

# [Kaiser disbelief. bismarck realised that twenty years](https://assignbuster.com/kaiser-disbelief-bismarck-realised-that-twenty-years/)

Kaiser William II“ Kaiser William II of Germany, 1888-1918, by his personalityand actions, contributed to the outbreak of World War I,” Discuss. William II came to power prematurely, on the death of his father, atthe age of 29. He lacked discipline, was arrogant and bad-tempered. He lacked political experience and maturity and was influenced in hisyouth by Hinzpeter who instilled in him the idea that a monarch shouldbe independent and follow orders from none.

It was obvious to all who were politically aware in Germany in 1890that a clash would occur between the Chancellor Bismarck, and theKaiser. When this clash did occur it was over the issue of Germanpolicy towards Russia. William favoured outright hostility towardsRussia and when he expressed this belief to Bismarck he was metwith disillusionment and disbelief. Bismarck realised that twenty yearsof his work was about to be undone by this impetuous imbicile.

Williamhas begun on his road to distruction for Europe. After the collapse of the renewed Dreikaiserbund in 1884, Bismarckrecognised that there was a possibility that the isolated Russia wouldjoin with France who was in a similar situation. He recognised that thiswould be disaster for Germany as it would pose the constant threat ofa two-front war. However, Bismarck convinced Russia to sign theReinsurance Treaty and once again managed to insure Germany wassafe. However, in 1890 when the treaty was due for renewal William, maintaining that his position “ having been imposed on me fromheaven.” Allowed him to let this treaty lapse. He worsened thesituation by refusing to let German bankers makes loans to Russianbanks.

French bankers took their place and in 1894 the Franco-Russianalliance fused the two together. For Bismarck, this was the ultimateblunder and Germany was faced with a nightmare war. William then adopted a policy of “ Weltpolitik”, that is now thatGermany was a European power he wanted to make it a World poweralso. He hoped to do this by expanding Germany’s number of coloniesand by getting involved in international crises between other powers. However, this policy was to bring Germany into conflict with Britainand hence alienate a potential French ally. This began when heannounced the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Baghdadwas contained within a British Sphere of influence and was suspiciousof the Kaisers actions. The second and more serious incident which turned the British againstthe Germans was the Kaiser’s interference in South Africa.

After thedefeat of Cecil Rhodes in the Jameson Raid in 1895 by the Boers, William sent a telegram to Paul Kringer, the Boer leader, congradulating them on their achievement. The British saw this as ablatent interfernce in what they considered was a internal affair. Forthem, this proved that the Kaiser was a dangerous figure mwho poseda serious threat to the balance and stability which they wanted tomaintain in Europe. Thus, when the Kaiser decided to build up militaryarmaments, they felt they could not allow him to surpass their armysize. Admiral von Tirpitz, a powerful military figure, felt that if Germanywere to become a world power she needed a strong Navy. Williamwas easily persuaded of this because of his love of pomp and paradesand set about buiding up a Navy.

The British sawm this as a warthreat and pointed out that “ the Royal Navy is a dire necessity- theGerman fleet a luxury” The bringing into operation of the dreadnoughtmade all other ships obsolite because of its power and this a NavalRce began between the two powers. Huge bitterness and suspicionlingered between the two and by 1914 the two were bitter enemies andBritain used the meek excuse of Germany marching on Belgium as anexcuse to declare war on Germany. William’s wanting to get involved in international eruses was also acause of World War I, because of how hje failed to achieve anythingat these conferences but to alienate other powers. He demanded aninternationa; meeting on the question of French influence in Moroccothinking that opther countries would stand with him. However, Franceand Britain together crushed him and his first diplomatic defeat wasone not easily forgotten. This 1906 confernece also brought Franceand Britain together and after the Entente Cordiate was signedtheybegan drawing up military plans.

The Morrocan Crisis rose again in1911 and once again the Kaiser was diplomatically humiliated. By hisalienation of other powers he was lining up the sides for World War I. Williams humiliating defeats were beginning to be critisized at home. The necessity of a war became apparent.

Count von Schlieffen drewup a plan as to how Germany was to cope with the two front war. Theplan was to annilulate France and then turn all forces to Russia who itwas thought would take longer to mobilise. The army numbers wereincreased and improved weaponary was developed. 90% of theGerman budget went on military and naval build up. Williamsimpetuous personality had now made it necessary for Germany to goto war if he was to survive and she was to prosper.

Between William’s years of power, a great number of alliances buildup around his own Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria andItaly. The Triple Entente between Russia, Britain and Francemarkedthe bringing together of the Anglo-French Entente, 1904, theAnglo-Russian alliance, 1907, and the Franco- Russian alliance, 1894. In his twenty four years in power he had managed to make true theultimate nightmare of the ‘ iron chancellor’ Bismarck. When Austriaasked Germany if she would support her if she were to attack Serbia, and the Kaiser gave his full support, war was imminent.