Austria-Hungary Declares War

What was Austria-Hungary to do? It is important to realize that Austria hated Serbia anyway. Nationalism threatened the very existence of the 'polyglot empire', and the Austrian Chief of Staff General Hatzendorff had asked for a 'surprise' war to destroy Serbia more than 25 times in the eight years after 1906. So, the assassination was used by Austria as an opportunity to sort out the Serbs: June 28, 1914

- **5 July**: Austria-Hungary approached the Germans and got a promise (the so-called blank check) that they could rely on Germany's support.
- **23 July**: The Austro-Hungarian government sent Serbia an ultimatum containing ten really tough demands. Failure to meet all of these demands, they said, would result in war. (They expected Serbia to reject the ultimatum, which would give Austria-Hungary an excuse to invade.)
- **25 July**: But the Serb government did not reject the ultimatum. Instead it sent reply in which it agreed to everything EXCEPT part of demand 6. It was SO conciliatory that, after reading it, Kaiser Wilhelm wrote on 28 July: 'the reply amounted to a capitulation in the humblest style, and with it there disappeared all reason for war'.
- **28 July**: Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.