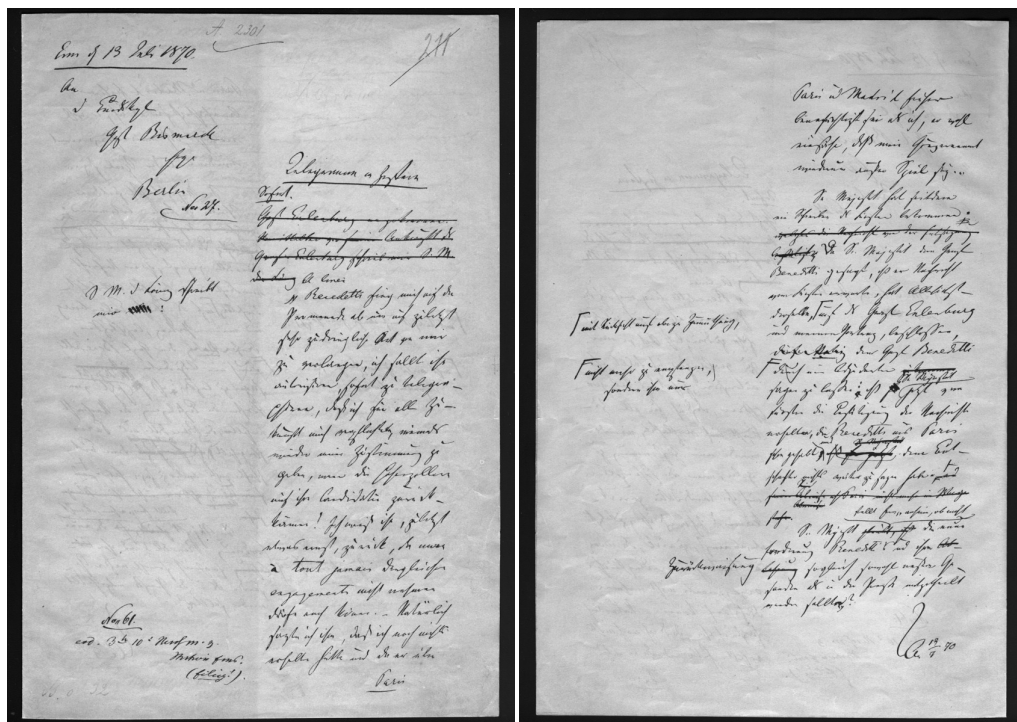


Ems Dispatch, Original (Pages 1 and 2) (July 13, 1870)

Abstract

Bismarck's abridgment of the Ems Dispatch and the perceived insult to French honor that resulted from its publication provided the French foreign minister with a *casus belli* that quickly led to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in mid-July 1870. This is a facsimile of the original coded telegram sent from Bad Ems by Heinrich Abeken, a member of the North German Confederation's legation in Paris, to Bismarck (then in Berlin) in the middle of the afternoon on July 13, 1870. The Abeken text reads [Page 1]: "Ems, July 13, 1870. To the Federal Chancellor Count Bismarck, No. 61, 3:10 p.m. Station Ems. (Rush!) His Majesty the King [Wilhelm I] writes to me: 'M. Benedetti intercepted me on the Promenade in order to demand of me most insistently that I should authorize him to telegraph immediately to Paris that I shall obligate myself for all future time never again to give my approval to the candidacy of the Hohenzollerns should it be renewed. I refused to agree to this, the last time somewhat severely, informing him that one dare not and cannot assume such obligations *à tout jamais*. Naturally, I informed him that I had received no news as yet, and since he had been informed earlier than I, by way of Paris [page 2 begins here] and Madrid, he could easily understand that my Government was once again out of the matter.' Since then His Majesty has received a dispatch from the Prince [Charles Anthony]. As His Majesty informed Count Benedetti that he was expecting news from the Prince, His Majesty himself, in view of the above-mentioned demand and in consonance with the advice of Count Eulenburg and myself, decided not to receive the French envoy again but to inform him through an adjutant that His Majesty had now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and that he had nothing further to say to the Ambassador. His Majesty leaves it to the judgment of Your Excellency whether or not to communicate at once the new demand by Benedetti and its rejection to our ambassadors and to the press. [Signed] A[beken] 13.7.70." Facsimile from the files of the Political Archive of the German Foreign Office.

Source



Source: "Ems Dispatch" from King Wilhelm I of Prussia to the Chancellor of the German Confederation, Count Bismarck, dated July 13, 1870. Facsimile.

Pages 1 and 2 of the dispatch drafted by Privy Legation Councilor Heinrich Abeken with Wilhelm's report on his meeting with the French envoy Count Benedetti in Bad Ems.

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