

The franco-prussian war

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The other cause was that the French emperor Napoleon III wanted to regain French influence and prestige both France and internationally that have been lost during various diplomatic issues especially those experienced in the hands of Prussia during the Austro-Prussian war of 1866. Prussia had strong military as seen in the war with Austria, which constituted a big threat to French influence and dominance in Europe.

The initiating event that led to the war was the candidacy of Leopold who came from Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, to rule Spain after the Spanish revolution of 1868. Bismarck had persuaded Leopold to accept the candidacy. The French government was frightened and threatened by a possible alliance between Prussia and Spain. In addition, the French government threatened Prussia with war if Leopold did not withdraw his candidacy. The French ambassador in Prussia was sent to inform that the Prussian government had ordered Leopold to withdraw his candidacy but unfortunately Leopold could not be reached (Howard 49). The French government was not satisfied with the Prussian reaction and threatened to humiliate them even if it meant using war. The French government demanded an apology from Prussia and that wanted it to consent that Hohenzollern candidacy would not be renewed.

However, the King of Prussia did not accept the demand. Bismarck wrote and published a document in a way calculated to anger and aggravate the resentment of the Germans and French. Bismarck knew that this move would lead to war since he was aware that Prussia was well prepared for war. In addition, he relied on the psychological result of the French declaration of war to organize South German states to Prussia's grounds, therefore attaining his final stage of unifying Germany.

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The French declared war on Prussia in July 1870 and that the south German states in compliance and fulfillment of treaties with Prussia, joined Prussia to fight against France. During the war, the Germans mobilized more troops than the French which meant that France would eventually lose the war to German (Howard 53). The French lost the war to the Germans and signed the treaty of Frankfurt which provided that the French province of Lorraine and Alsace be given to German. More so, France was to pay war indemnity amounting to five billion gold francs. France was first freed in 1873 when all these obligations and debts were fully settled.