‘The British Government cannot undertake to declare war, for any purpose, unless it is a purpose of which the electors of this country would approve. If the Government promised to declare war for an object which did not commend itself to public opinion, the promise would be repudiated, and the Government would be turned out. I do not see how, in common honesty, we could invite other nations to rely upon our aid in a struggle, which must be formidable and probably supreme, when we have no means whatever of knowing what may be the humour of our people in circumstances which cannot be foreseen.’ Prime Minister Salisbury justifies Britain’s policy of isolation from European alliances, 1901.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Narratives of the pre-1914 world tend to begin in 1871, the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. The story is almost certainly familiar, as Otto von Bismarck’s Prussia triumphed in this third and final war under the Iron Chancellor’s direction. The war led to the defeat of France and the fall of Napoleon III, as the French erected the Third Republic, and sought to recover from the punishing trauma that saw Alsace and Lorraine annexed by their neighbour. And this neighbour was now transformed. In previous wars against Denmark and Austria, Bismarck reimagined Prussia’s role in Germany. Now, with the triumph against France, Bismarck orchestrated the unification of Germany under Prussian control, thus reimagining centuries of great power politics, and chucking the balance of power out the window. The results were transformative. With Germany united, France was no longer the dominant military land power on the continent. Worse for the French, the harsh peace terms and concerns at France’s revolutionary tendencies moved Bismarck to ostracise Paris for the next generation. Henceforth, a reformed Holy Alliance of Germany, Austria and Russia stabilised European relations. Unlike the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, no new conferences were called to legitimise this new era; the new borders were legitimised by power and military success, an indication, perhaps, that this new epoch of European relations would be less stable.

Perhaps sensing the possibility that his work was not based on the firmest foundations, Bismarck sought the Dual Alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879, to which Italy was added in 1882. Russia remained linked to Vienna and Berlin through the Three Emperor’s League, but Romania was also added to the Triple Alliance as a secret partner. France recovered its financial strength far quicker than expected, yet could not find a chink in Bismarck’s diplomatic armour. Through several crises – including a Russo-Turkish War in 1877, and a crisis over Bulgaria’s future in the late 1880s – Bismarck maintained his grip on the alliance system, preserving Germany’s gains in the recent wars, while keeping France isolated. As Britain retreated into splendid isolation, there seemed little indication that matters would change. Yet, when in early 1888 Bismarck’s beleaguered master Kaiser Wilhelm I died, closely followed by his son Frederick a few months later, the Prussian-German throne fell to the twenty-nine-year-old Wilhelm II.

For the next forty years – from June 1888 until November 1918 – Wilhelm II would rule as Germany’s absolutist Kaiser, for better and for worse. Historians have devoted extensive space and time to this enigmatic figure. Was he clinically insane or suffering from acute mental illness, as some immediate post-war tracts insisted? Was he starved of parental affection, causing him to crave approval and seek radical methods to get the attention he desired? Did Wilhelm suffer a form of brain damage from his traumatic birth which rendered his left arm withered? Was this withered arm a source of constant embarrassment, which Wilhelm felt forced to compensate for with belligerent expressions and aggressive policies? Christopher Clark’s biography of Wilhelm II suggests we not dwell too heavily on these ideas, since many were politically motivated and penned by figures who had fallen from grace. Furthermore, many studies questioning Wilhelm’s sanity during the twentieth century serve as a representation of the latest discoveries, and an attempt to apply them to infamous historical figures. As Clark noted:

The appeal to psychological instability was and is often prompted by disapproval or distaste at a particular mode of behaviour; the more or less stringent application of clinical criteria then follows as a post hoc rationalisation. This helps to explain why the ‘diagnosis’ of Wilhelm II has historically tended to follow contemporary trends in popular science: ‘nervous debility’ in the 1890s; dynastic degeneracy in the early Republican era; Freudian paradigms in the 1920s and periodically thereafter; ‘repressed homosexuality’ from the 1970s; neurology in the 1980s; and, in the gene-obsessed fin de siècle of the twentieth century, ‘the gene of George III’ (i.e. porphyria).[[2]](#footnote-2)

These accounts are certainly interesting, in other words, but we should not allow our queries about Wilhelm’s sanity distract us from a proper analysis of the decisions he made. The new Kaiser could be erratic, confrontational, and careless in his public speeches, but it would be a mistake to classify him as uniquely unfit to rule, or uniquely hampered by his shortcomings, to the point that his errors in July 1914 are taken for granted. We will see in our analysis of Wilhelm’s behaviour that he could be very cautious and apprehensive, particularly regarding the possibility of a European war, yet he was also concerned with standing by Vienna, Germany’s only solid ally by that point in time.

But back to 1890, and Wilhelm’s usurpation of Bismarck’s monopoly of power. It was, of course, an immensely bitter pill for Bismarck to swallow. Wilhelm had been born in 1859, and grew up as Bismarck bent the continent to his will, shattering expectations while establishing Berlin as the centre of European power and activity. Without Bismarck, Wilhelm would have come to rule a Prussia still under Vienna’s boot, surrounded by more powerful adversaries and a disunited German Confederation of states. If Wilhelm recognised the towering achievements of his seventy-three-year-old Chancellor, this did not stop him from reasserting his authority as the Kaiser to wrest full control over German policymaking. Bismarck would spend the rest of the next decade lamenting the damage the young Kaiser was doing to the web of agreements and counter-agreements only he seemed able to understand. By 1894, Russia had slipped through Germany’s fingers, and a new phase in European relations was about to begin.

This is a humble reminder to check out the Age of Bismarck which launches in autumn 2024 for patrons of this podcast, and you can find the link below. In that series we will delve deeper into this fascinating period, examining Bismarck’s finest achievements, assessing the true measure of his success, and analysing the dynamic between the Chancellor and the Kaiser who ‘dropped the pilot’ as the famous cartoon proclaimed. For this reason, and for space as well, we do not need to dwell here on the true staying power of Bismarck’s system; we do not need to reflect on how stable it actually was, and whether it was on the way out before Wilhelm buried it. One thing is certain, however, the 1890s saw a transformation of the system Bismarck had built, and these changes were largely to Germany’s disadvantage. Furthermore, the two camps this period created, with Austria and Germany on one side, and France and Russia on the other, the stage was set for the next twenty years, a neat period of time which preserved this balance of power virtually unchanged until the First World War broke out.[[3]](#footnote-3)

By 1902, in addition, another power had entered the chat. Britain formalised an alliance with Japan, directed primarily at Russia, signifying that the period of splendid isolation was now at an end.[[4]](#footnote-4) But if Britain was paying more attention to the continent, this did not usher in a new period of involvement with European affairs. In fact, the Japanese alliance was a good fit for London, since it provided greater naval security in Asia without an extensive European commitment. A showdown with France along the Nile in 1898, and concerns over Russian expansion into China and Central Asia fuelled British concerns of the Franco-Russian Entente. But these concerns were not enough to compel the British government to join a German alliance, despite negotiations to this end continuing through 1897-1900.[[5]](#footnote-5) Britain seemingly intended to remain outside the two blocs, and then yet another transformation occurred, jolted into being by Britain’s new Japanese ally.

Japan’s surprise attack on Russia, its subsequent destruction of Russia’s fleets and defeat of her forces on land, affirmed the arrival of a new great power, albeit one far removed from Europe. Japan proceeded to wrest control of Korea and Manchuria, while preparing to take further advantage of Chinese weakness. However, arguably the greater change was inflicted upon the losing side.[[6]](#footnote-6) Russia’s prestige had been shattered by the loss, which appeared to affirm long-running assumptions about its inherent military weakness notwithstanding its sheer size. Worse, at home, the Tsar’s regime tried and failed to accommodate a population driven to protest at the restrictions placed upon them. A series of revolts in 1905 may have brought the Tsar’s regime down altogether, if Austria and Germany had not signalled their intentions to stand back from the tumult. Tsar Nicholas survived, yet his powers had been technically reduced by a new parliament, the Duma, which would henceforth provide a veneer of democracy. From 1905 onwards, either way, St Petersburg’s sole focus was on stabilising the domestic situation and rebuilding the army, and this meant that the balance of power was suddenly upended.

But first, what does it mean to speak of a balance of power? The term has been used since at least the eighteenth century, but its principles are likely familiar if you know your European history. It prescribes a policy which prevents the rise of a power strong enough to dominate its neighbours; it implies that an arrangement should be sought which would ensure that two powers – or two groups of powers – are balanced against one another so that one cannot gain the upper hand, and dominate the rest. In April 1914, *The Times* newspaper attempted to define the balance of power as it was understood at the time:

The division of the Great Powers into two well-balanced groups with intimate relations between the members of each, which do not forbid any such member from being on the friendliest terms with one or more members of the other, is a twofold check upon inordinate ambitions or sudden outbreaks of race hatred. All Sovereigns and statesmen – aye, and all nations – know that a war of group against group would be a measureless calamity. That knowledge brings with it a sense of responsibility which chastens and restrains the boldest and most reckless. But they know, too, that to secure the support of the other members of their own group and to induce them to share the responsibility and risks of such conflict, any Power or Powers which may meditate recourse to arms must first satisfy those other members that the quarrel is necessary and just. They are no longer unfettered judges in their own cause, answerable to none but themselves.[[7]](#footnote-7)

This leads us to an important aspect of the balance of power; it was not merely that two equally matched camps would prevent conflict, but that the negotiations within these camps would also deescalate tensions and reduce the risk of a war. When facing one’s rivals as a single power, there was a risk that conflict could accompany any effort to tip matters in one’s favour. As part of a bloc of powers, however, the risks of conflict were theoretically fewer once these partners provided a check on more disruptive influences, while the threat of a war between two blocs was perceived so immense, it would not be risked. The balance of power was thus multilayered, and was interpreted as a means of deterring conflict between the two blocs, while moderating policy within the bloc itself. Yet, while it had strategic and domestic considerations to recommend it, the balance of power was never seen as a silver bullet for peace. Indeed, as an idea it had many critics even before the twentieth century. On the eve of the Crimean War in 1854, the *Advocate of Peace* journal presented the balance of power thus: ‘Every student of international law, or of modern history, is quite familiar with this phrase; but it is impossible to tell precisely what it means, and sufficiently amazing to hear grave statesmen talk stale, pompous nonsense about it.’ It added further that ‘The world has outgrown this system.’[[8]](#footnote-8)

Sixty years later in 1914, this system plainly collapsed. The great powers inhabiting the two blocs had apparently outgrown the system which was supposed to keep their rivalries in check. But in 1905, in the aftermath of Russia’s defeat and domestic troubles, the balance of power was also in grave danger. Russia had lost 400,000 men killed or wounded, the loss of 250 million rubels worth of naval assets, and a further two and a half billion rubels spent. These catastrophic losses for no return signalled a new period of weakness in Russian policy, and implicit within this was the prospect of being unable to support France in the event of war with Germany.[[9]](#footnote-9) This induced Britain to emerge more emphatically from its isolation, by arranging a series of agreements with France. Although related largely to colonial disputes, the Anglo-French Entente nonetheless suggested that London would resolve its old antagonisms with its French rival. If this could be done, was it now also conceivable that Britain would resolve its disputes with Russia as well? These developments were of great concern, yet even with Britain’s loose alignment, after Russia’s loss to Japan the Triple Alliance was now more capable of defeating its rival bloc, and into this altered dynamic, the German Kaiser determined to take advantage, focusing on Morocco.

The First Moroccan crisis was the outcome. In the Entente negotiations, Britain acknowledged France’s determination to establish a protectorate in Morocco, in return for concessions to its Egyptian interests. Italy and Spain were also contacted, and new treaties were arranged recognising France’s interests there. However, despite being a signee of the 1880 Madrid Treaty which established Morocco’s position, Germany was not consulted. By engineering a confrontation at Morocco, Germany could both reassert its prestige as a concerned party to Morocco’s fate, and test the new entente between Britain and France. In March 1905 the Kaiser landed at Tangier, proclaiming his concern for Moroccan independence, and calling for a conference to decide the territory’s fate. Germany also applied intense pressure on the French, compelling the Foreign Minister, Theophile Delcassé to resign in June. Additional worries now plagued London; talk of a potential Russo-German rapprochement seemed confirmed by a meeting between the Tsar and Kaiser in July. There was now a frightful possibility that France would be left entirely isolated and subject to a lightening German strike; the British had received details of the Schlieffen Plan the previous year, and knew what to expect from Germany’s military planners.[[10]](#footnote-10)

These experiences led to a reconsideration of German policy. Lord Lansdowne, British Foreign Secretary at this point, had originally been suspicious of any talk of a German threat, and saw greater opportunities through cooperation. But the spectacle of German aggression in Morocco and intrigues towards Russia left him anxious. Suddenly, it was possible to construct a narrative which pointed to creeping German efforts to undermine British security. Suddenly, Germany’s growing naval power ceased to be a subject of interest, and became a direct threat.[[11]](#footnote-11) Lansdowne grappled with the new reality, yet lacked the time to formulate a plan to counteract it before he left office. His successor as Foreign Secretary was Sir Edward Grey, who possessed more substantial ideas about German intentions, and was quick to develop a plan for dealing with them. As the Conservative government gave way to a new Liberal regime in London, Berlin found that in its requested conference – which ran from January to April 1906 – the British and French closed ranks, while even the Italians offered their recognition of France’s position. Only Vienna supported German initiatives, and the conference proved a humiliating diplomatic failure.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Sir Edward Grey was to have a key role in the diplomatic developments which followed. Born in London in 1862, and hailing from a distinguished lineage which included Sir Edward’s great granduncle Earl Grey, Prime Minister from 1830-1834, this graduate of Oxford was well-placed to enjoy the trappings of high office. Yet it seems that the usual aristocratic passions were less appealing to Sir Edward than the simpler pursuits of walking, hunting small game, bird-watching or, perhaps his greatest passion, flyfishing. His estate at Fallodon contained bountiful moors and streams suitable for such activities, and saved Sir Edward from networking in high society, which thoroughly bored him. Churchill later recounted how Sir Edward’s passions bled into his political career:

"Once during the War when we were rather dissatisfied with the vigour of Sir Edward Grey's policy, I, apologizing for him, said to Mr. Lloyd George, who was hot, 'Well, anyhow, we know that if the Germans were here and said to Grey, "If you don't sign this Treaty, we will shoot you at once," he would certainly reply, "It would be most improper for a British minister to yield to a threat. That sort of thing is not done." But Lloyd George rejoined, 'That's not what the Germans would say to him. They would say, "If you don't sign this treaty, we will scrag all your squirrels at Fallodon." That would break him down.’[[13]](#footnote-13)

The high premium Grey was known to place on his estate and its trappings were thus known by his colleagues, and they could not have been too surprised at his hesitation to accept the position of Foreign Secretary. Moving his life to London and losing the freedom he valued were solid personal justifications, but of perhaps greater concern was Grey’s recognition of his lack of experience. He had served as Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, yet aside from this posting, he had very little conception of a career in that sector. He spoke only English, had never travelled outside of the country, and possessed an insular view of Britain’s place in the world.[[14]](#footnote-14) Yet, his appointment in December 1905 came at a pivotal moment in British foreign policy. On 10 January 1906, Paul Cambon the French ambassador to London, suggested to Grey that the Entente would be better equipped to deal with the threat of a German attack if Anglo-French staffs cooperated and shared military plans. Although Grey was cautious not to tie British hands, the conversations which followed over the next few years proved fundamental to Anglo-French conceptions of mutual security.

As E. F. Willis discerned, Grey was venturing into dangerous territory with these conversations. Even in their initial phase, Grey’s colleagues warned of ‘honourable understandings’ which would be built towards Paris. Yet, Parliament was never notified of these meetings, suggesting that Grey did see the value in keeping them secret. Paul Cambon, who remained as ambassador up to 1914, also understood their value. As Willis wrote:

Thereafter, it was only a matter of time before these so-called academic "conversations" would create understandings and honourable commitments, which Grey, an honourable man, would be the first to honor. Grey, to be sure, admitted in his memoirs that with more experience he might have been more "apprehensive," but he maintained that England was under "no obligation" and that honour was not involved. Yet in the mad July of 1914, when Grey was still hesitating, Cambon, who knew his man, said he was waiting to learn whether "honor" would be stricken from the English vocabulary. Grey did not fail him. On August 3, at 4:00 p. m., the pacific foreign minister carried his eloquent plea for war to the House of Commons. The following day England declared war on Germany, and the commitments that Grey had so unwittingly made before he held his office six weeks were thereby fulfilled.

Despite asserting how entirely not like an alliance the Entente was, then, Grey led the way in conceiving of the Entente in more practical terms, with dramatic implications.[[15]](#footnote-15) These military conversations conceived of a British deployment to France in the event of a German invasion of Belgium, but also considered the prospects for cooperation even without the Belgian element. British officials were educated on the workings of French railways, the nature of French fire drills, and developed plans whereby Anglo-French officers could reciprocate their service.[[16]](#footnote-16) The ailing Prime Minister, Henry Campbell Bannerman, granted tacit approval to these talks, but refrained from learning their deeper significance. Bannerman was thus mortified when French Premier Georges Clemenceau contacted him about recent cuts to British defence, inquiring whether this would affect plans to deploy the BEF to France. When Campbell Bannerman attempted to veto all mention of such a deployment, Grey tempered his response to keep it vague and non-committal. Even when confronted by this stark indication of the advanced nature of these talks, the Prime Minister preferred to keep the fractious Liberal coalition together, and he thus failed to bring them up in the year before his death.[[17]](#footnote-17)

That there was little point in dividing the Cabinet over a hypothetical was also accepted by Bannerman’s successor as Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith. Nonetheless, this fateful decision meant that even through various changes in personnel, within the eighteenth Cabinet ministers only five were truly aware of the full extent of the plans, a situation which continued until the outbreak of war.[[18]](#footnote-18) When the nature of these arrangements were revealed to Parliament in the final days of peace, Grey’s opponents responded with equal amounts of uproar and perplexity. How had the Foreign Secretary so committed Britain behind the back of the people or their representatives? How had Grey failed to understand that military agreements would entail obligations upon Britain towards France, thus reducing London’s freedom of action at a critical time? How indeed. The more important question seems to be why Sir Edward Grey identified Germany as Britain’s main rival, and adjusted British foreign policy accordingly.

The spectacle of Britain and Germany fighting on opposite sides is now so ingrained that it may be difficult to interrogate what was on the surface a new policy, and a radical break from the past. Why did Grey and his subordinates in the Foreign Office identify Germany as the main threat, when both France and Russia had long served as Britain’s traditional rivals? Was there not more to be gained by improving the German relationship, or even deepening it to place pressure upon the Franco-Russian camp? The circumstances of 1906 certainly influenced decisions; Russian power was stunted following the loss to Japan, and France was clearly unable to contend with German power on its own. The Entente had resolved several long-running colonial disputes, settling borders and easing tensions, and there was space to develop this understanding further. For the sake of the balance of power, then, it only made logical sense for Britain to throw its weight behind the weaker party, which in 1906 was represented in the Franco-Russian alliance. Yet, we should not view the Germanophobia as entirely logical. Strands of hostility to Germany existed before these developments, and were present even while London and Berlin came as close as they ever would to a substantive alliance agreement in the late 1890s.[[19]](#footnote-19) So how did these views become the majority, dominating British policy and influencing perceptions of Germany right up to 1914?

In Christopher Clark’s view, Sir Edward Grey’s appointment as Foreign Secretary meant nothing less than the consolidation of an anti-German ethos at the heart of the Foreign Office. For the crime of attempting to test the mettle of the Entente, Germany was vilified in private memos and despatches, while more positive appraisals of Berlin or Austria were ignored. ‘In the official mind of British foreign policy,’ Clark wrote, ‘the history of Anglo-German relations was reconceived as a blank record of German provocations.’ Grey was central in this reorientation, and he also interpreted this record as a one of misguided concessions to an implacable foe. Vague schemes of ‘Teutonic expansion’ and accusations that Germany aimed at the domination of the continent accompanied these impressions. According to Sir Francis Bertie, ambassador to France, Germany wished to ‘push us into the water and steal our clothes.’ Grey’s undersecretary in the Foreign Office, the older and more experienced Sir Charles Hardinge, formerly ambassador to Russia, asserted that Germany was ‘the only aggressive power in Europe.’[[20]](#footnote-20)

The Germans, of course, were not blameless. The Kaiser’s arrival in Tangier proved a massive miscalculation, which both enhanced the Entente’s solidarity and left German diplomatic efforts humiliated once the conference dissolved in its disfavour. As Bernhard von Bulow, German Chancellor until 1909, understood the situation, Germany was not well-liked by its neighbours. ‘The reason why we are disliked,’ Bulow perceived, ‘is that we underestimate the value of forms, of appearance and, as the Greek philosopher demonstrated long ago, mankind in the majority judges by appearances and not by the reality of things.’ Russia’s alliance with France had been a grave strategic development, and this was Berlin’s fault since she had failed to renew the Reinsurance Treaty in 1892. Yet there was no prospect of destroying this alliance now, and as Bulow saw it ‘All that we could do therefore was to recognise the fact of the alliance, and in spite of it maintain with Russia such an understanding as would protect us from a conflict with that Power. That was a question of diplomatic skill.’[[21]](#footnote-21)

By improving relations with Russia, Bulow intended to apply pressure on London, and weaken the combined strength of the Franco-Russian pact. Bulow recommended clear approaches; St Petersburg should be informed that Berlin would never sacrifice Vienna’s interests in the name of Pan Slavism. Russia would accept Germany’s leadership of any alliance bloc. She would be informed that Berlin would never use the Polish question against her, and the mutual dynastic interests each power shared would be further emphasised. Finally, Russia would be made to understand that Germany would not block her from seeking improvements to its position in the Straits, or from attacking Turkey in general.[[22]](#footnote-22) Challenging though the Russian dilemma was, Bulow conceived that Britain presented the gravest threat to German security and prosperity, thanks to its supremely powerful navy:

Unlike Russia England could not assail the German oak at its roots, but it could lop off many a noble branch and destroy much beautiful foliage. It could deprive us of our colonies, destroy our shipping, and our commerce, and so cause us loss running into thousands of millions.

To meet this British threat, Germany should increase its flexibility by building a fleet of its own. In keeping with the lessons learned in the Russo-Japanese war, a strong navy was central to great power security, yet if Berlin was to construct a fleet to rival the Royal Navy, it had to do so with great caution and care, as Bulow elaborated:

The immediate but terribly difficult task which lay before us was to build up to such naval strength that an attack on us would be a serious risk for the attacker. We must build up our sorely needed defences against England to protect those thousands of millions which we had entrusted to the seas. But at the same time we must build so as not to attract attention.[[23]](#footnote-23)

We will devote greater time to the Anglo-German naval race in a future background episode, but the broad strokes of the story can still be addressed here. Initially, Germany was successful in making these increases to its naval power without setting off alarm bells in London. But by 1906 the failures of its policy towards Britain and Russia were becoming plain. Although the significance of British agreements with its traditional French and then Russian rivals speak for themselves, of arguably equal significance was Germany’s loss of its traditional Russian ally. Since even before Bismarck’s tenure in office, the Prussian-Russian partnership had leveraged brute military force to preserve its conservative imperatives. The Tsar had stood aside while Bismarck reshaped the map of Europe, and Bismarck’s appreciation of Russian power moved him to resurrect the Holy Alliance which the Crimean War had destroyed. Yet, with Bismarck’s exit, the Russian partner had slid towards France and out of Berlin’s orbit, whereupon it shook the foundations of the old system, maintained by the Iron Chancellor since 1871. These developments notwithstanding, a striking development in Russo-German relations took place in July 1905, when the Tsar signed the Treaty of Bjorko with the Kaiser. This was a defensive alliance, prescribing Russo-German cooperation in Europe and suggesting a return to Bismarckian form; the Tsar indicated that he would soon request the French join in.

Had Germany shattered the two blocs into pieces before their rivalry had even truly begun? In fact, the Bjorko arrangement had been conducted over the heads of the respective governments, and was largely a private agreement engineered by an eager Kaiser and desperate Tsar. The reaction to the treaty was mixed, but it did not last long once it had been signed. Russian statesmen asserted that Bjorko directly conflicted with Russian commitments to France, and when the Russo-Japanese War formally ended via the Treaty of Portsmouth in October 1905, it was clear that Russia’s most pressing requirements was sufficient space to quell unrest at home, and a generous financial backer who could help repair the damage done by the war. Paris eagerly stepped into this role, not before declaring that France could never countenance an alliance with Germany. The forced dismissal of Delcassé was perceived humiliation enough for France, which could not conceive of an alliance which subordinated their interests to those of Berlin. By November 1905, the Tsar reluctantly informed his Kaiser cousin that the Bjorko Treaty could not be ratified under the present circumstances. The final chance to disrupt the Franco-Russian alliance was thus lost. Germany then entered the conference over Morocco with one less friend in the world; worse, the spectre of Russian financial collapse compelled the Tsar to throw his full support behind France, the only power which could conceivably save Russia from its financial woes.[[24]](#footnote-24)

With France, Russia and now Britain standing against Berlin, Admiral von Tirpitz was more convinced than ever of the defensive utility of a large German navy, and believed this would persuade Britain of the value of a German alliance or at least benevolent neutrality. The risk of fighting the German fleet would be so great, it was presumed, Britain would avoid this challenge by being more conciliatory in Europe and abroad.[[25]](#footnote-25) It was above contemporary German imagination to suppose that Britain would not merely see these activities as an affront, but as a challenge. Twinned with this lack of imagination was also an ignorance of – or an unwillingness to accept the implications of – the facts. The facts are that German naval spending started at £10 million pounds in 1901, compared to the £31 million Britain spent on its navy. By the end of the naval race in 1913, Britain’s naval budget had increased to £48.8 million, while Germany had only managed £23.5 million – less than Britain had spent from the beginning. This might seem like reason for congratulation in London, but viewed in a more negative light, these figures show that Germany went from spending 33% of Britain’s naval budget, to spending nearly 50% of it. Could the Germans make up this shortfall in time, even if it took another decade? The gap in spending was only one issue; there was also a lack of institutions, a different culture of military service, and a different industrial capacity which made pumping out new ships easier. Yet, because new Army Bills were not introduced in Germany until 1912, the German army remained largely static in size.

Had they remained true to the balance of power, would Sir Edward Grey and others not shift gears and dispense with their powerful allies to compensate? There were some palpable signs, as we will see, that all was not well in the Entente paradise by the eve of war. Yet the naval race became lodged in the memory of British officials, who would have found it difficult to think differently about Germany merely because relations had improved. The German goal had never been to beat Britain at its own game, but to make war with Germany so costly as to forcibly reorientate British policy in Europe. Sir John Fisher, First Lord of the Admiralty and naval adviser to the government, responded in two ways. First, through a process of naval rearmament aimed at deterring the German challenge.[[26]](#footnote-26) Second, and most infamously, with a new class of warship, the *Dreadnought*.[[27]](#footnote-27) Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty from 1911, wrote on 26 June 1914 that Britain possessed thirty-eight dreadnoughts to Germany’s twenty; ‘The British surplus,’ Churchill remarked, ‘is approximately equal in strength to the whole German line of battle.’[[28]](#footnote-28)

Britain’s victory in the naval race would only be acknowledged behind the scenes, but it did not necessarily remove the German threat. Whether or not the Royal Navy enjoyed an overwhelming preponderance of forces, the German battlefleet was still the second largest in the world, and could not be ignored in the event of war planning. The threat posed by this German challenge helped to colour perceptions of German intentions, and complemented the rise of an anti-German camp within the British Foreign Office. By early 1907, senior Foreign Office clerk Eyre Crowe published a memorandum which captured the assumptions this anti-German camp held, which had been vindicated in light of German behaviour at Morocco and the looming threat of German naval plans. Crowe’s memorandum, entitled ‘Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany,’ depicted a stirring tale of the recent Moroccan standoff, with the moral British standing beside their new French friend in the face of sinister German threats. This section of Crowe’s memo read:

Germany on her part had not really contemplated war because she felt confident that France, knowing herself unprepared and unable, to withstand an attack, would yield to threats. But she miscalculated the strength of British feeling and the character of His Majesty’s Ministers. An Anglo-French coalition in arms against her was not in her forecast, and she could not face the possible danger of it. It is now known that Herr von Holstein, and, on his persuasion, Prince Bülow, practically staked their reputation on the prophecy that no British Government sufficiently bullied and frightened would stand by France, who had for centuries been England’s ubiquitous opponent, and was still the ally of Russia England’s “hereditary foe.” So lately as the time when the International Conference was sitting at Algeciras, the German delegates, on instructions emanating from Prince Bülow, confidentially pressed upon the British representative in all seriousness the folly and danger of supporting France, and painting in attractive colours a policy of co-operation with Germany for France’s overthrow. Even at that hour it was believed that England could be won over. So grave a misapprehension as to what a British Government might be capable of, manifested at such a juncture, shows better than many a direct utterance the estimation in which England has been held in responsible quarter at Berlin.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Crowe justified Britain’s opposition by referencing the balance of power, disrupted by Germany, and highlighting how Britain’s interests compelled her to maintain the independence of existing states. Crowe provided a simplistic impression of German ambitions, portraying the young German merchantmen emerging from the ports of their newly united country, only to discover that while master on land, they were not master of the seas, and were not a truly Great Power since they lacked overseas possessions. While in favour of the unification of Germany, Crowe signalled his unwillingness to accept German assurances at face value. After all, had Berlin not proclaimed its disinterest in Morocco shortly before the crisis was engineered? Crowe recommended preparations for future confrontations, seeing in German colonial expansion a certain haughtiness and belligerence which he affixed with sinister undertones. As Clark discerned, in Crowe’s view, all British imperialism was legitimate and welcomed on the ground, while all corresponding German activity was the first step towards a dictatorship that would scupper the liberties of the world. Crowe also held German intrigues responsible for intervention in the Boer War, confrontation with Russia in Asia, and French opposition to Britain’s protectorate of Egypt. The French, in Crowe’s estimation, had once been a problem, yet because Britain had stood firm against her challenges, the Anglo-French Entente was the result. Thus, the only way to deal with Germany’s challenge was to hold a similar firm and unyielding line, to teach the new German Empire where its place was on the world stage.[[30]](#footnote-30)

I am keenly aware of the vast and overwhelming cast of characters which we are forced to bear in mind for the July Crisis. In the past, historians tended to exaggerate the influence of clerks like Eyre Crowe, perhaps because his above memorandum seemed to gel with later British policy towards Germany. As Richard Cosgrove has made clear though, Crowe was not influential enough to direct British foreign policy against Germany from 1906, nor was Crowe even the most anti-German Foreign Office official. British ambassadors in France, Germany and Russia all shared in these anti-German sentiments, shaped from their presence in thoroughly anti-German courts. Meanwhile, Sir Edward Grey as Foreign Secretary – and Grey’s underlings including Hardinge, the Permanent Undersecretary, and Harold Nicolson, later ambassador to Russia – waved a similar flag. Crowe, despite the fact that his memo was widely disseminated, was preaching to the choir by 1907. And, in any case, Crowe lacked the social connections to realise greater influence; his half German, half English parentage also counted against him, though Crowe’s resulting fluency of the German language made him technically indispensable. The long minutes Crowe wrote at the end of correspondence was a symptom of his inability to reach Grey or his subordinates directly, and not evidence of Crowe’s outsized influence on British policy, where his anti-German views led Britain to war.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Crowe would go on to become the Foreign Office’s expert on Germany during and after the war, but the reforms he presided over in the Foreign Office were arguably more important, if less compelling, than the above infamous memo.[[32]](#footnote-32) Yet it is worth reflecting on the rise of anti-German sentiments within the Foreign Office. Evidence shows this rise even before the events at Morocco, or the arrival of Sir Edward Grey in the post of Foreign Secretary. How do we explain this shift in attitude, before the full weight of the naval race strained relations? Clark suggests that the growth of German economic and industrial capacity identified that power as a competitor to Britain. From 1860-1913, German industrial production increased fourfold, surpassing that of Britain. At the same time the British share of world trade dropped to 14.2%, while Germany’s had risen to 12.3%. From 1895-1913, German industrial output increased by 150%, metal production by 300%, and coal production by 200%. In 1913 the German economy used 20% more electricity than Britain, France and Italy combined. As Clark continued:

In Britain, the words “Made in Germany” came to carry strong connotations of threat, not because German commercial or industrial practice was more aggressive or expansionist than anyone else’s, but because they hinted at the limits of British global dominance.[[33]](#footnote-33)

This German success did not make war inevitable, but it must have discomforted British contemporaries armed with these statistics, particularly when such growth and superiority was previously unknown in the Anglo-German relationship. Like many factors preceding the July Crisis, the role of individuals in acting out their preconceived biases in important positions proved key. Indeed, rather than Eyre Crowe, it was Grey and his likeminded subordinates who influenced the anti-German trend in British policy. This included the trio of Hardinge, the permanent undersecretary; Bertie, the French ambassador; and Arthur Nicolson, the pro-Russian diplomat who eventually succeeded Hardinge as permanent undersecretary. These three figures worked with Grey and each other to acquire more influential positions, and shape British policy. Had they failed to acquire these positions, British policy would have taken a different course. As Clark also discerned though, these figures had an ulterior motive for ‘inventing’ Germany as Britain’s new rival. To focus her military, political and industrial energies, an enemy was essential. Russia would traditionally have filled this role, and had done so since perhaps the 1830s.[[34]](#footnote-34) Yet, by 1907, Britain abandoned this tradition, thanks in no small part to Arthur Nicolson, who proved pivotal in the creation of an Anglo-Russian Convention signed that year. It is now time to investigate this key milestone of the pre-war era.

Sir Arthur Nicolson was a typical Foreign Office official. His previous stints in China, Constantinople, Tangier, Persia and Morocco saw Nicolson assume consular and other functional roles. By 1904 his big break was to serve as ambassador to Spain, and thanks to the contacts with Hardinge and Bertie mentioned above, in 1906 Nicolson was appointed ambassador to Russia, a post he held until 1910.[[35]](#footnote-35) In that four-year Russian posting, Arthur Nicolson was in an ideal position to affect a change in the Anglo-Russian relationship, a change which fundamentally altered the alliance bloc dynamics before the First World War. Nicolson had also served as Britain’s representative during the Algeciras Conference, which settled the First Moroccan Crisis, and gave Nicolson an impression of what it was like to work under the immediate pressures of statecraft. Arriving in St Petersburg in late May 1906, Nicolson found himself in a country barely removed from revolutionary turmoil. It took Nicolson some time to find his bearings. He leant on well-placed English-speaking figures with some expertise on Russian affairs, and some experience of Russian politics. Nicolson even invited one of these to live at the Embassy, whereupon differing views could be distilled and debated. With this private team of experts, Nicolson gradually found his footing, being particularly taken with the new Russian premier, Petr Stolypin, and less fond of the Foreign Minister, Alexander Izvolsky.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Nicolson urged Grey not to slacken in his approaches to Russia. If the Foreign Secretary was put off by the domestic turmoil prevailing in the country, Nicolson warned, Russia would take offence, and Germany might attempt to establish itself in Persia. History had shown that confrontation in Afghanistan and Persia were often fertile breeding grounds for differences between London and St Petersburg. A preliminary Anglo-Russian loan to Persia proved the prelude to the Convention, yet Keith Wilson does a good job highlighting the strains this placed on the developing relationship.[[37]](#footnote-37) Persia was arguably the epicentre of Anglo-Russian disquiet, and Russia had launched several invasions of this crucial buffer state in living memory.[[38]](#footnote-38) A formal settlement of these Anglo-Russian disputes was thus central to any lasting agreement, but when Izvolsky proved recalcitrant, Nicolson rushed home to London in the middle of July 1907 to iron out British issues in person. He returned to Russia in August, whereupon Izvolsky consented to the compromise, and by the end of August 1907, Nicolson acquired the necessary signatures to make the new Anglo-Russian Convention official.[[39]](#footnote-39) One Cabinet member called Nicolson’s effort ‘one of the most skilful performances in the record of British diplomacy.’ Even more effusive in his praise was the Foreign Secretary. In mid-September 1907 Grey wrote to Nicolson:

I can't tell you how much all of us who have been cognizant of these Russian negotiations admire the way you have handled them. Certainly since I have been at the F.O. I can say without qualification that in everything in which you have been engaged, you have made a success. I wish you could be multiplied at will so as to be available at once in every place where there were difficulties.[[40]](#footnote-40)

When searching for explanations for this diplomatic initiative towards Russia, a major contributing factor appears to have been the prohibitive cost of maintaining a war footing in India in anticipation of a Russian attack. Telegrams pinged between officials in India, the War Office and Foreign Office all testify to the military threat Russia still posed. She was eminently capable, it was proclaimed, of rushing 150,000 men through Afghanistan and past the uncertain Amir there, until she broke over the North West frontier and into the heartland of the Raj. To guard against this fantastic scenario – which was in fact one of the core assumptions of Anglo-Russian hostility in preceding decades – the choices were limited. Either Britain had to spend more on its Indian defences and military infrastructure or, in a break with the past, it could negotiate with Russia to resolve these differences peacefully, at a far lower cost. For a Liberal government elected in late 1905 with the promise of reform at home and cost-cutting abroad, a new Convention with Russia came highly recommended, even if not all Britons agreed with it.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Switching the focus from Russia would also free up energy and manpower for another looming threat – that of Germany. As it was anticipated that further increases to the naval budget would have to follow, there was simply no way for Britain to meet all its commitments with any degree of satisfaction or consistency. Better to cut one’s losses in a particular area to focus on another more pressing theatre, and this recalibration complemented – though did not cause – an increase in competition with Germany in Europe, rather than with Russia in Asia. Limited wargaming before 1907 suggested that Britain was at threat from an invasion by Germany, and that Germany was the only power capable of such a coup. What use were hundreds of thousands of soldiers on the frontier of India, which they could never entirely defend, when this front could be neutralised and the real threat met with corresponding force?[[42]](#footnote-42) John Morely, Lord President of the Council, and later to resign from Cabinet at the outbreak of war, rationalised the Convention in the following way once it had been signed:

The vital point of the report 'was the conclusion that the despatch of 100,000 men to India in the first year of a war with Russia is a military necessity. That is the fundamental argument for the Convention for we have not got the men to spare and that's the plain truth of it.[[43]](#footnote-43)

When considering how this Triple Entente came to be, then, we must bear in mind the profound impact which Russia’s loss to Japan made on British calculations. We must also note the Liberal Party’s desire for reduced expenditure, and the opportunity for cost-cutting existed most plainly in the inflating armaments on the North West Indian frontier. Grey was immensely pleased with the agreement, seeing in it the realisation of his efforts to adjust British foreign policy imperatives to the new realities, which included a more menacing Germany. Yet, it should be noted that of the three partners, only in Paris was there talk of a ‘triple entente.’[[44]](#footnote-44) Russia and Britain each maintained that the arrangement consisted of three bilateral agreements, not a singular three-way alliance. The murky nature of such claims is exposed by the aforementioned Anglo-French military cooperation and war planning, which continued from 1905. Yet, it is important not to simplify what were highly significant arrangements, acquired after months of painstaking negotiations. Nor were these agreements entirely watertight. Russia would continue to chip away at British confidence right up until the final moments of peace, spurring panicked British questions as to whether a new reorientation was necessary. From Tibet, to Afghanistan, to Mongolia, Anglo-Russian officials clashed and squirmed under the new pressures of the Convention.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Persia proved the conduit for latent Anglo-Russian hostility, a status signified by the fact that once the Convention was signed, Persia erupted into civil war, a scenario which traditionally saw London and St Petersburg intriguing on opposite sides.[[46]](#footnote-46) During these bouts of intermittent conflict, which included a Russian invasion of Azerbaijan, the French proved critical as a mediating influence, keeping the new partners apart, and not permitting any hostilities to contaminate the system of ententes. It was a delicate balancing act, yet the French, rejoicing at the news of the Convention, felt compelled to act for the sake of their security. Persia continued to excite tensions, and Russia continued to intervene there with a heavy hand, this time with British acquiescence.[[47]](#footnote-47) All the while, the French prioritisation of British and Russian relations helped serve as a convenient buffer. Mariam Habibi makes the point that the Triple Entente was not made in 1907; this Entente was a goal for the future, and the French were foremost in working towards it.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Therefore, Britain was not locked in an alliance with Russia and France from 1907 until the outbreak of war. Grey insisted, in public and in private, that Britain maintained its free hand. Yet, Britain had unequivocally abandoned splendid isolation. Henceforth, whether ally or not, Britain would be tied to the peaks and valleys of European diplomacy. She would have to watch for German threats to her French partner in Western Europe, and to her Russian partner in Eastern Europe. She had dispensed with her old policies of hostility towards traditional enemies, and focused attentions upon a new foe. She was not committed to Europe, but she was certainly more engaged in Europe than she had been at any point since the Crimean War. The battle lines had not been drawn then, but they had at least been sketched in pencil. Contrary perhaps to the expectations of Grey and those around him, the following years would harden attitudes towards Germany, while crystalising the Entente. All the while, the Balkans returned to the forefront of European considerations, where it was to remain until the outbreak of war.

1. Quoted in Ian F. D. Morrow, ‘The Foreign Policy of Prince von Bulow, 1898-1909,’ *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4, 1 (1932), 63-93; 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II* (London, 2013), pp. 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more on these questions of Bismarck see Mulligan, *Origins*, pp. 26-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Duncan Stuart Ferguson, ‘"Splendid allies" or "No more deadly enemies in the world?" General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British Military and Japan 1902—1914,’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 20, 4 (October 2010), 523-536. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Paul M. Kennedy, ‘German World Policy and the Alliance Negotiations with England, 1897-1900,’ *Journal of Modern History*, 45, 4 (Dec., 1973), 605- 625. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Douglas Howland, ‘Sovereignty and the Laws of War: International Consequences of Japan's 1905 Victory

over Russia,’ *Law and History Review*, 29, 1 (February 2011), 53-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cited in Gordon Martel and James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War*, 4th ed. (London, 2022), p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ‘Balance of Power,’ *Advocate of Peace*, 11, 9 (September, 1854), 129-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Fiona Tomaszewski, ‘Pomp, Circumstance, and Realpolitik: The Evolution of the Triple Entente of Russia, Great Britain, and France,’ *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 47, 3 (1999), 362-380; 363. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. William Mulligan, ‘From Case to Narrative: The Marquess of Lansdowne, Sir Edward Grey, and the Threat from Germany, 1900-1906,’ *International History Review*, 30, 2 (June 2008), 273-302; 286-288. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Matthew S. Segilmann, ‘Switching Horses: The Admiralty's Recognition of the Threat from Germany, 1900- 1905,’ *International History Review*, 30, 2 (June 2008), 239-258. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Joanne Stafford Mortimer, ‘Commercial Interests and German Diplomacy in the Agadir Crisis,’ *Historical Journal*, 10, 3 (1967), 440-456; 440. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. E. F. Willis, ‘The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey: An Interpretation,’ *Historian*, 1, 2 (Spring, 1939), 99-109; 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Ibid*, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Ibid*, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. William J. Philpott, ‘The Making of the Military Entente, 1904–14: France, the British Army, and the Prospect of War,’ *English Historical Review*, 128, 534 (October 2013), 1155-1185; 1157-1158. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. John W. Coogan and Peter F. Coogan, ‘The British Cabinet and the Anglo-French Staff Talks, 1905-1914: Who Knew What and When Did He Know It? *Journal of British Studies*, 24, 1 (Jan., 1985), 110-131; 114-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid*, 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This included a dispute over German threats to intervene in the Boer War, though this has been reinterpreted as a Franco-Russian endeavour, manipulated by Hardinge. See Edward T. Corp, ‘Sir Charles Hardinge and the Question of Intervention in the Boer War: An Episode in the Rise of Anti-German Feeling in the British Foreign Office,’ *Journal of Modern History*, 51, 2, (Jun., 1979), D1071-D1084. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 160-161. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See Ian F. D. Morrow, ‘The Foreign Policy of Prince von Bulow, 1898-1909,’ *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4, 1 (1932), 63-93; 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Ibid*, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See *Ibid*, 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Bernard F. Oppel, ‘The Waning of a Traditional Alliance: Russia and Germany after the Portsmouth Peace Conference,’ *Central European History*, 5, 4 (Dec., 1972), 318-329; 320-323. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War* (London, 2016), pp. 23-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Richard Dunley, ‘Sir John Fisher and the Policy of Strategic Deterrence, 1904–1908,’ *War in History*, 22, 2 (April 2015), 155-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Matthew S. Seligmann, ‘New Weapons for New Targets: Sir John Fisher, the Threat from Germany, and the Building of HMS "Dreadnought" and HMS "Invincible", 1902-1907,’ *International History Review*, 30, 2 (June 2008), 303-331. For more on this new class of battleship see Roger Parkinson, *Dreadnought* (London, 2015), especially chapter four. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Matthew S. Seligmann and Frank Nägler, *The Naval Route to the Abyss* (London, 2016), pp. 478-479. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. All extracts from Crowe’s memorandum cited from <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Memorandum_on_the_Present_State_of_British_Relations_with_France_and_Germany> Accessed 28 May 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 163-164 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Richard A. Cosgrove, ‘The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment,’ *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 4, 4 (Winter, 1972), 193-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For Crowe’s career see J. S. Dunne, *The Crowe Memorandum: Sir Eyre Crowe and Foreign Office Perceptions of Germany, 1918-1925* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 1-47. For Crowe’s role in Foreign Office reforms see Edward T. Corp, ‘Sir Eyre Crowe and the Administration of the Foreign Office, 1906-1914,’ *Historical Journal*, 22, 2 (Jun., 1979), 443-454. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Clarke, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Ibid*, p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Keith Nielson, ‘'My Beloved Russians': Sir Arthur Nicolson and Russia, 1906-1916,’ *International History Review*, 9, 4 (Nov., 1987), 521-554; 523. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. *Ibid*, 524-533. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See K. M. Wilson, ‘Creative Accounting: The Place of Loans to Persia in the Commencement of the Negotiation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907,’ *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38, 2 (Apr., 2002), 35-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. More details on the Persian aspects of the agreements are addressed by Rose Louise Greaves, see ‘Some Aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention and Its Working in Persia, 1907-14—I,’ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 31, 1 (1968), 69-91; ‘Some Aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention and Its Working in Persia, 1907-14—II,’ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 31, 2 (1968), 290-308. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Nielson, ‘'My Beloved Russians,’ 534-536. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Quoted in *Ibid*, 536. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Beryl J. Williams, ‘The Strategic Background to the Anglo-Russian Entente of August 1907,’ *Historical Journal*, 9, 3 (1966), 360-373; 368-369. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Ibid*, 370-372. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Quoted in *Ibid*, 373 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Mariam Habibi, ‘France and the Anglo-Russian Accords: The Discreet Missing Link,’ *Journal of Persian Studies,* 41 (2003), 291-307; 291. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ira Klein, ‘The Anglo-Russian Convention and the Problem of Central Asia, 1907-1914,’ *Journal of British Studies*, 11, 1 (Nov., 1971), 126-147. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Habibi, ‘France and the Anglo-Russian Accords’, 293-294. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Ibid*, 295-300. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Ibid*, 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)