



Source 5

Report of a conversation between the British Foreign Secretary and the German ambassador to Britain in July 1914

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How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. There are details in this source that will help you to answer the key question. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- What concerns does the German ambassador have?
- According to the German ambassador, what are the views of some in Germany about the possibility of war?
- Does the German ambassador seem concerned about Britain belonging to the Triple Entente?
- What impression do you get from this source of relations between Britain and Germany?



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A third thing was the idea that there was some naval convention between Russia and England. He had reported to his Government all that I had said to him recently, just before he went to Germany on holiday, about our relations with Russia and France, and he had assured his Government that they could trust every word, and that there was no secret agreement on our part. They accepted the statement that there was nothing between the British and Russian Governments, but they felt that, nevertheless, there might be some understanding between the British and Russian naval authorities.

The Ambassador went so far as to say that there was some feeling in Germany, based more especially upon the second and third things that he had mentioned to me this afternoon, that trouble was bound to come, and therefore it would be better not to restrain Austria, and let the trouble come now, rather than later. He impressed upon me more than once that he was speaking quite privately and on very delicate matters, but he was anxious to keep in touch with me. Though he did not share the belief of some people in Berlin that Russia was ill-disposed towards Germany, he was so anxious that he felt he must speak to me immediately on his return here from Germany. He quoted Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg as being pessimistic.

The Ambassador said that he had asserted at Berlin that though England would remain firmly in the group of the Triple *Entente*, for she must preserve the balance of power and could not see France annihilated, yet we did not wish to see the groups of powers draw apart.