



AP European History

EMS Telegram

Name:

Section:

Score: ____/5

Directions: Look at the following copies of the original EMS Telegram and the Altered Telegram and answer the questions below.

Text of the Ems Telegram, sent by Heinrich Abeken of the Foreign Office under Kaiser Wilhelm's Instruction to Bismarck

Original Text:

His Majesty the King has written to me:

"Count Benedetti intercepted me on the promenade and ended by demanding of me in a very importunate manner that I should authorize him to telegraph at once that I bound myself in perpetuity never again to give my consent if the Hohenzollerns renewed their candidature.

I rejected this demand somewhat sternly as it is neither right nor possible to undertake engagements of this kind [for ever and ever]. Naturally I told him that I had not yet received any news and since he had been better informed via Paris and Madrid than I was, he must surely see that my government was not concerned in the matter."

[The King, on the advice of one of his ministers] "decided in view of the above-mentioned demands not to receive Count Benedetti any more, but to have him informed by an adjutant that His Majesty had now received from [Leopold] confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already had from Paris and had nothing further to say to the ambassador.

His Majesty suggests to Your Excellency that Benedetti's new demand and its rejection might well be communicated both to our ambassadors and to the Press."

Altered Text:

"After the news of the renunciation of the Prince von Hohenzollern had been communicated to the Imperial French government by the Royal Spanish government, the French Ambassador in Ems made a further demand on His Majesty the King that he should authorize him to telegraph to Paris that His Majesty the King undertook for all time never again to give his assent should the Hohenzollerns once more take up their candidature.

His Majesty the King thereupon refused to receive the Ambassador again and had the latter informed by the adjutant of the day that His Majesty had no further communication to make to the Ambassador."

Thought Questions:

1. In what ways is the altered text different than the original text?
2. How does the alterations change the message in a way that makes it insulting enough to start a war?
3. How is this telegram evidence of Bismarck's philosophy of *Realpolitik*?