



CAN THE REALISM SCHOOL EXPLAIN BISMARCK'S DIPLOMATIC POLICIES?



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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the author would discuss Bismarck's diplomatic policies, which at some terms, were a miracle in the second half of 19th century. With outstanding strengths, German Empire became the most powerful state in European continent, and greatest potential rival for other powers. However, the tragic stereotype, that destructive conflicts between the hegemonic power and the rising power, did not come true in Bismarck's era, from 1871 to 1890.

In order to discover and comprehend this masterpiece, I'd raise a problem, as "CAN THE REALISM SCHOOL EXPLAIN BISMARCK'S DIPLOMATIC POLICIES?".

Then I make two hypotheses as: 1. The Defensive Realism can explain Bismarck's policies 2. The Offensive Realism can explain Bismarck's policies.

Firstly, I make theoretical introduction and historical overview, then comes the analysis. In the analytical part I analyze those two hypotheses, in both pro and contra aspects.

Both the two theories can explain some aspects of the diplomatic policies of Bismarck, but not completely. I try to make some additions, so as to achieve a better understanding of this diplomatic masterpiece.

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1.Introduction

In this paper, I'd like to research and analyze a piece of international relation history: Bismarck's diplomatic policies.

1.1Backgrounds

Bismarck's diplomatic policies, at some terms, were a miracle in the second half of 19th century. It was a jungle society where all great powers saw others all rivals, and they trusted in and fulfilled power politics. For greedy interest demands, the great powers set proxy regimes or wars in small states. Sometimes, they would directly conduct military interference for expanding sphere of influence and population. More importantly, when a new uprising power appeared in the circumstance, the existed powers always made fierce reactions. Also, the hegemonic state would leadingly besiege the uprising one. In the meanwhile, other second ranged powers would like to seize this opportunity to take a piece of cake under that chaotic situation. In general, a war would occur and spread to all the states in brutal way, so as to divide the power situation up newly.

However, this tragic stereotype did not come true in Bismarck's era, from 1871 to 1890, as signal of his resignation. On January 1, 1871, the new German Empire was established at Versailles, Paris. In the meanwhile, the fragile and smashing Central Europe became a unified and mighty power, which would change the geopolitical map in Europe, at the result of triumph of Franco-Prussian War.

In land area of 540,857 m², population 40 million (1871), outstanding productivity and brilliant land force, the Empire successfully became a significant player in the arena, even a polar. A British premier once sighed, "the unification of Germany was a matter more fatal than the French Revolution"¹.

¹ George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol.5, New York: The MacMillian Company, 1920, pp.133.



Unlike European-wide wars and anti-France coalition during the revolution, German unification did not encounter any massive anti-German alliances. Otherwise, France found itself as the isolated state one more time, while Britain and Russia all fell over each other to please Germany for the latter's support or neutrality, in favor of free movements in somewhere. Austria-Hungary (for short as Austria followingly), although an ally of Germany in Dual Alliance and League of Three Emperors could not lean on Germany the military giant to fulfill its own goals, it was reversely constrained by Germany and the German Military. During this period, national material strengths of German grew amazingly, to the uncontroversial top of Europe, nevertheless almost without other powers' envy. The relative peaceful environment was the results of Bismarck's policies, and simultaneously the precondition of further development. Effective policies made a positive circulation, which was rarely seen in international history. In Hobsbawm's words, he "remained undisputed world

champion at the game of multilateral diplomatic chess for almost twenty years after 1871, devoting himself exclusively, and successfully, to maintaining peace between the powers."²

1.2 The core problem and hypotheses

In the above section, I briefly introduce the existence and influence of Bismarck's policies. In historical document, Bismarck himself and his diplomatic team hardly discussed or concluded the theory of the policies.

Thereafter, in this paper, I'd like to analyze this diplomatic masterpiece, in the following problem:

Can Realism school explain Bismarck's diplomatic policies?

In order to handle this theme successfully, I set two hypotheses here:

1.The Defensive Realism can explain Bismarck's policies.

2.The Offensive Realism can explain Bismarck's policies.

In my scheme, I would like to discover some sub-problems in the following parts, such as why Germany did not develop its navy to deter Britain, and why Germany encouraged France to expand colonies in the East Africa. In addition, if I find, those two theories can't explain Bismarck's policies perfectly, I will try to discover, if there is another one could be helpful.

Through those core problems, sub-problems, and hypotheses, we could gain a better understanding and new sight upon this topic.

In the next part, Methodology, I'll present the concrete research approaches and processes.

² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987, pp.312.

2.Methodology

In this part, I'd like to preset the concrete research approaches and processes, for this interesting and complicated topic. Some methods might be special, so as to comprehend this topic in a better way.

2.1 Documents to read

The starting point is, document-reading. There are two kinds of documents I should read and study. The general introduction comes first. What I need including, general European history in 19th century, respective European powers' histories, before and after the German unification. This kind of document is in favor of acquainting myself with general conditions, the preconditions by where a policy was made and put into practice. An example of those books is, Bismarck and the Development of Germany.³ Another kind of document is, diplomatic archives. In those records it is necessary to scrutinize the details of international relations: the way of diplomatic functions, thoughts of people/parties concerned, and reactions towards opposite's sayings, particularly disapprovals. This kind of document is in favor of comprehending the policies' purposes and strategies better, to analyze and demonstrate my hypotheses. Next, I'd introduce my research approach. I will start from the core problem, "can Realism theories explain Bismarck's diplomatic policies?", with theoretical insights of Realism school. On term I study, I will do an historical overview, paving the way for analytic part. In the analytic part, there is a special thing, which requires attention. Namely, Bismarck's real global thought. It's a common sense, that politician's speeches in public should not express his intentions indeed, but a kind of disguise. This principle works exactly to Bismarck. In order to dig out his real perspective and strategic intention I decided to analyze and cite words from the diplomatic documents, as a source of internal information. Here I make a convenient hypothesis, that in the

³ Otto Pflanze, Bismarck and the Development of Germany, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

secret telegraphs, notes and comments, politicians were intend to express their real thoughts. I hope, I could collect enough concerning quotations to demonstrate my hypotheses and answer the question. The core diplomatic document I chose was “Die große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914”⁴, which was published in era Weimar Republic, to discover the policies of the German Empire and cause of the WWI. That was a precious series archives for studying history from second half of 19th century to eve of WWI. As for other documents cited I would not in the footnotes and bibliography.

2.2 The analytical method

The main components are, theoretical analyses. Based on the frameworks of relevant theories, I will explore the interrelated facts, to inspect whether the facts embody the logic and disciplines of the related theory. Of course, in this process, it is necessary to certainly utilize political, historical, sometimes military and geographical knowledges, to comprehend materials. In the end, I would make a conclusion of this thesis.

Particularly, in the analysis part, I will deposit supporting points in the general state at the first step, then followed some cases, do analysis in depth, so as to demonstrate the sights in further step.

In this thread, I form the structure of my thesis as following:

1. In introduction
2. Methodology
3. Theories
4. Analysis
5. Conclusion

I am the only person, workloads of this thesis to do. In a brief time plan, around October the historical overview, from November the theoretical part and analysis. After those writings, beginning of December, the conclusion and other parts will

⁴ Die große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1922.

come to my sight and be finished.

3.Theories

In this paper, I would mainly concentrate on the structural realism. This theory group is to deal with the security in international relations, in common structural perspective, and of different concrete insights. Here I choose the two main branches of structural realism, the Defensive and Offensive, to introduce and analyze.

3.1 Defensive realism

The defensive realism is a theory belongs to the structural realism school, which is recognized as a fundamental theory to perspective and explain international relations, and the main theoretical pointer in this paper.

The approach of this theory is of structural perspective, which posits there is a whole structure and several units in a system. The structure, as a unity, is most important, as that is the constrained force, to determine the function and qualities of a system and functions of several units in the system. Those units construct the structure, but the latter is not a sum-up of several units, but in different quality. Under the structure, more ever, units could have interactions as well. If statemen could not alter the international structure, they and their states would face the eternal structure and process of international relations. Thus, the most critical theoretic work is, to describe and study the structure of international relations, and thereafter figure out a practical solution in them.

Waltz found five basic assumptions, as:⁵

1. The international system is anarchic. The actors in international relations are states,

⁵ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International politics*, McGraw-Hill, 1979, pp.130-140.

as the units. Those units stand in the condition of power distribution. Thus, the international system is anarchic and of distributive characteristics. All other assumptions and solutions are derived from this very foundation.

2. States inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the ability to hurt, even possibly destroy each other. That is the way a state holds some powers and the possibility of survival.

3. States can never be certain about the intentions of other states. Waltz thought this assumption can eliminate the possibility of complicated political intrigue and oppression. On contrary, it could help to build coordination up.

4. The basic motive driving states is survival. So, the task of a state is, self-maintenance, rather than great power or territorial expansion, in Defensive Realism.

5. States think strategically about how to survive in the international system. Simply speaking, Waltz advised, states should try to build some order up, particularly the bi-polar system, rather than single polar or other forms. He thought that bi-polar is the best solution for the international stability and the survival of states, no matter strong or weak the state is.

Under those constrained structure, the action model of every state should sustain as the same. Therefore, the model should continue forever, thus the solution should be valid forever as well, theoretically.

Every state in the world needs “self-help”⁶, to sustain its survival and security in this anarchic even chaotic world. That is by not only defensive realism, but also all other branches of realism shared, to distinguish from liberalism or moralism. Aside abstract moral or liberal doctrines, the Defensive Realism provides the world with a concise and effective tool to gain insight international relations. States are main actors in international relations, and there is no such institution, government rule, or any others could protect itself, but self-help.

Powers are distributed to respective states; the whole situation would meet **equilibrium** by power counterbalancing. This is the basic structure of international

⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, , “China’s Unpeaceful Rise” Current History 105 (2006).

relations. All other assertions come from this basis.

Furthermore, the defensive realism claims, that the essence of a country is not always inherent aggressive but "the first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system."⁷ The so-called "first concern" is accurately the dominant concern, so that defensive realists think, that the pursuit of immediate survival is the nature of state, rather than pursuit of power. In defensive realist's eyes, it is not worthwhile pursuing power even hegemony in an international situation. Any aggression in terms of power or hegemony is extravagant, so it is dangerous, since "international anarchy punishes aggression; it does not reward it".⁸ Aggressive actions are unbeneficial to national security, and consumed huge resources. On the controversy, the hegemonic aggression would be counterbalanced by other states, thus contributes to the distribution of powers. The defensive realists think that is the chance to keep the national security.

In order to maintain its position, the state might even hold the belief, because of the counterbalancing, that the best international policy is coordination, not superordination, "none is entitled to command; none is required to obey"⁹. So, some political scholars thought that Defensive Realism is close to liberal internationalism. The consequence Waltz appreciated is "**equilibrium**". In this equilibrium, it trends to form bipolar situation, but not in other number.

Beyond this ideal equilibrium, Waltz posited "**security dilemma**". As an instance, on the opposite side, it describes the danger of blind expansion. This term tells: When one state increases military power or constructs alliance, it would increase the insecurity of others, thereby creating a more dangerous situation that encourages others to balance against it and to contemplate first strikes.¹⁰ This response must be in the same measure, and usually cause war, which could make more unsafety for all states paradoxically.¹¹ Thus the international order from defensive realism is, a kind

⁷ Waltz, Kenneth N. Theory of International Politics. New York: McGraw Hill (1979) pp. 126.

⁸ Snyder, Jack, Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp.11.

⁹ Waltz, Kenneth N. Theory of International Politics. New York: McGraw Hill (1979) pp.88.

¹⁰ Taliaferro, International Security, Volume 25, Number 3, Winter 2000/01, pp.128.

¹¹ Baylis, J. and Smith, S. The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations.

of equilibrium, and in some terms being amenable to coordination.

It is rational and plausible to accept the conservative aspect of Waltz's assertion, as aggression could jeopardize national safety and cause external rivals; but on the positive aspect, it is also rational to argue, it's not such a certain, when without military accumulation and alliance, can a state keep its safe and security. The last generations of Mogul emperors really didn't (re)attain regional hegemony, and did their best to keep "peace situation", however, British commanders and forces dismembered Mogul Empire and administered them as colonies, rather than coordination. The ever-existed balance was disappeared and didn't come back, as critique. That proved out, simple "coordination" and "low profile" could not simply prevent the security.

On another point, defensive realist argues, state's survival, and states are not as vulnerable as men are in a state of nature.¹² That is a conclusion derived from the bipolar model. In many conditions however, one state keep the superficial sustainability and peace, but the international conditions somehow influenced by its measures are dangerous for its own survival, and many times it would happen.¹³ For example, under international pressure and deposits, a small country encountered financial crisis. After the international sponsors, in the name of "liberal reform", but it lost the control of critical industrial professions and financing capabilities. Even with a crust of unification and security, this country could not exactly stand on earth, and decide its own destiny and movements but from other hegemonies.

In a brief conclusion, the hypothesis of Waltz essentially is, a static encounter-balancing situation, but not a pure anarchic situation; and he particularly ignored the hegemonic situation, which would cause a kind of hierarchy, strengths and status disparities. This kind of disparities in international society are observed by many scholars. The situation, after enough long time could be polarization, some or single

Oxford University Press, 2005, 3rd ed, pp.22.

¹² Jervis, Robert, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma" *World Politics* 30:2 (1978): pp.172.

¹³ John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics* vol. 2, no. 2 (1950): pp.171–201.

state grasped the top of pyramid, rather than counterbalancing by other small ones.

3.2 Offensive Realism

The offensive shares the structuralized security insights and anarchic world standpoints, but it aims at the latent negative defense of defensive realism.

Mearsheimer, the main figure of Offensive Realism, argued some amendments to realistic theory as:

1. the main actors, or the decisive actors in international relations are, the great powers.
2. The ultimate way to pursue survival is, to pursue powers, even construct hegemony.
3. It is necessary to maximize its material power, for a state, to secure its status.

Upon how much power a state needs, the Defensive and the Offensive departures. In Mearsheimer's own words: "Great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to be the hegemon in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive."¹⁴ Since a state cannot confirm how much power it needs to fight against other states, it will adopt a proper strategy to maximize its power, rather than in Defensive one. The incentive and international security threat exists forever. Thus, the dynamics of maximizing its power and even hegemony would not stop but persist. This is the departure point Offensive Realisms from the Defensive Realism.¹⁵

Accordingly, the Offensive Realism emphasizes general proactive attack or aggression. Indeed, only by taking positive measures can a state construct its own real security. Through proactive attacking, the state can hold the agency to constrain the adversaries' actions and further eliminate their counterattacking potentials.

¹⁴ John, J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Norton & Company, 2014, pp.35.

¹⁵ John, J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp.21.

Thus, it derives some other differences than defensive realism.

It is a great characteristic that Mearsheimer emphasized the function of material strengths, which are considered as the determinant factor of national security and powers, only by the solid materials including war, martial interference, diplomatic, economic and other technological methods. There are various approaches. In the view of offensive realists, it is of great necessity to take any possible and even latent methods, rather than depend on single ways, to achieve the big goal.

Thus, a state shall pursue the material profits, instead of vacant moral obligations and beliefs. The profit, which tightly belongs to the national security, is for reinforcing itself in strength and simultaneously eliminating or harming off adversaries' material strengths. The terms of profits include material production capability, transportation and exchange, giant financing, diplomatic institutions, etc. For convenience, people call them as "national interests".

Beyond those fundamental preparations, the core goal of a state is to construct the hegemony, which also indicates a capability to steer another state to do whatever it wants or not. One state could never make it clear the real intention of another state, whether that state would invade itself or form alliance with other rivals. The insecurity refers to the incentive of pursuing hegemony.

Regarding the concrete hegemony scheme, Mearsheimer drew the objective outline as three steps. The first one is the regional hegemony. As pointed out by Mearsheimer, the strengths of a state could be attenuated by distance. Thus, a state could not achieve a regional hegemony concerning survival.

The second one is the further maximum of world wealth. The aim is to maintain the status of regional hegemony and promote long-term development. However, there is a paradox with the last one. Namely, if a state urges to maximize the worldwide wealth, it will inevitably stretch its powers to worldwide, and not possible only a regional, but a globe wide controlling. This paradox must produce theoretic difficulty, which will be discussed in the following part.

The third one is to seek nuclear superiority over its rivals and this is a solution in

nuclear era to keep strategic deterrence.

There are some main tactics in Offensive Realism, alike blackmailing, buck-passing, bloodletting, deterrence, and war.

There are some weaknesses of offensive realism:

First, construction of the primacy of its own profits and hegemon status, would always cause other states' hostilities, that could relate to the so-called **security dilemma** from the defensive realism. By the offensive realists and offensive-oriented states, the hostilities and more material powers accumulation of adversaries would definitely trigger a Total War and then followed "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics", and no one could maintain its status quo. Particularly it is more easily, between a hegemonic state and a newly uprising one, occurring fierce conflicts, which is named as "Thucydides's trap". This allusion originated from historical terms of ancient Greece, two polis, Athens, the uprising one, and Sparta, the old ruling state. Threat and counter-threat produced competition and finally wars. Thucydides documented this affair first and that was usually cited by politics scholars, to indicate the inevitability of contradicts of two sides states.

Paradoxically this kind of primacy and pursuit for hegemony usually cause the loss of its hegemonic status and even leads to threat to its basic survival. The best example is, the fortune of Nazi Germany in and after WWII.

Another one is, the blindness of geopolitics. The so-called geopolitics is the geography measured by politics powers and military powers. The geographic situation is the arena of beyond politic activities. Terrain, climate, population construction and intensity, are all influential factors to politic strategies. Although Mearsheimer figured out some influential factors, such whether near ocean, buffer state and aggressive great power¹⁶ could impact the approach of alliance decision in a state, here he only emphasized the land force was the only determined force in war and thus in international hegemonic building. But he still didn't realize, what island state requires to keep its safety, and how different types of terrain could decide the military actions.

¹⁶ John, J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Norton & Company, 2014, pp.121-138.

In other words, he didn't set a light how could a state function its advantages.

Aiming at the doctrine, "the world is condemned to perpetual great power competition" from Mearsheimer, scholar Hans Morgenthau added something new, as¹⁷:

1. The good foreign policy should minimize the losses and risks, but maximize the benefits.
2. Realism maintains that universal moral principles must be dealt with in a concrete circumstance, of time and space,¹⁸ rather than abstract fulfilments and comments.
3. Realist must tell where the national interests are distinguished from moral of legislative viewpoints.

These additions are helpful to deal with encountering risks under the policies of offensive realism. And still unfortunately, it requires more insights upon the relationship of interests, policies and goals.

3.3 Some additions

For some newly emerging great powers, they seem to be difficult to simply fulfill the doctrines of Offensive or Defensive mechanically, as it could not solely "keep silent" to maintain moderate and balanced policies, so as to attain its security, especially relative long-term security. I will analyze the pros and contras of each theory to demonstrate the functions of each theory and find possible defects.

A short-term rational measure could lead to a dilemma. On the contrary, a disaster of the state will be caused in a longer term. For solving this contradiction, we need something new, in a higher perspective, to comprehend international relations and

¹⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 4–15.

¹⁸ Cozette, Murielle. "Reclaiming the Critical Dimension of Realism: Hans J. Morgenthau on the Ethics of Scholarship." *Review of International Studies* 34 (2008): 5–27.

national security. It is of great necessity to divide profit levels. The highest one should be the strategic profit, which indicates vertically long-term, horizontally wide-wide (usually continent wide or globe wide) advantageous trends and factors.

Bismarck's system and maneuvers are all elastic and proactive. All the strategies and tactics are in focus of German security, but in terms of proactive mastery, long term, low costs security. The details I would narrate in the following historical part and have discussion in analytical part. Then we could see, whether structural realisms can explain and comprehend Bismarck's diplomatic policies.

4.The Historical Overview

In this part I would narrate the basic and important historical facts of Bismarck's diplomatic system and related international circumstances, which are the materials I would comprehend and analyze in following parts to explore my problems and hypotheses.

Before concrete sayings, it's necessary to clarify some items:

When the documents talk "benevolent neutrality", it means "the contracting power would not attack its allies when the allies had war with other powers"; "free movement" indicates "The contracting power's free military actions even invasion", and "concern" indicates "The contracting power would take military intervention when the authority can't protect my profits or other powers already came into this land".

1.A pre-history

In 1871 Germany unified itself and established the Germany Empire. Middle Europe underwent a profound change; the once shattered territory became a unified country and a decisive great power to influence European situation and even worldwide

situation. Wilhelm I, crowned as the emperor, appointed Bismarck as chancellor of the empire. The chancellor was the main official in the federal government, and thus Bismarck oversaw empire's diplomatic affairs.

The victor, German Empire, was a new European "host", with outstanding strengths among countries, thus it received envies and rivals from the moment it was established.¹⁹

After the unification, German Empire faced severe international relations challenges, from other great powers.

France came first. It was defeated desperately in Prussian-Franco war, by loss of two provinces Elsaß and Lothringen, and unwillingly withdrew from the hegemony in Europe. Therefore, its diplomatic theme was always revenge to Germany before 1914. Russia was glad to rapture some profits by France's defeat, but at the same time was still afraid of the increasing strength of Germany and turned into the potential supporter of France. Simultaneously it also stretched out its hands to Balkan peninsula to build spheres of influences, aiming at Austria and Germany.

Great Britain regretted not such an in-time intervention during the Franco-Prussian War, so that left the German unification free. Thus it was ready to prevent a new hegemony in European continent again.

Austria, which was beat by Prussia and became a "dual-empire" in 1867, was always to find the chance or a situation to revenge Germany.

Those factors referred, that the unification of Germany was not a happy accident for European powers, but a pointer of new great game of politics, and thus it called for a new diplomatic thought and system to deal with and even overwhelm this situation. However, Bismarck chose to utilize some obsolete method, as for Britain, he emphasized the long-term friendship since Prussian era, and there was no secret agreement with Russia; that was an implication, when necessary Germany would sacrifice Russia to support Britain.²⁰ As for Austria and Russia, Bismarck said more

¹⁹ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, New York, Vintage Books, 1987, pp.228.

²⁰ Baron E. Fitzmaurice, *The life of Granville George Leveson Gower: Second Earl Granville K.G. 1815-1891*, 2004, vol.2, pp.74

about suppressing international socialist movements and traditional monarchy union. However, both sides would not recognize and accept Bismarck's "low profile" rather than take precautions against Germany, for its strength was not such it used to be. Those powers were all potential jealous aggressors towards Germany and later almost realistic enemies.

In 1871 occurred the so-called "Culture Struggle" in Germany. Rome Catholic Church interfered the secularization in Germany and Bismarck got information, that the Church was sponsored by French government and it would post a threat to his German and European policies.²¹

Bismarck also met some rumors about war as Germany was ready to swallow Belgium and Bismarck sent Radowitz to Petersburg as ambassador, which was recognized as asking Russian neutrality when a new German-Franco war. So as to prevent France from its recovery, Bismarck inspired a newspaper to posit article title with "Krieg-in-Sicht".²² Unfortunately, other great powers had intensive reactions, while it was Germany, not France, the largest threat to European ruling powers, otherwise France should be supported and prevented from crisis.

Britain, with Russia and Austria declared speech, against preemptive actions of Germany, and the latter found it was so lonely in international situation.

Those affairs gave Bismarck a good lesson, for necessity of a new diplomatic routine.

2. Bismarck's *Realpolitik*²³ in Berlin Congress

The Berlin Congress was an important affair in Germany history, which indicated, all European great powers pushed Germany should take more responsibilities. It was a trap for Germany, to become the focus of the conflict.

Since always, Austria and Russia urged to expand their influences in Balkan peninsular respectively. In 1875, by the Bosnian folk uprising against Turkish suppression, both powers began to intervene the situation and grasped self-interests,

²¹ Otto Pflanze, Bismarck and the Development of Germany, Volume II: The Period of Consolidation, 1871-1880. 1990, Princeton UP. pp. 189.

²² German words. They mean "war in sight".

²³ *Realpolitik* is a German word, literally means real politics. Here it refers realistic oriented policies, to deal with international affairs. I'd analyze it in the analysis part.

even in price of carve-up Turkey. In April, 1878 Russia compelled Turkey signing the Treaty of San Stefano, which confirmed a “Great Bulgaria” as Russian influential sphere. That result stimulated nerves of Austria, for its territorial loss; and for Britain, in fear of Russian controlling of Black Sea and a port in Mediterranean.

At the beginning Germany was only bystander facing this crisis, but great powers all expected it to fulfil its “responsibilities” to ratify the treaty. After failure of avoiding holding the congress, Bismarck had no choice but to be the host in Berlin. In the Berlin Congress, he exerted himself in neutrality, to cover the divergences of Austria, Britain and Russia, in prevent any of them allying France against Germany.

Although Bismarck performed fairly, solving the conflicts at least superficially and covering the gap between Russia and Austria (those three countries set a nominal agreement in 1873²⁴). In Russia, there still was an anti-Germany tide. Those facts indicated, that “low profile” would not help Germany stand and deal with other powers, it was urgent to face the truth, that Germany had been the pivot point of Europe (even to the world), and it was urgent to discover a new approach to communicate with other great powers and small states.

3. Bismarck’s alliance outline

The challenge was nothing but to create a new muster to build up a relative stable and peaceful external environment for Germany.

Fortunately, Bismarck found a possible proposal, when Bismarck handed went to Kissingen to do a recuperation in 1876, at where he did total reflection of his diplomatic policies and wrote a memorandum, coming up with some basic principles and diplomatic goals: Preventing an anti-Germany alliance and building stronger relationships with other powers as well.

There were five concrete goals set:

1. The profits and the hostilities from Russia and Austria were gravitated to Orient.
2. Russia held a strong position at Orient so as to prevent its coast by Black Sea, thus necessary to align with Germany.

²⁴ This alliance was called Schönbrunn Agreement, which was set by Austria and Russia, later Germany participated, as a loose structure.

3. Status quo Britain and Russia satisfied with, in interests they had and Germany had.

4. British disengagement with France, which was always hostile to Germany, because of Egypt and Mediterranean affairs.

5. Russia and Austria stayed in a situation, in which they were almost impossible to make an intrigue to opposite to Germany.²⁵

4. The League of Three Emperors

Under those judgments, to prevent the anti-Germany alliance, Bismarck began to establish his alliance system. The guiding thought was, “depriving the wish of one of our two grand rivals in field, connecting another one and revenging to us”.²⁶

In his calculation, the true threat comes from Russia rather than other countries, and only the anti-Germany group in Russia is a down-to-earth menace.

Logically, it seemed that he should directly connect with Russia. However, he in fact turned to connect Austria. Bismarck himself put forward that if he directly got alliance with Russia and rapidly bound German policies to Russia, Germany would therefore abandon other countries following the will of Russia. It made German policies be in an unequal position. Nevertheless, it was easier for Germany to prevent Austria from closing intimately to France and Russia in geographically and politically.

The negotiation with Austria was held on August 1879. Chancellors had a little dispute only on the anti-France responsibility, and it ended with Bismarck's compromise. The real obstacle of the negotiation was the emperor Wilhelm I. The old emperor yelled: “I am much ensured the revenge lust from Austria as France”²⁷, pressing Bismarck to reject Austrian proposal. Although Bismarck argued and requested piteously, the emperor was still unwilling to sign the treaty. At last, Bismarck used the resignation of the whole cabinet to intimidate him, and he eventually yielded. The treaty unequivocally indicated, as Empires both attacked by Russia, the High Contracting Parties are bound to offer assistance for each other with

²⁵ The Kissingen memorial of Bismarck. 15. Jun. 1877. Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871 - 1914: Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes, vol.2, pp. 153-154.

²⁶ Otto von Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerung, Berlin: Karl-Maria Guth, 2016, pp.198.

²⁷ Chancellor Bismarck to emperor Wilhelm I, emperor's notes. 24. Aug.1879. Die große Politik, vol.3, pp. 19

the whole war strength of their Empires. Moreover, if the attacking party of Contracting Parties is obviously or potentially supported by Russia, the obligation mentioned above would be equally operative until the end of the war.²⁸

According to Bismarck's original plan, the defensive alliance treaty was the first thread weaving the whole Europe alliance web,²⁹ and the next step was to contact with Russia. But he breached formal logic again. He positively promoted the "alliance in friendship" with Britain. He asked the British government, if Russia was against the friendship among Germany, Britain and Austria in Balkan, what Britain could do.

³⁰The answer of Britain was merely staying silent. Though the British government came up with better proposals later, but Bismarck ignored them and put them aside. The news of Dual Alliance and the contact of Britain and Germany spread like wildfire. Thus, Russian anti-Germany tide retrieved and pro-Germany ambassador Sabulov hastily headed to Berlin for discussing the Bismarck contacting affairs. At that moment, what Bismarck considered was, the alliance of all three countries rather than that of any two. Due to reaching the beneficial agreement with Russian, Bismarck concentrated on negotiation with Austria. Whereas Austria considered that the Dual Alliance would support its expansion in Balkan and there was no not confrontation with Russia, it would likely align with Britain to suppress Russia. Just then, British congress election helped Bismarck. The newly elected Gladstone cabinet advocated "European coordination" in liberalism meaning, which stood the opposite of Austria's engagements. Austria thus had no choice but to participate in the negotiation.

After arduous arguments and negotiations, the three countries all signed the treaty of Three Emperors League in 1881. Its key articles stated clearly that one of the High Contracting Parties should find itself at war with a fourth Great Power, and the two others shall maintain towards it benevolent neutrality and shall devote their efforts to

²⁸ Yale Law School, The Dual Alliance Between Austria-Hungary and Germany, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/dualalli.asp#art4>

²⁹ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, Oxford University Press, second edition, 1977, pp.298.

³⁰ Bismarck to envoy Radowitz, 14.Sep.1879, *Die große Politik*, vol.4, pp.7-10

the localization of the conflict. Furthermore, Russia respected Austria's interests in Balkan and principles of closing the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. The all three courts would negotiate the relevant new modifications.³¹

Thus Austria's critical interests, the nominal unification of Balkan, as well as Russia's core profit, the strait of Bosphorus, were both secured. This league also stipulated that both Austria and Russia must first negotiate with Germany before taking actions, which enabled the two countries to enter the German designed orbit and they would basically motion in the way not harmful to Germany. Particularly this alliance dug a gap between the two orient monarchies and France. For Austria, its external security circumstance was perfectly ameliorated, and there was no necessity to get aligned with France; and for Russia encountering French and British competitions, it must take it seriously with the alliance to Germany.

It was the kernel of Bismarck's alliance system.

5. Triple Alliance

After League of Three Emperors Bismarck met still uncertainty factor from Russia, namely the conquests in Balkan under Pan-Slavism. In 1882 occurred Skobelev affair, that the hero of Russo-Turkish-War General Skobelev visited Paris and Poland to preached Pan Slavism and argued Germany was the enemy of whole Slavic folks. Although the affair ended with resignation of Skobelev, Bismarck felt yet the potential menace and took some measures, as dragging to Romania and Italy to an alliance. At the beginning, Bismarck didn't care with the requests two countries, but at 1883, after Skobelev affair he turned to accept the contract between Romania and Austria and became one of allies of Romania.

And as for Italy, it was ambitious to occupy Tunisia alone, but the conquest was failed by French interference and the latter swallowed Tunisia as well. And with historical grudges in Italian unification, there was serious contradiction between those two countries. It was significant for Italy to get aligned with others to confront France and stabilize internal situation.

³¹ Yale Law School, The Three Emperors League, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/empleagu.asp>

Italy tried to get aligned with Austria but the latter looked down the former's value and set this on air on purpose. In February 1882, Bismarck urged Austria to continue the negotiation with Italy.³² In the chancellor's eyes it was important to keep Italy in alliance and thus minimize the possibilities of conflicts between Italy and Austria. That was of global advantage.

In this process, some high officials, such as Holstein argued that was not rational and valuable to align with Italy, since its mediocre strengths and complicated domestic power struggles, more ever that would undermine troubles with Pope in Christian believes, which was recently recovered from Cultural Struggle.³³ And this treaty mainly profitable to Austria rather than Germany and of course Germany would take some risks, Bismarck still persisted.

In 20th May 1882, three countries signed the treaty. The most important article for Italy stated as, the reinforcement of monarchism and in the case Italy was attacked by France the two other Contracting Parties shall be bound to lend help and assistance with their forces. And, in case a power out of the alliance would threaten the security of the states of one of the Contracting Parties, the threatened Party should find itself forced on that account to make war against it, and the two others bind themselves to observe towards their ally a benevolent neutrality.³⁴ Thus those three countries build up a military coalition when suffered from Franco-Russian invasion, and when Germany initiatively attacked France other twos would be neutral and if France and Russia get coalition to fight, the twos would participate the war against France and Russia.

This treaty was a supplementary to Three Emperor League, in favor to stabilize Italian domestic situation and more support to Austria in Balkan affairs. The functions I would discuss in following parts.

³² Under-secretary Busch to Ambassador Reus at Austria, 28. Feb.1882. Die große Politik, vol.3, pp.211-213.

³³ Norman Rich, Friedrich von Holstein: Political and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and Wilhelm II, New York : Cambridge University Press, 1965, vol.1, pp.110.

³⁴ Grenville, John; Wasserstein, Bernard, The Major International Treaties of the Twentieth Century: A History and Guide with Texts. Routledge. 2013, pp. 38.

6.Relationship with Britain and France

Before 1880s, Britain and France were still over the edge of Bismarck's system, while those two great countries were all powerful and could shock Germany's security.

Bismarck realized he must do something to involve them into his orbit, with patience.

The main key was Egypt.

Egypt was an important field in Africa and East Mediterranean, by where the Suez Canal was built up in 1869, its strategic importance was obvious to the world.

Particularly for Britain, Egypt was a fatal entrance to Red Sea and India, to maintain its colonial empire.

Besides France was also a traditional colonial big power especially in Egypt with enormous economic interests. It intended to grasp control of Egypt from Britain.

Bismarck grasped this point in his acuteness and decided to intervene British-Franco relationship and alienate them.

In 1882 Britain and France respectively interfered into Egyptian folk uprising, for seizing its sovereign. So as to alienate them, thereby, Germany advised "European coordination" upon this affair and definitely it failed as Ottoman Sultan rejected to send an envoy to attend the conference. As Egyptian situation deteriorated and called aids at Britain and France, those two powers decided to move positively, and at last Britain accomplished the entire occupation of Egypt and made deep hostility with France. The latter was isolated in a step further.³⁵

In this crisis, Germany played an important role. The appeal of Germany ingratiated France and at the same time encouraged Britain to take measures positively. The so-called "European coordination" led to an open hostile attitude between two countries and definitely led to collapse of coactions, while both powers were all eager to conquer Egypt solely. The crisis ended as, British military control of Suez, and a gap between Britain and France.

Beside the achievements of setting a wedge between those two countries, Bismarck also played the card colonial coordination with Britain. In a series of conflicts and

³⁵ A. G. Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882". *The Journal of African History*. July 1986, 27 (2): pp.384

communications, Germany set some colonies in West Africa and East Africa, in 90% of German colonies before WWI.³⁶ Particularly Germany occupied some significant colonies in Kenya and Tanzania, which held sword on the upstream of Nil river, in terms of British and French concerns. That caused tight strategic connection between Germany and Britain, and Germany always push France fighting for leadership of Nile against Britain.

For France Bismarck usually appraised the latter's actions of struggling colonial profits. As in 1884 Britain tried to transfer Congo river to Portugal and enjoyed most-favored-nation treatments, Bismarck held the Berlin Conference 1884-1885. The Conference decided the free ship traffic of Congo river, and the Effective Occupation principle, when a power set a colonial territory in Africa, it must govern it and explore and utilize it economically as much as possible.

This principle set strait and conflict seed between Britain and France, for the "real possession" was either of clear meaning and could be overturned.³⁷

Thus, wrangles and conflicts upon Nile and Egypt became the main stream of British-French relationship, and they all had to depend on Germany's support and profit-exchange, then gravitated into Bismarck's orbit.

7. Bulgarian Crisis and Reinsurance Treaty with Russia

By League of Three Emperors, Balkan would not be easily peaceful, but encountered potential crisis. From 1885 in Bulgaria occurred a serious of uprisings against pro-Russia forces and combined as "Great Bulgaria" in effect of reducing Russian spheres of influence. Thus, Russia appealed to hold agreement of Berlin Conference in 1878, but encountered obstructs from Britain and lured Austria, which led to intensive situation and Serbo-Bulgarian war. Although great powers set an agreement to stabilize situation but in 1886 Russia conspired a coup d'état to control Bulgaria, which caused severe rebounds definitely, from Britain and more from Austria, for it

³⁶ C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialism: British Foreign Policy 1878—1902*, Routledge, 1967, pp.61.

³⁷ Ajala, Adekunle, "The Nature of African Boundaries", *Africa Spectrum*, Institute of African Affairs at GIGA, Hamburg, 1983, 18 (2): pp.177–189.

was a disaster for them, facing Russian forces in Black Sea and East Mediterranean. The Austrian Premier yelled “any state couldn’t have priority to take military interventions or set protectorate”, and if Russia did anything intensified situation, Austria would take “decisive standpoint”³⁸. This diplomatic cliché declared the bankruptcy of Three Emperor League.

Here Germany faced the classical security dilemma: to support any side would cause itself becoming the focus of conflicts, when it supported Austria, that would have a deterrent effect towards Russia, which would destroy all works to keep situation controllable and attract all safety pressure from Austria; otherwise standing with Russia to push Austria would also cause Austrian safety deterioration therefore potential pressure on Germany itself.

Besides voice of fighting against Russia, and building alliance with Russia but except Austria,³⁹ Bismarck took an alternative, which was proved up as successful approach to solve the crisis. The alternative had two parts:

The part one was, a new agreement to stabilize bilateral relationship of Germany and Russia, at beginning of 1887. At first they dealt a draft that confirmed Russian benevolent neutrality when German-Franco war, and thus Germany recognized the special status of Russian in Bulgaria and benevolent neutrality when Russian occupied the Bosphorus strait. However, this draft couldn’t satisfy Russian appetite, so Russian people put the draft aside on purpose.

Facing this difficulty, Bismarck began to compose anti-Russia force, in terms of dragging it back. By the excuse of “Boulangier Incident”, a public chauvinism event, appealing alliance with Russia to confront Germany, in France, Bismarck positively connected Britain, to push the latter holding responsibilities to support Austria in matter of Balkan, while Germany had no choice but increasing military measure and budgets to cope with the improving pressure from France. By those maneuvers Russia felt the phenomenon that anti-Russia coalition was still on the way, and there was no

³⁸ William L. Langer, *European Alliance and Alignments 1871—1890*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950, pp.368-369.

³⁹ Norman Rich and M. H. Fisher (ed.), *the Holstein Papers: the Memoirs, Diaries, and Correspondence of Friedrich von Holstein, 1837—1909*, vol.2, pp.267.

so much possibility to avoid German influences to move freely, in Balkan and Black Sea. In May 1887, this incident was cool-down, and Russia chose to go back the table of negotiation. In 18th June 1887, the Reinsurance Treaty was signed. The core article stated as, when one of the contracting power was at war with a third great power, the other would maintain a benevolent neutrality towards it, and would devote its efforts to the localization of the conflict. Except wars against Austria or France”.⁴⁰

They both made negative compromise in neutrality, as recognizes the rights historically acquired by Russia in the Balkan Peninsula, and European and mutually obligatory character of the principle of the closing of the Straits of the Bosphorus and of the Dardanelles.

Superficially it was a treaty only Germany tried to flatter Russia, but de facto it wasn't. This treaty played a role of the substitution of a Russian-Franco coalition, therefore perfectly prevent the participation of France, and more important, all promises Germany made was subverted in the Second Mediterranean Agreements.

8. The Second Mediterranean Agreements

Here came the second part of Bismarck's maneuvers, he also constructed an anti-Russia coalition in actual effect, by utilizing the fruits that coordination and rely-on from Britain.

That was of Mediterranean affair, as the handling land, no matter in Balkan peninsula or in Egypt all demanded the control of sea, therefore Mediterranean affair was a pivot to meet urges of Britain and Russia at the same time.

although they had diverse determined orientations; Italy could also have some coordination with Britain, in terms of France, while those two countries also had some historical and territorial problems. As British government's core fighting target was controlling of Egypt and Mediterranean, in the security of Suez—Bosphorus—India, it would not hesitate to gravitate into Bismarck's blue drawing, although with some

⁴⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Web. 10 Feb. 2016
<<http://www.britannica.com/event/Reinsurance-Treaty>>.

doubts and suspicions, especially when July 1887 the situation in Bulgaria intensified again. In November 1887 Bismarck wrote to Salisbury, as when Austria was threatened by Russia, otherwise Britain or Italy was attacked by France, Germany had no choice by participating the war, that became the sign of German attitude towards Mediterranean affairs. Thus, Britain could in relief exchange diplomatic notes, upon the (second) Mediterranean Agreements.

In the new treaty, those three countries announced to protect Near East's peace and status quo, free navigation of Black Sea, and Turkish authority on Bulgaria.⁴¹

The second Mediterranean Agreements was weird by formal logic: at first, Germany performed positively in whole process and it had alignments with Austria and Italy, more ever it possessed important influence in Mediterranean affair, but it was not a member in this treaty. Secondly, this treaty was severely contradicted to Reinsurance Treaty with Russia.

However, exactly by those contradictions, could Bismarck build up his diplomatic system and interesting international relations, alike galaxy. Other great powers were all move in German orbit and politicians achieved a no-war era for decades, even after Bismarck's resignation.

In following analytical part I would, by two branches of realism and other necessary theories, explain the rationality of Bismarck's system and maneuvers.

⁴¹ W. N. Medicott. The Mediterranean Agreements 1887. The Slavonic Review Vol. 5, No. 13 (Jun., 1926), pp. 66-88

5. Analysis

“Strong one must suffer from envy” refers to a motto of Realism. As an eternal truth, it was always trusted and scrutinized by Bismarck.

When Germany unified the original broken zone of Middle Europe, the geopolitical circumstances and strength-structure were unavoidably disrupted and transferred into a new era.

The new era meant the unification, and the uprising of Germany Empire was the end of broken Central Europe. A new territory, which could alter the situation, must do that. Indeed, even a tiny movement will cause a resonance.

Since the second industrial revolution promotes the expansion and flourishing of production, respective great powers could afford a greater war. Such kind of war would be more lasting and it would be more expensive than Seven-Years-War and Thirty-Years-War.⁴²

5.1 Can Defensive Realism explain the policies of Bismarck?

5.1.1 Pros

Globally, the diplomatic system of Bismarck is defensive, and it is in favor of peace and German security, rather than conquest and hegemony. In this section, I'd analyze the global goal of the policies and process of alliance.

1. The global goal

When the international relations were originally founded, the situation in the second half of 19th century was standard anarchic world and great powers fulfilled Power Politics, which implied interfering small states' territory as well as material profits and building up the protectorate. Simultaneously, all the great powers were suspicious

⁴² Those two wars were all macroscopic and destructive wars in Europe, in early modern era. All states involved in, suffered from chaos caused by wars.

with each other in this process, and they set barriers for each other for preventing the other's obstacles.

By historical developments since the 17th Century, Europe had become the center of the world, in which it included several great powers. Generally speaking, those great powers had vast colonies. By contrast, German unification was relative late. Because of the unification, it integrated once fragile and fragmented territories, which not only confirmed the power distribution from Defensive Realism but also reinforced the degree of such power distribution. Therefore, under the efforts of German, they constructed the ideal situation hypothesized by Defensive Realism.

Also, Bismarck realized this condition in his acuteness. He oriented his state as "the potential hegemony in European continent", rather than a realistic hegemony.

Furthermore, he exerted himself in the rest life to avoid the old disastrous pitfalls Charles V. and Napoleon had fallen into: the excessive military expansion made so many adversaries surround themselves. In the end, it caused multilateral losses to their empires. It is a kind of defensive perspective undoubtedly. For Bismarck, after the unification, he never advocated or appealed German parliament to start a war anywhere. Germany was in urgent need of peace and stability. Because the nationalism flourished in 19th century, people were bound to the belonged nation state. In general, conquering war would not fulfill its purpose. However, a serious swamp would trouble the invasive one.

Besides Germany, there were still several great powers in Europe. Once Germany encountered a Two-Front-War, according to the Introduction and Historical Overview of this paper, it would bring a disaster for the national security. Thus, Germany needed allies, in form of an alliance system, to sustain its survival and security.⁴³ This is clearly a thought of Defensive Realism, and it is often cited and discussed as example of Defensive Realism.

However, in the Wilhelm II. Era, on the contrary, the worldwide hegemony turned into the diplomatic theme of the Empire. Challenging British navy and expansion of

⁴³ Otto von Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerung*, Berlin: Karl-Maria Guth, 2016, vol.2, pp.180. pp.198.

colonies in Africa and Asia were all in the scheme. Thus, all the other great powers necessarily turned into Germany's rivals, and all of them were destroyed in a World War.

At the following sections, I will discuss a case, namely Bismarck's alliance policies with Austria and Russia.

2.Process of making the alliance

The stabilizer of his system was the alliance with Austria, the so-called Dual Alliance. According to the historical overview in this paper, the alliance was the most significant defensive measure from Bismarck's system.

The main trunk of this system was the League of Three Emperors, which was defensive as well.

Bismarck had got report from ST. Petersburg since 1878: The force of Russia was recovered from decline. Thus, Germany itself would be underestimated. Is there the necessity of alliance with Austria?

In telegraphs Bismarck sent to Emperor Wilhelm I., the chancellor emphasized the importance of Austrian topography, the special legitimate meaning for Germany and German folk. At the same time, on another side of the coin, Bismarck depicted, even exaggerated the threat from Russia.⁴⁴

Besides the prelude, he particularly deposited the potential danger, that when Austria went to the side of France and Russia, that Germany must be the first one to suffer from, alike Kaunitz coalition⁴⁵ in history. As "The Russian armies were of 400,000 men, and with force of France, both grown up. Russian people had already become more and more unpeaceful... The Russian Tsar would expand its influences and European wide no statemen could stop him".⁴⁶ The alliance with Austria should be decisive. Only by this kind of defensive alliance can Germany keep its security and there would be more possibility of other alliance policies and movements.

⁴⁴ Bismarck to Wilhelm I. 31. Aug.1879. Die große Politik, vol.3, pp.32.

⁴⁵ Konitz coalition refers the coalition set up by Duke of Kaunitz-Rietberg in Seven-Years-War. This coalition aimed at aligning with France and Russia, but isolating Prussia. Bismarck used this item to refer any anti-Germany alliance, especially by connecting France and Russia.

⁴⁶ Bismarck to Wilhelm I. 24. Aug.1879. Die große Politik, vol.3, pp.17

There was a tidbit in the negotiation, to depict diverse attitudes of Bismarck and the emperor vividly. The emperor Wilhelm I. played an obstacle role, who in his mind was occupied by monarchical unity and relative with Russia, as the Tsar was his nephew; on the other hand, Austria was Habsburg dynasty, always opposite to German Empire's former, Prussia. The obstinate emperor argued "I can feel the revanchist desire from Austria as from France".⁴⁷ Equaling Austria as France, that was an overdoing metaphor, as France was the real rival of German Empire before and after the unification, which indicated the anxiety of the Emperor and the dangers of judging national affairs by personal emotions. In this case Bismarck one more time sent the memorial to enlighten the Emperor, which was the fatal and which was trivia. In Bismarck's eyes those obsolete monarchical ideology was not the essence of international relations, especially at the era Power Politics. Only by the alliance based on national interests and other maneuvers, can a state protect its security. Thus, Germany could interfere into the Balkan affairs and Black Sea affairs, which created more chips and chances to build alliance up.

The treaty stated the contracting parties would bind together when any of them suffering from a third power's invasion or attack. In the real situation, this treaty was particularly in prevent of Russia. As the Defensive realism, powers all take precautions against each other. Here, Russia was eager with conquering Turkey for religious, and more important geopolitical reason. If Russia succeeded, Austria would be next one which was squeezed and threaten by Russia, since its strengths were weakest in the three orient monarchical states, and the terrain it contained was easily to suffer from external attacks. When Austria was defeated, Germany would encounter a much greater security pressure. That could be recognized as a kind of "balancing" in defensive meaning.

Somebody might have the question: whether Bismarck would like to make an alliance really against Russia, even in risk of a war? The answer was clear: No. In Bismarck's

⁴⁷ Ibid. pp.19.

plan, the next step after Dual Alliance was, dragging Russia into a new, bigger alliance with Germany and Austria.

Bismarck always insisted the significance of cooperating and allying with Russia, as the only correct way was “Tsar quit the unconnected situation with its two neighbors”.⁴⁸ In this logic, the alliance with Austria became a precondition in favor of League of Three Emperors (see Historical Overview). Also, Bismarck made that clear somewhere, “I knew once we fixed things with Austrian, Russian would positively get close”⁴⁹.

In the new League, it was, by German dominant status, more convenient for Germany, to reconcile the conflicts from the other twos. From the very beginning of German-Russian connection, Bismarck required that this new alliance should be of three states, instead of two, because that was his plan in Kissingen memorial. Indeed, including those three monarchical states in one circle could help to reconcile the divergences. For dragging Russia, Bismarck promised that this was a defensive alliance in favor of Russian profits in the Strait, and fear of a continental coalition to against Russia.⁵⁰

Then, this alliance was also effective to dig out the gap between Austria and the Western Great powers and prevent a new Kaunitz coalition, which definitely aimed at Germany. Also, this League helped stabilize Russia and Austria on influential sphere in Balkan. The stability of this area contained for years. Besides, that was an important step to block France’s participation, in any form, into the coalition against Germany. The target set in Kissingen memorial was reached.

In the Defensive Realism, the powers could make coordination as help to each other, in favor of peace and encounter-balancing. In the case of Bismarck’s system, man could see a typical example. The “help” mainly indicated that both sides would hold their behaviors in sensitive areas: a balancing.

Then this alliance would be comprehended as the “coordination” in Defensive

⁴⁸ Record of Bismarck. Die große Politik, vol.3, pp.13.

⁴⁹ Otto Pflanze, Bismarck and the Development of Germany, Princeton University Press, 1971, vol2, pp.509.

⁵⁰ Envoy Radowitz to Secretary of State Herbert von Bismarck, 15. Aug. 1879. Die Große Politik, vol.3, pp.139-140, pp. 143-145.

Realism, which achieved a kind of legitimacy concerning common security. This strategy functioned as usual, when the League had been actually broken up in 1887, during the Bulgaria Crisis (see Historical Overview). At that time, Bismarck still emphasized “as I am the chancellor, I would not agree with the preemptive war against Russia”.⁵¹ In 1890, at the eve of his resignation, he resisted, in a written statement to new crowned emperor Wilhelm II, it was unnecessary, and unwise to start a war against Russia. The relationship between Germany and Russia was “good and clear”.⁵² By those words and remedies as the Reinsurance and Second Mediterranean Treaties, Bismarck exerted himself to reinforce the mutual coordination by any possibility. Throughout Bismarck era, there was no anti-Germany alliances and wars. International society accepted rising and status of Germany. Bismarck’s alliance system achieved a long-term security and external stability of German Empire, that could be seen as a triumph of Defensive Realism. The sequence after old chancellor’s resignation offered a demonstration from the negative side. As new chancellor and diplomats abandoned Bismarck’s defensive thoughts and his alliance system, but turned to the hostility against Russia and Britain, the peaceful status quo existed not anymore, what Bismarck was afraid of really happened in 1892, in result of Russo-Franco alliance.⁵³ Since then Germany met a diplomatic hard time. There were many more examples, which could demonstrate the validity of the Defensive Realism in this case. At the next section I’d give some contra details to illustrate the weakness of this theory in comprehending this thesis’s topic.

5.1.2 Contrasts:

Interestingly, man can find some characteristics as well, of this alliance system, not to

⁵¹ Bismarck to Reuß (Ambassador in Austria), 15. Dec. 1887. *Die Große Politik*, vol.6, pp.24-28.

⁵² Bismarck to emperor Wilhelm II, 17. Mar.1890. *Die Große Politik*, vol.6, pp.125.

⁵³ After Bismarck’s resignation, German government didn’t renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia. The latter found to meet diplomatic isolation and had to be intimate to France. In 1892, Russia and France officially signed the treaty, a military alliance to build up. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Web. 10 Feb. 2016, < <https://global.britannica.com/topic/Dual-Alliance>>

be covered by the Defensive Realism. In this section, I'd figure out and analyze some puzzles in the alliance system, power situation and polar system. Those points could be recognized as flaws of Defensive Realism, and breakthrough by Bismarck in diplomatic practices.

1. The puzzles within the alliance system

In Defensive Realism: Under the same international condition, horizontally different states could take distinctive measures to cope with the challenges. Unlike France which started wars against the rest of Europe, or Italy which fulfilled the national unification and stayed quietly by their powerful neighborhoods, Germany chose to align with some partners and altered the international order somehow. Here, man could find some puzzles concerning the system construction.

Option of allies

There is a rational and plausible deduction in the Defensive Realism, that more alliance and allies can achieve more stable peace and security. However, Bismarck adopted a series of “contradicted” actions to the alliance with Britain.

After the Dual Alliance, Bismarck established a positive connection with Britain. In term of British standpoint, when Germany had conflicts with Russia, for “the friendship with Britain and Austria”, British Prime Minister Disraeli answered “(Britain) keeping silent”. That was the rational answer because that was the card in Britain's hands, as if there was no fear of attack from the rear, when Austria and Germany really attacked Russia. However, Bismarck noted at the margin, “nothing else?” and put it aside as it didn't exist.⁵⁴ In reality, Bismarck utilized the connection with Britain as a method to impose pressure on Russia and prevent Russia from standing close to France.

More, at the time when it seemed a chance that Germany and Austria could connect, even align with Britain in 1887 (see Historical Overview), Bismarck was anxious again and pushed Austria to refuse British request. In the eyes of Bismarck, it was

⁵⁴ Münster (German Ambassador at Britain) to Bismarck, 14. Oct.1879. Die Große Politik, vol.4, pp.11-12.

quite hard to align with Britain in real meaning. When making Dual Alliance, there was not enough chip in the chancellor's hand to play with, Bismarck only utilized this communication to push Russian into the League. Notably, the most significant reason was, that Germany, as a rising power, could not make cooperation in all dimensions. The co-ordination could be possible in some certain areas, such as colonial affairs, which were far from the sensitive areas for Britain. Nonetheless, any too obvious actions to align with Britain would cause British and French vigilances (relationship with France was in same logic and easier). They would be anxious of their overseas profit spheres and worry about that Germany would squeeze the formerly less space in European continent. If so, Bismarck's alliance system would be damaged, advantageous status of Germany would lose. Blind alliance would reward itself. However, the things were different for Austria and Russia because they were all the relative vulnerable sides. Particularly Austria would be eager to participate in an alliance to keep its security. For Russia, confronting with the Dual Alliance as 2:1 power ratio. It clearly had made the most profitable decision for Germany, for no rear-menace, and more power to deal with Britain. That was the reason why Bismarck always focus on those two monarchial states.

Attitudes towards allies

In Defensive Realism, it is a trend to state that the relationships would converge rather than differentiate. Because of both sides stopping at a boundary, the both sides could not override the other one, but should be "respectful" to each other. Therefore, the world situation would be stable. Nevertheless, from last section I made, the structure of international relations was not so perfect, but with cracks. The I will present some evidences to show Bismarck's diverse attitudes towards his allies.

Regarding the common security responsibility, man intended to consider, that Germany should support Austria to fight for its profits in the Balkan, even a war against Russia. In the negotiation of League of Three Emperor, Austria premier also indicated, that the existed Dual Alliance should allow and support priority of Austria

in expansion, since Austria was “ally” of Germany, that exactly opposed against Russia. However, Bismarck spoke clearly in an attitude of deterrence: Germany would not support Austrian’s irrational measures in Balkan and East Mediterranean and the latter should restrain itself in prevent of annoying Russia. No matter Dual Alliance or the League of Three Emperors, Germany held the dominance, instead of the real equilibrium that all three powers could sit in the same level and made discussion. During the negotiation, Bismarck said to Russia officials “The only unfaithful great power is Austria”⁵⁵. Moreover, in the Bulgaria Crisis (see historical overview), he warned of Austrian diplomatic minister that if there was anything else to fight against Russia, the Pan-Slavism would be over again and that would jeopardize the interests of German.⁵⁶ Bismarck would never allow Austria to get out of the bridle. According to plan in Kissingen memorial, he had noted clearly, that, in prevention of intimation of Russia and France. So, any Austrian actions further than should, could not be appreciated. Anything could isolate Russia, de facto was a poison for German external circumstance.

To Russia, in the face-to-face talk, Bismarck emphasized all the way the friendship between two states as well as the significance to the stabilization of Balkan, Strait and East Mediterranean. On the hinterland, he would always take countering measures, such as facilitating the Second Mediterranean Agreements (however Germany hid behind Britain and Italy) to suppress Russia. Also, by Bismarck’s support, the Germany military made military strategies against Russia at the east frontier. (details see next section) All those behaviors showed, Bismarck would not like to lose agency in face with that East European giant.

Attitude towards war

The Defensive Realism also argued, states are not as vulnerable as men are in a state of nature.⁵⁷ In other words, the existence of a state could be strong, in front the

⁵⁵ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, Oxford University Press, second edition, 1977, pp.307.

⁵⁶ Reuß to Bismarck, 9. Dec. 1885. *Die Große Politik*, vol.4, pp.264-265

⁵⁷ Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma”, *World Politics* 30:2 (1978): pp.172.

external threats. However, Germany's situation during the Bulgaria Crisis, was very perilous, to meet a **great irreversible over-take**. In the Historical Overview, I made a brief presentation. As between Austria and Russia occurred a war, that must be a great one, Germany must be involved into this great war, which could damage or destroy empires. If Germany believed its strengths carelessly, so looking forwards to a war in haste, that could be dire at all.

Thus, there were diverse attitudes of Bismarck and Bismarck's alliance system for different states. The decisive factor was its strategic position required in the alliance system, which could not be explained by the Defensive Realism.

2.The structure of international relations is not always distribution of power and static.

One of the most impressive theoretical point of the Defensive is, the boundaries and power borders are set by the both sides, since all expense their strengths over and have to stop in front of a boundary. That is so-called" distribution of power".

In this kind of situation, it is easy for a state to slip into a low profile to please other states, especially the big rivals, to diminish the danger of conflicts. There were many cases in this logic, such as Japanese attitude towards USA in 1980s. At that case Japan reinforced the military alliance more tightly and positively deflating Japanese Yen to balance economic relations. However, Germany opted an independent way, by taking agency and centralizing the power.

Instead of balancing with "low profile" of Defensive Realism, Bismarck diplomatic measures was perfect instance to dispute: The alliance system led by Germany was constructed, so as to solve the security problem in lofty tone, since simply keep its status quo wouldn't give others the secure impression, but more severe harbor suspicions.

Instead of expanding until no more momentum, after the unification, although it had outstanding strengths, Germany fulfilled new type of policies, as initiatively helping other powers relieve security pressures.

The Dual Alliance and following League of Three Emperors were the first step, and the Triple Alliance was the next step, as a supplementary. Those steps provided those states with security and at some terms security confidence. Then contracts with Britain and France, was a further step, in a symbol of Berlin Conference, to coordinate their colonial affairs. The last step Bismarck made was, Reinsurance and Mediterranean Treaties, offering both Russian and British sides stability. In every step, he always provided helps to others, not seize profits aggressively. However, thereby reversely he centralized the strengths and powers for Germany, since all other great powers were tied with Germany tightly, those powers had conflicts reciprocally. Bismarck increased number and weights of chip in his hands, to push adversaries. This process was motional and concentration of power, not static and distribution of power.

By the moment, Bismarck's resignation in 1890, Germany had hold enough agency in international situation, thus, those results challenged another assessment of Defensive Realism.

3. Bipolar or triple polar system?

In Defensive Realism, the bipolar system is the best, most stable model to encounter balancing and meet peace, and the members of polar should not increase but decrease. The result of the international-relation-evolution should be the bipolar system.

Nevertheless, the history of 19th century told another story.

Although Britain and Russia formed a situation, which could be recognized as bipolar system in 19th century, and the conflicts between those two great powers was the mainstream of 19th century diplomacy called by some scholars, Bismarck still exerted himself, to make Germany a real pole in the world. Based on the last section, since Berlin Congress, Germany had already become a pole, as a pivot of power system. The most significant example was Berlin Conference. The host of a big-scale international conference is always a symbol of power influence.

In this conference, great powers discussed colonial topics, as result, they signed the principle of "Effective Occupation". Berlin handle the whole conference topic and the

discussion direction. Thus, the fertilized and well administrated German East Africa was sustained by Germany, and the most strategic-important Egypt and downstream of Nile were still under strait of Britain and France, that left huge conflict space and interference space for Germany.⁵⁸ Both those two western European states built friendship with Germany, to confirm no rear-menace from upstream of Nile and neutrality in Mediterranean; while Russia and Austria had to stand by, in no alternative to involve into African affairs. When Berlin altered its foreign policies, other great powers must correspondingly adjust. Germany became a third pole in international relations undoubtedly. That caused a relevant stability, instead of bipolar model from Defensive realism.

By last two sections, it was not hard to find, that the mutual relationships of other great powers, such as British-Russian, and British-Franco, all in diverse level became severed. In my analysis above, they could be concluded as, while Bismarck's successful alliance system worked.

Overall, Bismarck's system was not to deal with Russia, or Britain alone, but always dragging some partners. In a sense, Germany twisted the structure of international relations, to make them no longer even alike crystal structure, but in orbits. Bismarck exerted himself, to make Germany as the **center** of the orbit system, providing others with dynamics to move. It was no wonder, diverse states would meet different attitudes, and positions.

5.2 Can Offensive Realism explain the policies of Bismarck?

In this part I will mainly focus on Bismarck's diplomatic policies to Russia France and Britain, not only in Europe but also worldwide.

⁵⁸ This kind of conflict lasted still after Bismarck's resignation, e.g. Fashoda crisis, in 1898. Both sides stood by the edge of conflict at Sudan.

5.2.1 Pros

In Offensive Realism, the so-called equilibrium does not exist in the real international relations. One state should focus on the proactive “Self-Help” but not the defensive meaning. In this section, I’d discuss matters of military, material strength accumulation and power used in practices of Bismarck.

1. Force of military

Rather than just a military strategy, it still needs to cope with the changes and challenges from a diplomatic perspective.

The German army played a significant role in this process. A German officer once proudly told an Austrian diplomatist: “The one million armies we have are the promise of future balance.”⁵⁹ Helmuth von Moltke (also known as Moltke the Elder), the chief of staff of German Army, was a brilliant field marshal. Although there were some disputes with Bismarck, Moltke the Elder still resisted to accord with the chancellor, for coordinating politics and military and promising the normal function of the diplomatic policies. Moltke’s military strategies are part of Bismarck’s diplomatic system.

In 1877, through some modifications, Moltke confirmed the grand military plan to deal with the tough Two-Front-Wars. His plan, in short, was, West Defensive & East Attack.

In the west, the means of increasing military measures of France was implemented. According to Moltke, it would be the top rival of Germany. Thus, it required the German main force. In the view of Moltke, it had no need to start strategic attack against France there. However, relying on the Vosges Mountains, which was Elsaß-Lothringen, and by the boundaries, it was easier and more effective for German armies to arrange defensive fortifications. However, for French armies, the mobility space was too narrow by the boundaries. They could move only in the narrow tunnel left side of the mountains. In this place, it was easy to suffer from ambush and

⁵⁹ Helmut Boehme, ed. *The Foundation of the German Empire: Selected Documents*, London: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp.16.

besieging. By Metz bastion, the solidest and strongest bastion in Europe,⁶⁰ it was so challengeable for French armies to break through and march into hinterland of Germany. Apart from this perfect plan, Moltke the Elder also envisaged a situation that Germany armies were defeated backward of Rhein. If so, the armies would reassemble by Mainz and did counteroffensive.⁶¹



Picture 2. The west situation of Germany

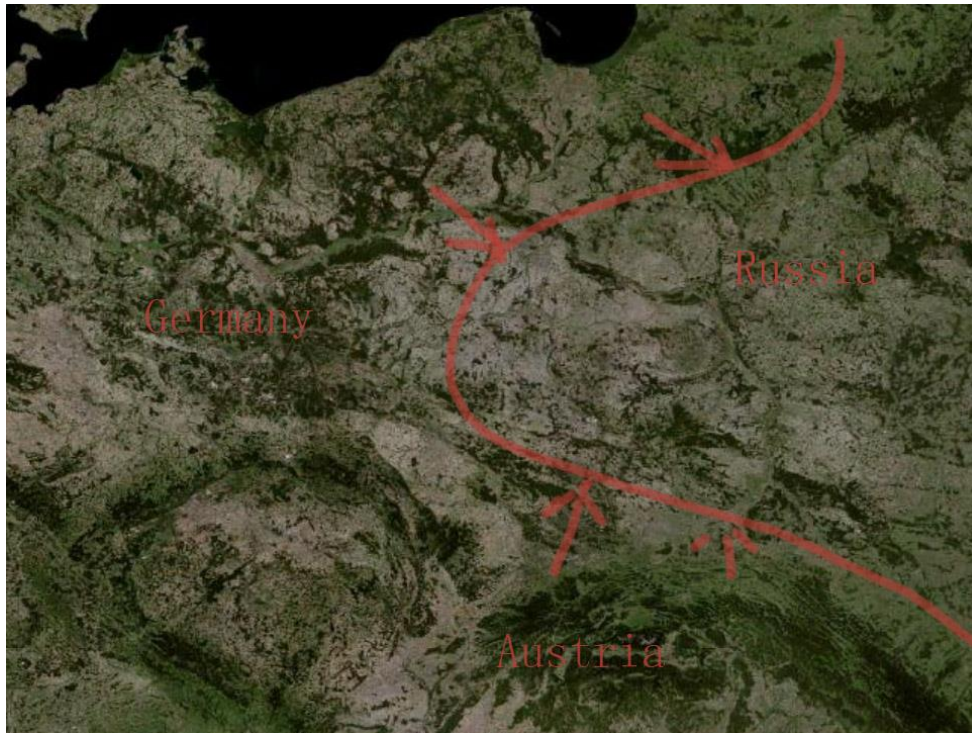
In the east, due to long boundaries, it was not convenient for defense, but attack. More favorably, under the assistance of Austria, the attacks against Russia could be remarkable. Moltke's plan was mainly to occupy Russian Poland from both northern and southern sides.⁶² Then uprisings of suppressed minority folks in Russia must happen. The fighting capabilities of Russian armies would be damaged. All of those tactics were served for a favorable bargaining table with Russia. When

⁶⁰ Friederich Engels, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Werke. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED. Berlin, 1968, vol. 21, pp.445.

⁶¹ Gerhard Ritter, The Schlieffen Plan: Critique of a Myth, Praeger, 1979, pp.19-20.

⁶² Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1649-1945, Oxford University Press, 1955, pp.273. And, Gerhard Ritter, The Schlieffen Plan: Critique of a Myth, pp.20.

Germany armies made it, Russia was easy to take a negotiation. Thus, France at the west front could not stand alone anymore. In characteristics of conservatism and control, this marshal plan got Bismarck's endorsement, and served as cornerstone of Bismarck's policies.



Picture 3. The east situation of Germany

It's worthwhile figuring out, that this plan was a pre-arranged plan, to deal with foreign attacks and contribute to diplomatic actions, when even a crisis became the Two-Front-Wars. It helped control the situations, instead of preemptive war against double sides, or intensifying situations.

2. Material strengths accumulation

Bismarck was a believer of solid material strength. Thus, his policies thought highly of material strengths accumulation, both diplomatically and internally. There were two pieces of evidences:

Firstly, the core influence Bismarck made upon Britain was encouraging the latter to seek more colonial territories, so as to follow the monopolized profits, fundamentally

global colonies, navy, and financing activities. Britain must hold the global and even not regional hegemony by huge military budgets, and make more exploitation in colonies and ocean trade as well as the most significant financing investments and speculations. In fact, those activities were very “effective” in money-earning rather than gross manufacturing and industrial productions. While in the 1850s, Britain reached its peak of production force. Ever since then, it felt the development ceiling and began to decline.⁶³ The British Empire could not produce and accumulate wealth and beat its rivals in preeminent speed as it used to be, but painstakingly conserve its frontiers in Egypt, Red Sea, India, and South Africa. In other words, the economic model of Britain had become the barrier of its own future.

From the 1870s, the British overseas investment had increased enormously, from £ 75 million by the 1870s, to £ 4 billion before the war in 1914,⁶⁴ which was recognized as phenomena of the hollow of industries. Meanwhile, British industrial productions were dumped into colonies.⁶⁵ On the other hand, British domestic markets were mainly occupied by brilliant German productions. Since the middle of the 19th century, Britain encountered its pivot of its historical trace and began to decline relatively.

On the other hand, German Empire developed itself rapidly and powerfully. Although at that time Free Trade Theory was very popular, Bismarck and German enterprisers would not appreciate “Invisible Hand”⁶⁶ (Adam Smith) but a visible hand, intensively and powerfully. By high tariff protection and other industrial stimulus policies,⁶⁷ the government helped and brought up the native enterprises, from infancy to professional giants, not only in domestic market, but also globally. Top figures of them were,

⁶³ Hobsbawm, Guancha, <http://www.guancha.cn/chenping1/2016_07_24_368628_2.shtml>. Visited as 2. Nov.2016.

⁶⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Changes and Military Conflicts from 1500 to 2000*, Unwin Hyman, 1988, pp.156.

⁶⁵ J. P. Taylor, *The Way the Modern World Works: World Hegemony to World Impasse*, Chichester: Wiley, 1996, pp.227.

⁶⁶ Mark Thornton, "Cantillon and the Invisible Hand". *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2009) pp. 27–46.

⁶⁷ Such as Iron and Steel Act in 1879. See Hans-Peter Ullmann, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918*, Suhrkamp, 1995, pp.61.

Krupp in weapon industry and shipbuilding, Siemens in electricity and telegraphy, etc. What was more, the government sponsored and encouraged scientific researches, consisting of applied technologies, also fundamental theories,⁶⁸ which could instruct industrial practice and sights of people thought of the world in determinant meaning, to develop materials' potentials and human's potentials. Beyond this higher esteem, Germany built the solid ground of material powers creation and accumulation, which were favorable for national strengths, further transformation into military movements. In Wilhelm II era, those material strengths were the fundament of marine competition with Britain, hat has been always the basis of international relations and diplomatic system.

Decades of late 19th century, Germany got predominant advantages in several dominant indicators, such as coal, steel production, railway and GDP.

State	steel production (1886, million tons)	Railway (1914, thousand km)	Population (1890)	GDP (1890, billion,1960USD)
Germany	954.00	61.75	49.5	26.6
Russia	241.00	65.98	98.5	19.7
Britain	2403.00	32.62	33.1	26.0
France	427.00	37.40	38.3	17.9

Form 1: Some important figures of European powers by 1890.⁶⁹

From the form above, those key indicators illustrate, that Germany had had some advantages over Britain, or could challenge the latter, by late Bismarck era. After

⁶⁸ 1810 educationist Humboldt established Humboldt University in Berlin, under the support of the king. That was the model of modern form of university, and educated great number of scholars and engineers. Since mid-19th century the flourishing of Göttingen University and München University made great contributions to ties of theories and industrial production.

⁶⁹ Steel production: Walther G. Hoffmann, *Das Wachstum der deutschen Wirtschaft seit der Mitte des 19. Jhs.*, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 1965, pp.123. Population: W.Fishcer, *Handbuch*, 5,pp.14.. Railway: Christoph Nonn, *Europäische Geschichte*, UTB GmbH, 2014, pp.247. GDP numbers are calculated by the author.

Bismarck era, this trend went more and more distinctly. All others knew, time stood by the German side, the longer time, the stronger German would become. The national strengths were the most powerful deterrence. When Bismarck wrote to encourage Britain struggled with Russia and France in Black Sea, Middle Asia and North Africa and East Africa, he would have forecasted the dilemma and difficulties of this huge empire. Those long-term and complicated measures could be covered by Offensive Realism's basic opinion perfectly.

3. Powers and maneuvers used

Power refers to the central theme of Offensive Realism, which indicates the capacity and will of steering others in one's mind. Here, this concept perfectly covers the diplomacy of Bismarck.

In this diplomatic system, almost all the other great powers were gravitated into German diplomatic orbit. The motion discipline was specified in Berlin rather than its own cabinet at some terms. Compared with bare yielding and threat, that is the highest situation of power.

On the one hand, Bismarck held Russia steadily, by the Dual Alliance and League of Three Emperors, to make Russia believe that it obtained support from Germany at the back. On the other hand, through measures at some pivots, Britain found itself having to lean on Germany for its lifeline. Thus, the power came naturally as steering Britain and Russia (also in some terms France). Meanwhile, the global situation went to a condition which was beneficial for Germany.

In the next paragraphs, the case analysis will be conducted.

The real deep attitude of Bismarck towards Britain and Russia was bloodletting of Offensive Realism. Certainly, the confrontations of those two giants were the main stream of the whole international relations in the 19th century. No matter before or after the German unification, Britain and Russia had strife everywhere. Unlike the assortment of Mearsheimer, the wide water has no function of barrier because the whole ocean is unobstructed and unbeneficial to defense. Thereafter when a state built

the marine hegemony, it would move at free will in almost all oceanic regions. For mastery of marine hegemony, Britain must require continent power as the construction of strongholds and nourishments. On the other hand, a state of continent power, such as Russia, reversely needed marine powers to safeguard its security and stability.

Therefore, Britain conquered Egypt, Cyprus and Suez Canal in very high prices, for an open tunnel towards Orient, especially India. However, in term of the security of Ukraine (its hinterland and granary), Russia was always afraid that Bosphorus Strait is opened for all powers to pass warships.

The so-called “Great Game” was used to describe this long-term process. From East Europa to Far Orient, from Bosphorus Strait to Siberia, there occurred numerous wars, confrontations and proxy agencies.

Bismarck saw them and utilized them, as perfect chances to see the bloodlettings.

More ever, Bismarck arranged multiple schemes to arrogate the confrontations, facing the huge strategic space that should be taken advantages.

In Kissingen memorial Bismarck envisaged clearly, “Britain controlled Nile and Suez Canal and Russia occupied the Strait and Black See”⁷⁰. That was not a project of “balancing”, but a swamp set for those powers, as the strategic targets set for two powers were standing too close, which meant more easily to happen a misfire. In other areas, such as Middle East, things were the same.

For Britain, Bismarck screwed the possible British-Franco coordination up in Egypt Crisis, and led the whole British occupation of Egypt alone, at risk of wars with France, thus it caused the hostility from the latter. Thus, Britain could not step too further from Germany, since German influence in East Africa, and in addition for the legitimacy of international coordination.

For Russia, at the first period, Bismarck stapled Russia in frame of Three Emperors League, reinforcing the profits and influence in Balkan and Black See, thus paving the

⁷⁰ The Kissingen memorial of Bismarck. 15. Jun. 1877. Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871 - 1914: Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes, vol.2, pp. 154.

way for further Russian-British confrontation, such as Panjdeh Crisis in Afghanistan.⁷¹ This crisis almost became a war, which proved out British diplomatic isolation, and dilemma of Russia as well.

Fortunately, statemen prevented a war from occurring, and achieved a new international situation by this chance, in the second period. In that period, Russia encountered oppositions from Britain and Italy as expected, and signed the Reinsurance Treaty with Germany. Later, Britain, aligned with Italy and Austria, signed the second Mediterranean Treaties.

In this process, Bismarck used some maneuvers, which were from Offensive Realism. For Britain and Russia, it was “bloodletting”, as let the two struggle in someplace, in results of great energy consumptions from both sides. Fortunately, the third one, namely Germany, could share powers and hegemonic status of those former twos. Towards Austria, maneuvers used were as “buck passing” and “blackmail”, but in unusual ways. Internally, Bismarck emphasized only had Germany the defensive responsibility, when Austria declared to take movements at its frivol will in Balkan and asked aids from Germany. That passed the responsibilities of Dual Alliance to Austria, as the latter should confine its actions. And that could be recognized as a “soft deterrence”, as deterrence by the hegemonic status in the alliance and risk of invasion from Russia, to push Austria confining its movement in a small field and restricting its ambition. Officials from Berlin also persuaded Vienna, that was the best way to contain Austrian profits, instead of wars.

There was some military cooperation between Germany and Austria. For German general staff Moltke the Elder knew the main arrangements and intentions of Austrian armies. Without aids from Germany, Austria couldn't afford and fulfil a war against Russia or other powers. By those buck-passing and blackmail, Austria played an inferior role in the system. Once Germany didn't loosen the rope, Austria couldn't move in free will.

⁷¹ Panjdeh was a region in Afghanistan, which was a critical tunnel into British India. In 1885, it became a focus of confrontation from Russian and British expansions.

5.2.2 Contrasts

Also, there are some theoretical weaknesses of Offensive Realism. In this section, I'd discuss some blind areas or wrong propositions of Offensive Realism, including the hegemony, the expansion and stratifications of costs and profits in international relations.

1. **Not always pursuit hegemony**

From Mearsheimer, the pursuit of power could be concluded as a "desire of controlling". This kind of desire should be naked. But in close observation of Bismarck's system, it was not followed this doctrine, but a "loose grip", or just "influence". Here I'd like to posit an example of France. At the sake of France, it would not likely to welcome or accept Bismarck's proposals or suggestions. As the narrative in the historical overview, Bismarck didn't do anything to conquest France recklessly, or directly improve the relationship with France, because grudges from France towards Germany was unreconciled. However, Bismarck did something that France had to face diplomatically: there was no possibility of alliance with Russia or Austria; for besieging Germany, was in void; at the same time, there was still potential crisis in overseas colonial affairs with Britain. This plight of France was a masterpiece of Bismarck's policies. To attain some international space and solve domestic economic predicament, France decided to find a life-saving straw in North Africa and Control of Nile. Those decisions were natural for France, but also beneficial for Germany. While the former one caused the intimacy of Italy and Austria, which contributed to Triple Alliance and a solid rear for Germany; the latter desperately caused the conflicts with Britain, that pushed France into a diplomatic abyss for years. Furthermore, the interference into Egypt destroyed Ottoman Empire further, which indicated, intensifying fragmentations in Orient and Middle East, thus Germany could have more chances to take maneuvers for "loose gripping" others.

In this process, Germany didn't directly overbear France in term of hegemony, but by Bismarck's policies, let France do on its own choices, which were finally beneficial to Germany as well.

2. It is better to protect its status than blind worldwide expansion

That is a natural deduction from the last section. As here “protect” doesn’t simply mean containing as in Defensive Realism. However, the status-protection indicates, avoiding any wrong ways which are unfavorable to the status, but taking right ones. In Mearsheimer’s book, the expansion was recognized as the destiny of great powers and a Morison pill could cure any disease: more materials, more powers, greater forces. However, Bismarck’s policies demonstrated successfully, the blind and overall expansions would result in destruction.

There were two traps in expansions, which Bismarck avoided successfully. The first one was, colonial trap. Since 1880, European states entranced into “new imperialism”, which was embodied as colonial exploitation and more wars between great powers. Under the domestic pressures, Bismarck resisted the independence in diplomacy, by which doing no obvious expansion in Africa and Asia. When talked to a fanatic colonist, Bismarck stated in witness, “My African map lies in Europe. Here is Russia, there is France, we are in the middle. That’s my African map.”⁷², “Friendship with Premier Salisbury is more important than 12 muddy colonies in Africa”.⁷³ Without colonial affairs binding hands, Bismarck won more diplomatic space between Britain, France and Russia.

Another one was military. For land force, Bismarck worked together with Moltke the Elderly, formed a “**West Defensive & East Attack**” grand plan, which was conservative and controllable. For navy, Bismarck all resisted, the measure of German navy as negligible status. Not only for a cliché, that Germany was a traditional land power; but more importantly, Germany should maintain the financial balance and concentrate mainly upon potential land affairs. Here Bismarck also had a thought, that it was not the proper time to challenge British marine hegemony, which could stimulate the latter to take diplomatic and military measures against Germany, thus

⁷² Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, Princeton University Press, 1971, vol.3, pp.142.

⁷³ C.J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists: British Foreign Policy 1878-1902*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, pp.63.

could ruin the global strategy of Bismarck.

3. How to definite costs and profits

In the “Tragedy of Great Power Politics”, Mearsheimer emphasized, when the profits are greater than costs, it is worth taking proactive measures to against another one, usually in war. From the analysis above, it is clear, that the measure of weighting profits and costs by Mearsheimer is, of numbers. The costs and profits there mainly indicate the material consumptions, behind them, simply number of allies, of a war. No wonder, this kind of comparison is only of quantity. In his eyes’ it seems no necessity to consider the qualitative aspect in whole process, such as grand situation and agency therein. He thought only by the material strengths comparison, in calculation and sand table exercise, can a state win the war or it is rational to believe it would win the war.

This weakness could be reflected in an example: Balkan-Mediterranean affairs in late 1880s.

When 1887, Germany encountered a security crisis caused by Austria and Russia, it was a reasonable time to take some measures proactively, say a preemptive war, against Russia, according to the doctrines of Offensive Realism. That was exactly what German general staff plotted. When Moltke the Elder and other generals all clamored to fire first, to win an army-number-advantage against Russia again since boom Russian troop expansion. Although German generals had piles of sufficient reasons to start the war, and politically it seemed Germany can set an office in the Balkan and earn some articles for some prerogatives for Germany, but Bismarck still set the red light, faced with those overreactions.

While if so, Russia must have an image, that it was Germany, which supported even dominated Austria to challenge Russia in Balkan, while only by German supports can Austria stand in a position to move freely in Balkan. And, when only Germany hold the responsibility of supporting Austria, the latter must be a great burden for Germany. The appealed preemptive war, didn’t belong to the grand plan Bismarck

agreed, but singly a mindless one, aiming at eliminating Russian potential mobile forces. This kind of war would drag Germany into a deep swamp of war, because it was almost unlimited, when it urged to damage a disturbing mass. One battle would cause more battles, even Total War, rather than limited conflicts. However, the complexity of a Total War could out of any man's mind and calculation.

More severely, before the second Mediterranean Agreements happened, it was not easy to Germany but, the situation was not the most extreme one, such as a world war. If Germany assembled other states and joined a treaty of Mediterranean, it would attract Russian hostility one more time beyond the plotted preemptive war, although it could get one more "ally" (Britain). When Britain, Austria and Germany all stand opposite from Russia, it would stimulate Russia, in any prices, to align with France, for its own survival. Thus, all so-called profits were so negligible, compared with dangers they caused. If so, Germany must encounter the Two-Front-Wars in very high strength. Bismarck's system would be destroyed completely, so all measures done before would be in ruin.

Bismarck always avoid this situation, things happened after Bismarck era also demonstrated the correctness hundred times.

In this delicate moment, the correct way should be, as what Bismarck did: To solve problems still in diplomatic way, protecting the status and passing the buck to others (such as Britain). When a profit is in a grand sight, long-term one, it is a critical profit. What Bismarck wanted was, a stable motion of other states, in center of Germany. A negative example, which statemen all focused on numerical, superficial profits but lost whole world was, the WWI.

In Mearsheimer's eyes, it is inevitable, that there would be wars between great powers, the only matter is when the war would occur, and thus what could the state acquire in this war. From the analysis above, man could see the coming results, when by a delicate situation, boldly using extreme way to deal with.

Any other common profits, such as profits of free trade, or some military aids wouldn't alter the grand level. Diverse levels of profit couldn't commensurate each

other. When the grand level fell down, the common level profit couldn't maintain itself anymore.

In this analytical part, I discussed Bismarck's policies, in perspectives of Defensive Realism and Offensive Realism, in consideration of both pros and contras. I believe It is sufficient to see which fields the both theories could cover, and which not. In the coming conclusion, I will conclude those discussion and features and try to make some evaluations of Bismarck's diplomatic system.

6.Conclusion

Bismarck's diplomatic policies should be considered as an organic system. This system is a synthesis with both defensive and offensive characteristics. Those two sides aid reciprocally, for offensive measures were served for the defensive goal and the defensive measures could achieve offensive results.

Thus, I can make a brief conclusion about the two hypotheses I made in the introduction.

For Defensive Realism, it could explain the final purpose of Bismarck's all policies: to attain and sustain peace, instead of the occurrence of conflict and war. No one can afford the price of war, especially a total War. In term of measures, both alliance and coordination are often used. Bismarck used the functions of the alliance well. Thus, he made German Empire to enjoy peace for decades.

On the other hand, it is incapable of containing effective enough measures, to construct the condition it argues for. In Bismarck's system, many concrete and critical maneuvers were used to accomplish some weird attitudes and behaviors, which were in favor of good results. More seriously, the ideal international condition that it appeals, is static and superficial. Any tiny but drastic change could distort the whole

situation, thus making national peace and independence impossible. The diplomatic policies of Bismarck indicate, more thoughts and measures used than Defensive Realism. Otherwise, the alliance system would fall into chaos and meet crisis, Germany would be kidnapped by its allies, rather than peace and stability.

For Offensive Realism, it could explain the vicious international circumstance better than the Defensive. The basic elements, maximum of power, material accumulation and army are more plausible to explain and understand international relations. The tactics it appeals, such as bloodletting and deterrence, are plausibly practical. The diplomatic policies of Bismarck are a brilliant example, to prove out its validity. On the other hand, it is rigid to sight some direction and degree of power, and military. In addition, it lacks patience and global strategies. The diplomatic policies of Bismarck are not simply a fulfilment of Offensive Realism, but a more complicated entity. So, Bismarck could avoid blind expansions and reckless wars, and achieve a peaceful rising of his motherland.

Here I'd bring in a new theory, **Grand Strategy Theory**, as an addition. This theory could be also recognized as a branch of realism school. In Gray's words, "Grand strategy, sometimes called national security strategy, is the art of employing all of the relevant assets of a country for the political purpose set by high policy" and "Grand strategy is support of national security policy functions in peace and in war and encompasses positive as well as negative sanctions".⁷⁴ The term "Grand" stands for: At term of time, it is in the long view. At term of space, it is in global sights. The whole process is motional.

In my theoretical and analytical parts, I've already made some introductions and implications. Undoubtedly, it could appropriately explain diplomatic policies of Bismarck, at some difficult aspect, which could not be covered by those two realistic theories.

⁷⁴ Gray, B. Colin, War, Peace, and Victory: Strategy and Statecraft for the Next Century, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990, p.30-33.

For the final goal, Bismarck's policies were aimed at the national survival and security of Germany, which thus inevitably constructed its own strengths and material powers. However, in foresight of Two-Front-Wars and Total War, it is necessary to use violence to gain peace.

Bismarck handled the situation, at least in his mind, always in a dynamic trend, instead of static image. He knew it was irrational and meaningless, to consider national survival in a frozen image, as even a slight detail could influence or subvert the global condition, resulting in obvious vulnerability to national security in 1892. In order to have a better comprehension of Bismarck's policies, here I'd make a brief comparison of strategic models between Germany, Britain and Russia.

For Britain, it was island chain thought. Because of lacking continent and hinterland movement tradition and theory, Britain usually regards distant land as a big or small island. In this respect, India was the biggest and most crucial one, therefore, Britain demanded a series of islands, as an island chain to protect its survival lane. Thus, the administrative way was proxy regime or governor. All in all, it was unavoidable to encounter the continental power's coercion.

For Russia, it was land-swallowing thought. Russia transformed itself from a Moscow dukedom to a giant across the continents. About unparalleled defense depth, it required marine power to assist, as most lands of Russia were landlocked, so it was in dire need of ice-free port. In this logic, it expanded its sphere of influence into Balkan, Iran and Afghanistan etc. Once it succeeded, by great aids from the continent, it could challenge any existing marine hegemony. Literally, it would have fierce competition with Britain. This was certainly structural competition.

However, for Germany, the model was offshore-balancing in real meaning. Bismarck found Germany's security was hidden within relationships among other powers, and in some geographic pivots as well. This model must be complicated than the other two powers. Germany stood in an inferior position when it unified, therefore it required a profound perspective, namely, the **Grand Strategy Theory**.

What Bismarck pursued was, to attain and sustain the national security, in both superficial and profound levels. The routine of this system was, the global envisage, instead of local envision or economic envision. The effects it pursued were, long-term profits, instead of candies before eyes. The maneuver of this system was, gravitating others to move into its own orbits, instead of following the other's actions. The style of this system was elastic and acute, which adopted naked or latent offensive ways to general defensive situations.

There were three orbits in Bismarck's system. The first one was, the Three Emperors League circle. This circle was the core, which offered the confirmation of the stability in external circumstance. In this circle, Germany could hold fundamental survival, and make a realistic leverage of further potential strategic maneuvers to influence other powers. The latter was more important, as only more leverages and maneuvers are used, safer Germany can be.

The second one was the Mediterranean circle. This circle mainly did bloodletting upon Britain and Russia, in pivot of sea gate. The so-called neutrality de facto gave Germany the conditions to steer both sides, as a result, to be intimate to Germany. Thus, German policies became policies of Britain and Russia to some degree. Instead of the anxiety under external threats, Germany could hold more agencies to shape the situation.

The last one was African colonial circle. This circle mainly put Britain and France into conflicts and confrontations in colonial affairs, and sustained the deterrence in upstream of Nile. In this circle, Germany could expand its influence at larger spheres, although the "sphere of influence" was not the conventional meaning by those colonial powers. The conventional way was to control a land by proxy regime or direct military interference. However, for Germany, Bismarck mainly built some walls of barriers to prevent people from other places stepping into, and at the same time, figured out some paths to encourage others to take.

In this process, all other powers were influenced by Germany, and had to take or obey German diplomatic policies. Thus, in defensive or offensive ways, a long-time, global peace was constructed, in favor of Germany.

The last sentence of this paper is, that Defensive and Offensive Realism can explain some aspects of diplomatic policies of Bismarck, but only with Grand Strategy Theory, can man understand this masterpiece perfectly.

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