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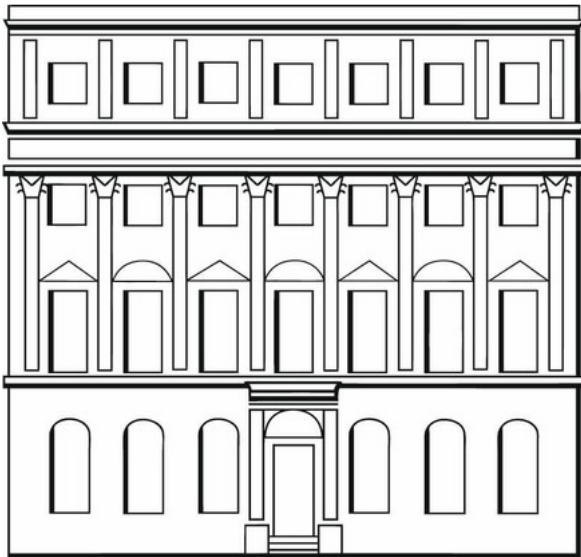
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Austria-Hungary's Decision for War in 1914

GÜNTHER KRONENBITTER

He couldn't remember, at least not accurately. Count Leopold Berchtold von und zu Ungarschitz, the very embodiment of aristocratic nonchalance, tried to reconstruct the details of the major diplomatic actions that had led to the outbreak of war in 1914, but in vain. He was unable to recall the circumstances and results of what would be called the Hoyos Mission by historians, the talks with Russia during the crisis, or the British initiative for further negotiations in the last days of July. Five years after the July Crisis, Berchtold started work on his view of the events that led to war and, finally, to the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. In the Swiss canton of Bern, a safe distance from his troubled homeland, he did not have access to the official documents stored at the Ballhausplatz in Vienna. But he had time to write letters to his former staff, scattered over what used to be the realm of the Habsburg dynasty and even beyond. Since he was not the only former diplomat or politician who appreciated the relative safety and stability of his host country, Berchtold could also rely on news delivered by passing former Austro-Hungarian or German officials, and on conversations with those who were living in the same area. The former minister spent a great deal of time with Baron Alexander Musulin von Gomirje, who had drafted the ultimatum to Serbia in summer 1914 and worked on the Austro-Hungarian Colour Book. Musulin, Austria-Hungary's envoy to Switzerland in the last two years of the war, was a valuable source, but Berchtold had to turn to Alexander, Count of Hoyos, to fill him in on the mission to Berlin in early July 1914 and other related topics. Without official documents to hand, Berchtold's former private secretary was unable to come up with detailed answers. Five tumultuous years had taken their toll on both men's memories of the events in July 1914.¹

¹ Berchtold to Hoyos, 24 June 1919, and Hoyos to Berchtold, 28 June 1919, Ös-

Both Berchtold and Hoyos would give their account of the July Crisis in memoirs, parts of which were published in the 1960s and 1970s.² Hoyos felt a personal responsibility for the outbreak of war and harboured doubts about Austria-Hungary's crisis management, but refrained from making them public during his lifetime.³ It was different with Berchtold, whose motives for working on his version of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy and crisis management on his watch were quite clearly apologetic. In 1919, provoked by the former ambassador Heinrich Count von Lützow's critique, Berchtold began to expand on the appropriateness of his decisions of 1914 in his correspondence.⁴ By the mid 1920s he was writing his memoirs, in which he tried to defend his record as foreign minister.⁵ But when he died in 1942, the memoirs were still unfinished, and so it was left to others to define Berchtold's role in the outbreak of the Great War. In the chorus of outrage that was triggered by the War Guilt Clause in the treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain, German and Austrian criticism of Berchtold was usually muted. Emil Ludwig's portrait of the Habsburg diplomatic élite as war counts who had pushed Europe into the abyss and other publications in the same vein could not shake Berchtold's conviction that he had done the right thing in 1914.⁶

Nevertheless, in the interwar years some of those who questioned Germany's pivotal role in the July Crisis but were unwilling to put all the blame on Russia and its allies would focus on the Habsburg monarchy's part in the drama of 1914. Among the most

terreichisches Staatsarchiv (hereafter ÖStA), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter HHStA), Berchtold Papers, box 15. See also Berchtold Diary 16 (1919) and 23 (1934), *ibid.*, box 12.

² Berchtold's memoirs were the main source for Hugo Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold: Grandseigneur und Staatsmann*, 2 vols (Graz, 1963), which quotes from them extensively. Hoyos's memoirs were originally published by Fritz Fellner in 1976. The most recent edition is Fritz Fellner, 'Die "Mission Hoyos"', in *id.*, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund: Studien zur Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen 1882–1919* (Vienna, 1994), 112–41.

³ Redlich Diary, entry 3 Nov. 1916, in *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs: Die Erinnerungen und Tagebücher Josef Redlichs 1869–1936*, ed. Fritz Fellner and Doris A. Corradini, 3 vols. (Vienna, 2011), ii, 223; Ernst U. Cormons [Emanuel Urbas], *Schicksale und Schatten: Eine österreichische Biographie* (Salzburg, 1951), 163.

⁴ Berchtold to Lützow, 14 May 1919, ÖStA, HHStA, Berchtold Papers, box 15; Berchtold Diary 16, entries 28 Apr. 1919 and 13 May 1919, *ibid.*, box 12.

⁵ Berchtold, *Memoiren*, 23 Mar. 1908–17 Jan. 1913, Vorwort, 6 Aug. 1926, ÖStA, HHStA, Berchtold Papers, box 13. See Günther Kronenbitter, 'Amnesia and Remembrance: Count Berchtold on 1914', *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, 23 (2014), 77–90.

⁶ Emil Ludwig, *Juli 1914* (Berlin, 1929), 28–32.

outspoken critics was Heinrich Kanner, co-editor of the Viennese weekly *Die Zeit*. He had started to investigate the origins of the war while the fighting was still raging and in his postwar publications castigated Habsburg foreign policy élites for their aggressive stance in 1914.⁷ The memoirs of Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, Chief of the General Staff of the Imperial and Royal (*k. u. k.*) Army before and during most of the war, were published in the 1920s and bear witness to the bellicose mindset of the military élite in Vienna.⁸ As the details of Austria-Hungary's policy in 1914 became known, Sidney Fay pointedly suggested that 'Austria was more responsible for the immediate origin of the war than any other power'.⁹

As Fay's assessment indicates, Berchtold's apologetic amnesia did not go unchallenged during the war guilt debate of the 1920s and 1930s. After 1945, when the Habsburg monarchy had become a distant memory and a focal point of nostalgia, this was to change. With two superpowers in charge of world politics, it came naturally to historians to analyse the outbreak of the First World War as a clash of alliance systems, dominated by the world powers of 1914, Germany and Britain. The Fischer controversy reinforced this tendency and made Germany's role in the outbreak of war the major concern of scholarly debate about the July Crisis. When one of Austria's most distinguished historians, Hugo Hantsch, published a hagiographic biography of Berchtold, based on the former foreign minister's own account, the scholars engaged in the Fischer controversy just looked the other way.¹⁰ Almost no one seemed to care about the Habsburg monarchy's contribution to the outbreak of war.¹¹

The exception to this was Fritz Fellner, who discovered Hoyos's hitherto unknown memoir on the outbreak of war and published the part relating to the mission to Berlin. In his discussion of the memoir, Fellner pointed to the evidence that the attitude that waging war was a way of avoiding the Habsburg monarchy's further

⁷ Heinrich Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik: Ein Stück zeitgenössischer Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1921).

⁸ [Franz] Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906–1918*, 5 vols. (Vienna, 1921–5).

⁹ Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2 vols. (New York 1930), ii, 550.

¹⁰ Hantsch, *Berchtold*. See Hugo Hantsch, 'Die Tagebücher und Memoiren des Grafen Leopold Berchtold', *Südost-Forschungen*, 14 (1955), 205–15.

¹¹ See Günther Kronenbitter, 'Keeping a Low Profile: Austrian Historiography and the Fischer Controversy', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48/2 (2013), 333–49.

decline was widespread among the élite in Vienna.¹² This brief paper and a dissertation by British historian John Leslie encouraged new research on Austria-Hungary's role in 1914.¹³ The era of benign neglect concerning Austria-Hungary's role in the outbreak of war was drawing to a close—slowly, since almost all Austrian and even Viennese historians, who were just a few streetcar stops away from the most relevant archival troves, steered clear of late Habsburg international history. So it was left to foreigners to shed new light on Austria-Hungary's Great Power policy and its decision to wage war in 1914. F. Roy Bridge published his still authoritative accounts of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy in 1972 and 1990.¹⁴ Since the 1980s, British, American, and German scholars have further scrutinized the motives and actions of diplomats, politicians, military leaders, and members of the Habsburg dynasty.

John Leslie's ground-breaking studies of foreign policy debates and war aims before and during the first months of the war opened a new perspective on Russian–Austro-Hungarian relations.¹⁵ Solomon Wank has published the first volume of a two-volume biography of Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, Berchtold's predecessor, and an edition of his correspondence.¹⁶ Among Wank's publications on the Habsburg monarchy's foreign policy, that on Berthold Molden's memorandum of July 1914 is a particularly striking example of the importance of domestic issues for the development of Vienna's diplomatic strategy.¹⁷ As the studies by Leslie, Wank, and the Austrian

¹² Fellner, 'Die "Mission Hoyos"', 112–34.

¹³ John Duncan Leslie, 'Austria-Hungary's Eastern Policy in the First World War, August 1914 to August 1915' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1975).

¹⁴ F. Roy Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1866–1914* (London, 1972); id., *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815–1918* (New York, 1990).

¹⁵ Leslie, 'Austria-Hungary's Eastern Policy'; id., 'The Antecedents of Austria-Hungary's War Aims: Policies and Policy-Makers in Vienna and Budapest before and during 1914', in Elisabeth Springer and Leopold Kammerhofer (eds.), *Archiv und Forschung: Das Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte Österreichs und Europas* (Vienna, 1993), 307–94; id., 'Österreich-Ungarn vor dem Kriegsausbruch: Der Ballhausplatz aus der Sicht eines österreichisch-ungarischen Diplomaten', in Ralph Melville et al. (eds.), *Deutschland und Europa in der Neuzeit: Festschrift für Karl Otmar Freiherr von Aretin zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1988), 661–84.

¹⁶ Solomon Wank, *In the Twilight of Empire: Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854–1912). Imperial Habsburg Patriot and Statesman*, i. *The Making of an Imperial Patriot and Statesman* (Vienna, 2009); *Aus dem Nachlaß Aehrenthal: Briefe und Dokumente zur österreichisch-ungarischen Innen- und Außenpolitik 1885–1912*, ed. Solomon Wank, 2 vols. (Graz, 1994).

¹⁷ Solomon Wank, 'Desperate Counsel in Vienna in July 1914: Berthold Molden's Unpublished Memorandum', *Central European History*, 26 (1993), 281–310.

historian Helmut Rumpler made clear, it was a younger generation of diplomats, full of admiration for the late Count Aehrenthal, the Habsburg monarchy's foreign minister from 1906 until his death early in 1912, who tried to win Aehrenthal's successor over to an activist, robust policy of self-assertion. They, like many others in politics, journalism, and the military, hoped that a more forceful foreign policy would help to reinvigorate the Habsburg monarchy. Berchtold was surrounded by a whole group of diplomats who were quite willing to wage war.¹⁸ This helps to explain Hoyos's self-accusation, which is echoed by Leopold von Andrian-Werburg's verdict. With hindsight, the former expert on Poland in the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service put it thus: 'We have started the war, not the Germans and even less the Entente—that I know.'¹⁹

These glimpses of what might be called the official mind of the Habsburg monarchy's power élites help us to understand their assertive policy in July 1914. But much, of course, remains to be explored. The relative importance of domestic issues and foreign policy concerns is hard to measure. To be sure, Aehrenthal had pinned his hopes for a revival of the Habsburg monarchy's stability on a successful, prestige-enhancing Balkan policy. Diplomats, generals, politicians, and publicists shared this view. Probably at least as important was the widespread fear that foreign policy setbacks abroad would undermine the legitimacy of Habsburg rule at home, in particular among the monarchy's South Slavs. In addition, some domestic conflicts and crucial foreign policy problems were intertwined. Galicia, Transylvania, Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tyrol, and Trieste were cases in point. This being said, the élites in charge of foreign and military policy decisions had relatively little exposure to domestic debates and were shaped by traditional notions of service to the monarch. The military and diplomats alike depended on Austria-Hungary's status as a Great Power, and its willingness to risk a general war in 1914 should be analysed in this context. All the same, the diplomatic and military rationale behind the decisions during the July Crisis should not be dismissed as mere pretexts. Decision-makers knew

¹⁸ Helmut Rumpler, 'Die rechtlich-organisatorische Rahmenbedingungen für die Außenpolitik der Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918', in Adam Wandruszka (ed.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vi/1. *Die Habsburgermonarchie im System der internationalen Beziehungen* (Vienna, 1989), 1–121, at 82–6.

¹⁹ Leopold von Andrian-Werburg, *Der Kriegsbeginn*, quoted in Leslie, 'Österreich-Ungarn', 675.

that the Habsburg monarchy depended on the international system and the military balance of power, and they tried to act accordingly. Individual character traits, collective mentalities, and domestic politics need to be taken into account, but professional patterns of perception and modes of operation have to be part of any analysis of the decisions taken in 1914.²⁰ The question of the primacy of domestic or foreign policy should be considered obsolete.²¹

A staple of narratives on the origins of war in 1914 is the system of alliances. The fact that the Triple Alliance fell apart in 1914–15 should not make historians oblivious to its significance in international relations in general, and decision-making in the July Crisis in particular. Holger Afflerbach has reminded us of the Triple Alliance's importance to German and Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. He has also pointed out that the alliance worked well to keep the peace in Europe and that the outbreak of war in 1914 therefore looks even more unnecessary and avoidable.²² To a certain degree, Friedrich Kießling's study of détente policy in prewar Europe drives home the same message: to politicians and the public in Europe in early summer 1914, a Great Power war did not seem imminent and unavoidable.²³ Deterministic views of international relations on the eve of the July Crisis could obscure the view of the origins of war.

This lesson should also be applied to the history of German–Austro-Hungarian relations. The most recent account, by Jürgen Angelow, focuses on the growing rigidity and aggressiveness of the Dual Alliance.²⁴ A closer look at the reality of German–Austro-Hungarian co-operation reveals some evidence for a less clear-cut assessment. Both Vienna and Berlin looked for peaceful methods of conflict resolution right up to summer 1914. The fluidity of

²⁰ For the military leadership see Günther Kronenbitter, *'Krieg im Frieden': Die Führung der k. u. k. Armee und die Großmachtpolitik Österreich-Ungarns 1906–1914* (Munich, 2003). For the diplomats see William D. Godsey, Jr., *Aristocratic Redoubt: The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office on the Eve of the First World War* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1999).

²¹ Paul W. Schroeder, 'Embedded Counterfactuals and World War I as an Unavoidable War', in id., *Systems, Stability, and Statecraft: Essays on the International History of Modern Europe*, ed. and with an intro. by David Wetzel, Robert Jervis, and Jack S. Levy (Basingstoke 2004), 157–91, at 170.

²² Holger Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund: Europäische Großmacht- und Allianzpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 2002), 826.

²³ Friedrich Kießling, *Gegen den 'großen Krieg': Entspannung in den internationalen Beziehungen 1911–1914* (Munich, 2002), 319–24.

²⁴ Jürgen Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige: Der Zweibund am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Cologne, 2000), 471–3. See also Aleš Skřivan, *Schwierige Partner: Deutschland und Österreich-Ungarn in der europäischen Politik der Jahre 1906–1914* (Hamburg, 1999).

alliances was a big headache for Habsburg foreign policy, and Germany's role in the diplomatic crises of 1912 and 1913 reinforced this sense of instability. At the end of July 1914 Austria-Hungary took German suggestions to enter into negotiations seriously, because they matched its experience of German de-escalation in 1912–13.²⁵ A clash of alliances did not seem inevitable in early 1914. In fact, their crumbling was more of a concern for decision-makers in Austria-Hungary, who were well aware of the deteriorating strategic situation and became ever more willing to do something about it.

The widespread support for an assertive foreign policy among the élites in Vienna and Budapest helps to explain why they did not need prodding from Berlin to take the plunge in 1914. Nevertheless, the Habsburg monarchy's crisis management in summer 1914 raises questions about the rationality of decisions and actions. With respect to this aspect of the outbreak of war, scholarly attention has focused on the effects of the sequence of crises from 1908 on. The winter crisis of 1912–13, in particular, shifted expectations and reframed the security dilemma the Habsburg monarchy had to deal with. For a brief period, even Franz Ferdinand, usually the most outspoken opponent of confrontation with St Petersburg in the circle of decision-makers, supported a diplomacy that carried the risk of showdown with Russia. Probably because of Germany reluctance to back Austria-Hungary's action, the Habsburg monarchy had to seek an agreement with the Tsar.²⁶ Samuel R. Williamson has argued convincingly, in what is still the best overall account of Austria-Hungary's part in the origins of war, that a learning process led to a widespread consensus among the élites about Austria-Hungary's position in the European system and the need to act forcefully.²⁷ The countervailing trends towards détente and co-operation among the Great Powers proved to be disappointing from a Viennese perspective. With the exception of Franz Ferdinand, the heir apparent, very few decision-makers were inclined to play for time because of

²⁵ Günther Kronenbitter, 'Die Macht der Illusionen: Julikrise und Kriegsausbruch 1914 aus der Sicht des deutschen Militärattachés in Wien', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 57 (1998), 519–50. See Tim Hadley, 'Military Diplomacy in the Dual Alliance: German Military Attaché Reporting from Vienna, 1906–1914', *War in History*, 17/3 (2010), 294–312.

²⁶ Alma Hannig, 'Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns vor 1914', in Jürgen Angelow (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg auf dem Balkan: Perspektiven der Forschung* (Berlin, 2011), 35–56.

²⁷ Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke, 1990).

their pessimistic views of the deteriorating domestic situation and the shifting balance of power in Europe.

Nevertheless, with hindsight, the military forces available in case of a major war did not seem to justify a policy that deliberately risked unleashing a Great Power war. At the time, the improvement in military preparations since 1906 on Conrad von Hötzendorf's watch as Chief of the General Staff helped to nourish hopes that Austria-Hungary's armed forces might be up to the job if its German ally could deliver its part of the deal reached between the military leaders in Berlin and Vienna. In September 1912 Blasius Schemua, Chief of the General Staff from late 1911 to 1912, calculated that a war against Russia would not necessarily be a hopeless endeavour, even if Germany did not join the fray. That Germany, in contrast to the situation in 1912–13, seemed to be a reliable partner in a confrontation and, if necessary, even in a war with Russia dramatically improved the strategic odds in 1914. Compared with the winter crisis, July 1914 looked like an opportunity. Conrad's risky strategic moves at the end of July 1914 have to be understood in the context of the learning process of the years before. Proper risk assessment in a European context gave way to a rather narrow focus on short-term domestic stability and the reliability of Germany's commitment to the Habsburg monarchy's survival. With the pro-war stance of Hungarian prime minister Tisza and the Emperor, first demonstrated in the autumn of 1913, and Franz Ferdinand out of the picture, no one thoroughly questioned the viability of Berchtold's policy in 1914.²⁸ Austria-Hungary followed its own agenda in the July Crisis, deliberately brought about war with Serbia, and consciously risked a European war.

During the Cold War, it was quite natural for historians of the July Crisis to focus on the superpowers of 1914. Just as Austria-Hungary's role attracted scant scholarly attention, so did that of the Habsburg monarchy's south-eastern adversary, Serbia. In the wake of 1989 this gave way to a new assessment of Serbian policies. Whereas in the case of the Habsburg monarchy a detailed study of the political élite led to a more critical view of Austria-Hungary's actions in the July Crisis, Serbia's part in the Wars of Yugoslav Succession in the 1990s made it plausible to reconsider Belgrade's role in the unfolding drama of 1914. Imanuel Geiss, who had contributed to Fritz Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht* and had

²⁸ Kronenbitter, 'Krieg im Frieden'.

done more than most others to defend Fischer's views on the July Crisis, went so far as to revise his judgement on Serbia's policy in 1914. In the light of 'Sarajevo II', Serbian aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 'Sarajevo I', the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, looked like just another piece of evidence for Serb ultra-nationalism wreaking havoc with European peace and stability. This did not necessarily imply that Austria-Hungary's reaction to the assassination was justified, let alone smart, but instead of siding with Serbia's claim to liberate the South Slavs from Habsburg repression, as he had done in the 1960s, Geiss now favoured a more nuanced stance.²⁹ Without going into any detail, Helmut Rumpler went one step further and came to the conclusion that Austria-Hungary's decision to wage war on Serbia in 1914 was 'a murderous reply to a murderous provocation'.³⁰

All in all, this assessment is strikingly similar to the perceptions of Austria-Hungary's decision-makers in July 1914. The terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001 sparked a brief discussion on parallels between 9/11 and 6/28 on the HABSBURG discussion blog, probably the main venue for scholarly debate among anglophone Habsburg scholars. Two days after the attacks, Steven Sowards posted on this h-net discussion list:

some reflection on the events of the summer of 1914, from the Habsburg perspective: not because they shed specific light on our own situation in 2001, but because as an American I now find myself with a new appreciation for the actions and fumbblings of the Vienna government after the murder of Franz Ferdinand. I don't wish to push this too far, because huge differences in the situations apply and influenced government thinking (the dilemma presented by the Monarchy's Slavic citizens and their brethren outside the Monarchy, for one, has no real counterpart today). Nevertheless, I have found myself thinking about the choices available to Austro-Hungarian policy makers from a new direction.

The debate spawned by Sowards turned out to be short-lived. As an editorial posted the next day indicates, what could be read as a mixture of historical and political arguments caused unease among Habsburg scholars. Sowards closed his contribution: 'I have not yet

²⁹ Imanuel Geiss, 'Deutschland und Österreich-Ungarn beim Kriegausbruch 1914: Eine machthistorische Analyse', in Michael Gehler *et al.* (eds.), *Ungleiche Partner? Österreich und Deutschland in ihrer gegenseitigen Wahrnehmung: Historische Analysen und Vergleiche aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1996), 375–95.

³⁰ Helmut Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna, 1997), 573.

seen anything like a set of specific demands formulated in Washington in the aftermath of 9/11, far less any kind of “war aims”, but as I watch and wait, the experience certainly conveys a new appreciation for what it may have been like for some spectators in the summer of 1914.³¹ It is not too hard to imagine that most American Habsburg historians wanted to remain aloof from anything that might be taken as a political suggestion.³²

Even if 9/11 did not inspire a tangible shift of opinion among Habsburg scholars in the USA towards a more favourable view of Austria-Hungary’s policy in 1914, it was an American historian who challenged broadly held convictions about the Habsburg monarchy’s role in the outbreak of war. Paul W. Schroeder took a critical view of British foreign policy with regard to Vienna in the prewar era, but in a paper delivered in 2004 he went further and pointed out how Britain and its allies had denied the Habsburg monarchy the necessary freedom of action to defend its vital interests. By doing so, they had left the leaders in Vienna and Budapest with little choice but to risk the destruction of a European state system that was bent on bringing down the Habsburg monarchy.³³ In Christopher Clark’s recent book on the outbreak of the First World War, a critical assessment of British and especially French foreign policy is also an important part of the argument. Unlike Schroeder, Clark gives a detailed account of the changes in Russian, French, and British Balkan policies in the last years before the outbreak of the First World War and how their commitment to Serbia changed the international situation. Given Serbia’s tumultuous politics in the wake of the 1903 regicide, this was risky—as the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the involvement of Belgrade’s ultra-nationalists would make abundantly clear.³⁴

Allocating ‘war guilt’ should no longer be a concern of historians,

³¹ Steven Sowards, Thoughts on 9/11 and 1914, Date Written: Thur., 13 Sept. 2001 08:45:23-0400, Date Posted: Fri., 13 Sept. 2001 09:07:58-0400 (<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=HABSBURG&month=0109&week=b&msg=aosO%2bDOdWaLnZFHgB5znGQ&user=&pw=>) [accessed 24 July 2013].

³² Jim Niessen, Re: Thoughts on 9/11 and 1914, Date Written: Fri., 14 Sept. 2001 09:10:35-0400, Date Posted: Sat., 14 Sept. [?] 2001 09:10:35-0400 (<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=HABSBURG&month=0109&week=b&msg=KaLGzYGgOCVuPzgSfsTynQ&user=&pw=>) [accessed 24 July 2013].

³³ Paul W. Schroeder, ‘Stealing Horses to Great Applause: Austria-Hungary’s Decision in 1914 in Systemic Perspective’, in Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (eds.), *An Improbable War: The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture before 1914* (New York, 2007), 17–42. See also id., ‘Embedded Counterfactuals’.

³⁴ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London, 2012), 293–301.

but the renewed interest in decision-makers, either individuals or small élites, inevitably brings up the question of responsibility. The critical assessment of Serbia's crucial role in 1914 and the extent to which the Entente supported Belgrade does not take the onus of responsibility from those who steered Austria-Hungary and, by implication, Europe into war. They had to grapple with their share of the disaster they had helped to bring about. In 1919 Hoyos, who realized that the assertive foreign policy of the much-admired Aehrenthal had been the beginning of a path to instability and Great Power confrontation, and who held a sceptical view of his own role in 1914, tried to reassure Berchtold that war had been inevitable anyway.³⁵ As always, the former foreign minister proved unwavering in his conviction that his policy in 1914 had been just and reasonable. Because of Serbia's and the Entente's machinations, the Habsburg monarchy's position on the Balkan Peninsula had become untenable. Vienna had to take action in 1914 in order to prevent a catastrophe. Then he went on to compare how Austria-Hungary dealt with Serbia to the invasion of Saxony by Frederick II at the beginning of the Seven Years War. The Habsburg monarchy, he wrote, had been rather considerate.³⁶ The details of the July Crisis had vanished into oblivion, but Berchtold just knew that Austria-Hungary had not really had any choice after Sarajevo. He did not need any documents to be sure of that.

³⁵ Hoyos to Berchtold, 29 Apr. 1919 and 20 June 1919, ÖStA, HHStA, Berchtold Papers, box 14. See Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold: The Man Who Could Have Prevented the Great War', *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, 19 (2010), 24–51.

³⁶ Berchtold to Lützow, 14 May 1919, ÖStA, HHStA, Berchtold Papers, box 14.