



37 Days: Countdown to World War One

9 July - Britain tries to deter Germany

Prince Lichnowsky - German Ambassador:

But let's just speculate for a moment if you don't mind ... what do you think would happen if Austria decided to punish Serbia?

Sir Edward Grey - British Foreign Secretary:

To punish her?

Lichnowsky:

To teach her a lesson. Do you believe that Russia would come to the aid of the Serbs?

Grey:

Well, she might

Lichnowsky:

And if that happened would France have to follow Russia and ...?

Grey:

And would Britain be bound to follow France?

Lichnowsky:

Yes – would Britain be found to follow France?

Grey:

Yes and you're trying to get me so say that if Russia cries help a French Gendarme and a British bobby will turn up on the doorstep

Lichnowsky:

You're teasing me Edward

Grey:

I feel you're almost trying to tell me something Max

Lichnowsky:

But you do have an understanding with France?

Grey:

You know we do just as we have one with Russia

Lichnowsky:

But nothing that binds you in a crisis? We're still speculating

Grey:

I have nothing to hide. His Majesty's Government has an obligation to Parliament not to incur secret liabilities abroad. You know that. I often think that we're a little more open on that score than you are. I sometimes wonder what your Reichstag doesn't know. But I tell you this no speculation now – what happened last week – much depends on Austria maintaining its sense of proportion. It's important that Serb sentiment isn't raised to a point where Russia finds it impossible to stand aside.