



37 Days: Countdown to World War One

19 July: Secret plans made to strike

Prof Christopher Clark:

I am standing in the Bauhausplatz in the heart of old Vienna in front of the old Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry – it is a very splendid building with a vast portal in white marble and two huge carved doors and this is exactly where the decisions were made during the July Crisis of 1914. A kind of militant group think seized hold of the people in this building when news of the assassinations became known – a consensus formed within hours that the only way out of the crisis arising from the assassinations was at the very least a very harsh ultimatum to Belgrade. But what most of the people in this building hoped would happen was a war which would allow the Austrians to settle for good their open issues with Serbia, and no-one summed it up more clearly than the Austrian Chief of the General Staff who with characteristic brutality noted that:

Austrian Chief of the General Staff:

If you have a poisonous adder at your heel you stamp on its head – you don't wait for the deadly bite.