



Source 2

A telegram from the British ambassador in Germany to the British Foreign Secretary, 31 July 1914

(Catalogue ref: FO 438/2)

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 question do you think the British have asked the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs?
- What was the response of the Secretary?
- What does this document tell you about relations between Germany and Belgium?
- Does this telegram give the impression that the British are concerned about Belgium?
- Is it possible to say whether concerns about Belgium were for Belgium's sake or for Britain's?



Source 2

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received August 1.)

(No. 114.)

(Telegraphic.)

Berlin, July 31, 1914.

YOUR telegram No. 287 of 31st July to Paris: Belgian neutrality.

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he could not possibly give me an answer before consulting the Emperor and the Chancellor. I said that I hoped that the answer would not be too long delayed. He then gave me to understand he rather doubted whether they could answer at all, as any reply they might give could not fail, in the event of war, to have the undesirable effect of disclosing to a certain extent part of their plan of campaign. After taking note of your request, he told me in confidence that Belgium had already committed certain acts which he could only qualify as

hostile. On my asking him for details, he gave me as an instance that the Belgian Government had already embargoed a consignment of grain destined for Germany.

In telling me that it was unlikely that the Imperial Government would be in a position to answer, he said that in any case it would be necessary for them to know what France replied to your enquiry.

I shall speak to him again on the subject to-morrow, but I am not very hopeful of obtaining a definite answer.