neither Prussia nor Italy would be permitted to seek a separate peace agreement, thereby binding them to a united course of action. Most importantly, Prussia committed to pursuing the conflict until Venetia was secured and ceded to Italy. Through this second treaty, Bismarck not only solidified Italy's loyalty to Prussia but also made a binding commitment to Italian interests. This alliance was not simply a pact of mutual cooperation; it was a pledge to deliver Venetia to Italy, regardless of the cost. Bismarck's approach thus ensured a deeper and more resolute alliance, aligning Italy's ambitions directly with Prussia's military objectives… So, what makes this contingency brilliant? It's brilliant because, despite having to keep an eye on three fronts—Italy, Austria, and France—Bismarck cleverly addressed this challenge by establishing a contingency plan focused on Italy. This strategy impacted the other two powers as well: it prevented both France and Austria from enticing Italy with promises like Venetia. With Napoleon III unable to manipulate the situation, his safest choice was to remain neutral rather than side with Austria. And did Bismarck actually use this contingency? Yes, he did. Because even though Napoleon III was initially deceived, he would remain wary and just before the Austro-Prussian war, he would have attempted to pull

Italy away from its alliance with Prussia, hoping to isolate Prussia diplomatically. However, this maneuver failed, thanks to Bismarck's contingency.

3. **STEP THREE [Isolate Austria, create tension, and declare war]**



Everything was in order now; Bismarck had thoroughly checked his coverages and established contingencies. For him, this was akin to perfectly arranging each chess piece with precision for an assured victory. At this moment, any conflict would lead to a victory for Bismarck—not only because of his meticulous planning but also due to the investments and innovations in the military that he and his generals had implemented. I could elaborate on how Prussia's military became nearly unbeatable, resulting in the Austro-Prussian War lasting just seven weeks, but that would take the focus away from Bismarck himself. So, let's just say he had everything strategically arranged; He simply needed to create a conflict with the opportunity presented to him… Austria was now completely isolated, and despite Bismarck's treaties being in secret, they somehow found out about them, which left them feeling very anxious. Interestingly, while Bismarck was reviewing his coverages, Austria had begun making preliminary military preparations and adopted a defensive posture, all while accusing Prussia of plotting against them. The Austrian ambassador, Karolyi, reportedly confronted Bismarck about his intentions, to which Bismarck responded, "You don't think I should tell you if I did intend to do so?" This was a hint that Prussia was poised for action while technically staying within the gastein treaty's limits. On March 24th, as a counter, Bismarck made a calculated diplomatic move: he sent a message to Prussian representatives in various German states that deliberately mischaracterized the situation. He portrayed Austria as the aggressive party, claiming their military preparations were hostile, and that it forced Prussia to mobilize theirs in response. This was a classic straw man that diverted attention from Prussia's own actions. The deceptive nature of Bismarck's claims is evidenced by a confidential memo written by Moltke on the same day, which acknowledged that Austria's military movements were actually just purely defensive, with no indication of planned hostility against Prussia. This reveals that Bismarck was not only employing a straw man but was deliberately misrepresenting Austria's intentions to justify Prussia's own military preparations… Once again, I'll emphasize; Austria was isolated, which was precisely what Bismarck intended. His goal was to exert pressure on Austria, pushing it

towards conflict. And after securing his position, on April 9, he dealt Austria a strategic blow by advocating for universal suffrage, a strategy he had employed before, but only defensively when backed into a corner by Austrian diplomacy. This time, he wielded it as an offensive weapon. universal suffrage, the principle that all adults should have voting rights in a democratic parliament, was actually against Bismarck's own conservative beliefs. However, it was even more threatening to Austria, which ruled over a diverse empire including Hungarians, Czechs, and other ethnic groups. Implementing universal suffrage would undermine both Austrian control and the German Confederation's authority, as it would empower these various nationalities to demand greater autonomy. Bismarck compared this strategy to holding up a cross before a vampire, because it was particularly devastating for Austria, far more than for Prussia. When he proposed it, Austria found itself in a difficult position, unable to openly oppose such a popular democratic principle among the German Confederation's population. From this point onward, Austria, and particularly its Foreign Minister, Count Mensdorff, began to make significant errors under the influence of Bismarck's Psychological-Warfare. One notable example of this was when Napoleon III, who sought a means to counter Bismarck's influence, proposed a peace conference, scheduled for May 24, 1866, to be attended by all German states. However, Count Mensdorff declined the invitation, a decision that proved critical in further isolating Austria. This refusal was a grave misstep that left Austria increasingly marginalized on the European stage. With the odds mounting against Austria, the situation appeared dire, making a conflict almost unavoidable. It was evident that Austria urgently needed a strategy to preserve itself. The roots of Austria's predicaments can be traced to the complications arising from the Gastein Treaty and the Schleswig-Holstein dispute. So therefore, Count Mensdorff attempted to address these challenges by requesting mediation from the German Confederation—a decision that would ultimately backfire… This appeal for the Confederation's involvement as a mediator effectively allowed external interference in matters concerning both Austrian and Prussian interests. Austria then complicated matters by independently convening Holstein's estates, violating the Gastein Convention. This was problematic for several reasons. First, any decisions about Holstein required Prussian cooperation due to their shared sovereignty. Second, Austria's independent action implied it had sole authority over Holstein, ignoring Prussia's equal rights under the treaty. Third, Prussia could—and did—view this as Austria attempting to determine Holstein's destiny unilaterally, breaking both the implicit understanding and explicit terms of the Treaty. This diplomatic misstep cast Austria as the instigator, giving Bismarck the justification he needed for war. So in response, Bismarck deployed Prussian forces to Holstein, withdrew from the German Confederation, **and declared war not only on Austria but also on its allied German states and even neutral parties.**

While Bismarck's broader plan to isolate Austria was carefully orchestrated, Mensdorff's specific diplomatic blunder here was not orchestrated by Bismarck, though it was influenced by the pressure of his machinations. And Bismarck was the genius that skillfully exploited this and his other mistakes, ultimately leading to the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War.

Bismarck's Plan to Unify Germany

Setting up Coverages prior to the second phase of his master plan

Reorganize the army, regardless of the Landtag's support

Lückentheorie (Gap Theory Strategy)

Review and Create more Coverages for the War

Take advantage of the first opportunity to engage in war with Austria

Create the Gastein Treaty → Isolate Austria

Create a Contingency against Counteraction

Austro-Prussian War Victory

Dissolve the German Confederation

Establish Prussian Supremacy



(All Planning Categories, Strategy, EQU, EQP, Psychology, Psychological-Warfare: Abusing Insecurities, Overall Reasoning, Deception: Sophistry & Misdirection, Indirect Manipulation, Risk Calculation, All Foresight Categories, Thinking: Analytical & Thinking, Charisma)

IMPORTANT:

Before I explain how Bismarck would disband the German Confederation and ultimately unify the northern German states, I need to clarify that this master plan culminates here, with the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War. While Bismarck was aware of his aims following the war—To disband the German Confederation and establish Prussian dominance—there is insufficient evidence to suggest he had a detailed plan for actions beyond it. The subsequent actions would be reactive, shaped by the circumstances his earlier master plan created. Although his main sub-plan is also adaptable, it includes consistent elements of Bismarck's main plan, while the developments following the Austro-Prussian War do not follow this pattern; they are merely grounded in Bismarck's original intent, rather than a continuation of a planned sequence. Thus, I will discuss the events after the Austro-Prussian War individually, while acknowledging that their foundation and objectives are still part of Bismarck's grand master plan. Thank you.

THE CIGAR TEST

During the Austro-Prussian War, Bismarck had meticulously planned for Prussia's victory, as shown previously. However, since he was merely a diplomat and not in direct control of military operations, he could never be completely certain of the outcome. This uncertainty weighed heavily on him, especially given his health issues, which made him particularly vulnerable to stress. He feared that if the war took a turn for the worse, he could face exile or even execution. To ease his anxiety, Bismarck sought reassurance from General Moltke, who was leading the military campaign. However, instead of directly asking about the situation—perhaps knowing that Moltke might not be entirely truthful—Bismarck devised a subtle test. He offered Moltke a cigar, observing his reaction carefully. Moltke examined the cigars leisurely, selecting the finest one, a sign of his complete confidence. Had he been nervous, he would have either hastily grabbed one or declined the offer altogether. Witnessing this composed response, Bismarck felt immediate relief, recognizing that the war was under control. This moment demonstrated his remarkable ability to gauge the situation through subtle emotional cues.

It is the crudest trial to the statesman that he must see his best plans undone by the mistakes of the generals. Bismarck often looked with anxiety at Moltke's face to see whether he could read in it the result of the battle. The King, too, was getting nervous. Bismarck at last could stand it no longer; he rode up to Moltke, took out a cigar case, and offered it to the General; Moltke looked at the cigars carefully and took the best; "then I knew we were all right," said Bismarck in telling this story. It was after two when at last the cannon of the Crown Prince's army came into action, and the Austrian army, attacked on two sides, was overthrown.

(Emotional Perception)

Although Bismarck had masterfully orchestrated diplomatic efforts to keep other nations from intervening in the Austro-Prussian War, his control over their actions was limited once the war had begun. While he successfully prevented outside involvement at the outset, he could not entirely rule out mid-war interference. This became evident when Napoleon III attempted to insert himself into the conflict under the pretext that Austria had requested French mediation for an armistice. This development posed a significant threat to Bismarck. Even though France was not formally allying with Austria, there was still the possibility that Napoleon III could use military force to enforce his mediation. West Germany, being largely undefended, was particularly vulnerable to a French incursion.

At a crucial moment—just as Bismarck was nearing victory—Napoleon III seemed poised to outmaneuver him. If Prussia were forced to fight on two fronts, the war could take a disastrous turn. To counter this, Bismarck devised a strategic response:

He instructed King Wilhelm I to accept the French mediation—but with conditions. Wilhelm sent a carefully worded, non-committal reply, agreeing in principle to Napoleon's proposal. However, he refused to halt military operations unless peace terms were settled first and insisted on consulting Italy, Austria's other enemy.

Why was this a brilliant move?

- It bought Prussia valuable time to continue its advance toward Vienna.
- It forced France to clarify its intentions—Napoleon III now had to either commit to war or engage in direct negotiations.
- It kept Prussia's military momentum going, ensuring pressure remained on Austria.

This calculated diplomatic maneuver neutralized the French threat without opening a second front. Had he mishandled the situation, Prussia could have faced a far more difficult war—or even defeat.

Not two days had passed since the great battle, when a telegram from Napoleon was placed in the King's hands informing him that Austria had requested France's mediation, that Venetia had been surrendered to France, and inviting the King to conclude an armistice. Immediately afterwards came the news that the surrender of Venetia to France had been published in the *Moniteur*.

If this meant anything, it meant that Napoleon intended to stop the further progress of the Prussian army, to rescue Austria, and to dictate the terms of peace; it could not be doubted that he would be prepared to support his mediation by arms, and in a few days they might expect to hear that the French corps were being stationed on the frontier. What was to be done? Bismarck neither doubted nor hesitated; it was impossible to refuse French mediation. West Germany was almost undefended, the whole of the southern States were still unconquered; however imperfect the French military preparations might be, it was impossible to run such a risk. At his advice the King at once sent a courteous answer accepting the French proposal. He was more disposed to this because in doing so he really bound himself to nothing. He accepted the principle of French mediation; but he was still free to discuss and refuse the special terms which might be offered. He said that he was willing to accept an armistice, but it was only on condition that the preliminaries of peace were settled before hostilities ceased, and to them the King could not agree except after consultation with the King of Italy. It was a friendly answer, which cost nothing, and meanwhile the army continued to advance. An Austrian request for an armistice was refused; Vienna was now the goal; Napoleon, if he wished to stop them, must take the next move, must explain the terms of peace he wished to secure, and shew by what measures he was prepared to enforce them.

(Tactical Response, Planning Flexibility, Adaptability)