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Publisher: Routledge

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## Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for  
authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19>

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Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Spenser Wilkinson (1896) Moltke's Projects for the Campaign of 1866 Against Austria (with MAP), Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 40:221, 851-872, DOI: [10.1080/03071849609416250](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071849609416250)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071849609416250>

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## MOLTKE'S PROJECTS FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF 1866 AGAINST AUSTRIA.<sup>1</sup>

(WITH MAP.)

By *SPENSER WILKINSON.*

ONE of the great difficulties of military history consists in the scantiness of the evidence usually accessible with regard to the working of the minds of those who on either side directed the operations. In some cases, we are obliged to infer a general's thoughts from his acts. Knowing the orders which he gave, and the operations which resulted from them, we construct for ourselves the process of reasoning by which we suppose that he was led to give them. Speculation of this sort is not entirely unprofitable, but it is only speculation at the best, for we can never accept without reserve an account of motives compiled after the events. Yet hypothetical explanations of this kind constantly find their way into theories of strategy.

The Prussian General Staff has no better tradition than that which devotes a part of its energies to its record of past campaigns. The so-called official histories of the three wars which brought about the unity of Germany were first contributions to the knowledge of those campaigns. They made no pretence to be history, for they avowedly attempted only to give such an account as could be compiled by the Head Quarters of one side, working with the limited materials available within a short time after the events; moreover, a very considerable reserve is imposed upon the contemporary narrator of military operations, for there is much, both in the political motives, which are always dominant in war, and in the personal relations between the principal actors, which cannot be made public at the time. The Prussian Staff history of the campaign of 1864 was not published until twenty-two years after the events which it describes, and it is therefore much more a history, and much less a mere official narrative, than that of the campaign of 1866, which was published in 1867. But no history, no continuous narrative, can give the same insight or carry the same conviction in regard to the motives of the actors as is obtained by a study of the actual

<sup>1</sup> Moltke's *Militärische Korrespondenz*. Aus den *Denkschriften des Krieges* 1866. Herausgegeben vom Grossen Generalstabe. Abtheilung für Kriegsgeschichte. Mit 1 Uebersichtskarte, 3 Plänen und 1 Text-skizze. Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1896.

documents forming themselves a part of the transaction. A new light was thrown upon the campaign of 1864 by the publication four years ago of Moltke's military correspondence during that war, a volume which revealed, as nothing published before it had done, the brilliant abilities and resolute character of the Prussian general. That delightful volume has now been followed by the publication of a selection from Moltke's military papers relating to the war of 1866. These papers, to some extent, lift the thin veil which in the Staff history half concealed the moving springs. They are divided into four parts, collected under the headings of preparation, mobilisation and deployment, the actual operations, the truce and peace. The chief interest of these disclosures lies in the first part, for it is the arrangements for the first deployment and subsequent concentration of the Prussian Army that have formed the principal subject of controversy in regard to this campaign. Moreover, since the construction of railways, the great importance which always in every campaign has attached to the opening has been, if anything, increased. The opening is usually arranged with a deliberation impossible in the subsequent stages of the action. It is the part of the game which admits of the completest study, and it is the part in which for this campaign abundant evidence is now given. Moltke's colleagues of the Staff have told us since his death that they were much impressed by his habitual effort to think things out, and that he used in this process to assist himself by putting his thoughts on paper, and re-writing his analysis or his argument again and again until he found it satisfactory. In the first part of the collection before us there are, besides a number of official letters, more than twenty of the memoranda in which Moltke cleared his mind with regard to the arrangements for the war against Austria. They enable us to trace through almost all its phases the growth of his plan of campaign.

As early as the spring of 1860, Moltke wrote a memoir upon the deployment of the Prussian Army in case of war against Austria. It is, of course, based upon an examination of the then existing political situation, and of the condition of the Austrian and Prussian Armies at that date, when King William I. was still Prince Regent, and while the Army re-organisation, of which he was the author, was in process. It begins with a review of the political situation, which is worth translating.

"A war between Austria and Prussia would affect all the Powers of Europe; for a considerable success of the one or the other would end the present disintegrated condition of Germany, subject the small States to the victor, and found in the centre of Europe a united State, which would be equal or superior in power and influence to any of its neighbours.

"Among the great Powers, England necessarily requires a strong ally upon the Continent. It would find none which would better correspond to all its interests than a united Germany, which can never claim the command of the sea, but which by a strong central position between the Romance West and the Slavonic East secures for all time the greatest imaginable stability upon the Continent. A far-seeing policy of the

cabinet of St. James would necessarily support such a transformation, and out of consideration for the ties of kindred and of religion use its influence in behalf of Prussia. Yet it is probable that England, clinging to the old order, would take the side of the party attacked, in order to prevent a political remodelling of Europe, of which it must be admitted that the far-reaching consequences cannot in all their bearings be foreseen.

“For direct interference in the contest, England could use only her fleet, and a weak army to be landed on the Continent. Her hostility would destroy our trade and devastate our ports, but both these forms of damage together would not suffice to endanger the existence of the State. The friendship of England, on the other hand, would protect our coasts, and might furnish the kernel for the formation of a Belgian auxiliary army. But even this limited effort of assistance becomes doubtful the moment that the interests of France are on the opposite side, because then Britain requires all her forces to protect herself.

“And this case arises immediately if war breaks out between Austria and Prussia.

“France least of all can wish, as the outcome of this conflict, for an Empire of the German nation, comprising seventy millions of inhabitants, but from the conflict itself may hope for the very greatest advantages—the acquisition of Belgium, of the Rhenish Province, and perhaps of Holland—indeed, these advantages may be looked for almost with certainty if Prussia's principal forces are held fast upon the Elbe and Oder. Moreover, inasmuch as Prussia only, and not Austria, defends those Rhinelands, an alliance with Prussia could have no direct object for France: It would better correspond to the Austrian interest to sacrifice territory in the German West if thereby in the East the Austrian dynastic power can be fixed upon lasting foundations.

“These same reasons would, without doubt, suffice to induce Russia to take Prussia's side. However much Russia may desire extension along the Southern coast of the Baltic, her main interests are towards the East. The uninterrupted internal decay of the Ottoman Empire offers there between the fairest seas the richest lands, whose inhabitants of kindred race and faith have been awaiting for centuries the entry of the blonde nation into Byzantium to raise once more the Grecian cross upon the dome of St. Sophia. The realisation of the plans formed even in her day by the great Empress Catharine could be prevented in the long run by none of the Maritime Powers, but only by Austria. Accordingly, nothing is so contrary to the interests of Russia as a considerable extension of the Austrian power.

“But for Prussia the help of Russia has always the two-fold disadvantage that it comes too late, and is too powerful. Moscow, which we may regard as the centre of gravity of Russia, is as far distant from Berlin as Madrid or Naples. The Russian Army is spread over a surface of a million square miles. It concentrates slowly, and has from the Volga to the Vistula 1,400 miles of country without a railway to pass through. The might of the Russian Army will arrive at our frontier

when we shall either have conquered, and, therefore, no longer require help, or shall have been defeated, and must pay dear for it with provinces. For Russia, if she comes in at the end of the campaign with a fresh army of 300,000 men, is mistress of the situation, and has the chief share in deciding the limits up to which we may make the most of our success, or must submit to our misfortune.

“Great importance, in a war between Austria and Prussia, attaches to the behaviour of the minor States, for their help is in part quicker than that of Russia, and more momentous than that of England.

“For Belgium it would be of much value if a British auxiliary corps, even a weak one, landed at Antwerp, should furnish the nucleus for the collection of her own forces. Belgium must say to herself that France, if it intends to conquer the bank of the Rhine, cannot respect Belgian neutrality, and that the possession of the Rhenish Province without the possession of Belgium is inconceivable. The assembly of the Belgian forces at Antwerp leaves open to the enemy the country and the capital, of which the reconquest is possible only by Prussian forces, and in the same way the Netherlands can seek help only from Prussia.

“In Italy, things are as yet only developing, but even now it is clear that in all circumstances we shall have in Sardinia an ally against France as against Austria, and most certainly against both if they act in concert. Our interest seems to demand the utmost strengthening of this newly-reviving Power. Denmark, too, if the question of Schleswig-Holstein were settled, would be the natural ally of Prussia. Until then, it must be regarded as an enemy, but will probably remain neutral on account of internal dissensions. Switzerland and Sweden will take no action.

“The situation of the small German States is peculiar. Their whole existence is based upon the jealousy between Austria and Prussia. So soon as this tension is relaxed, either by union or by war, they see in either case their existence threatened. Neutrality is not possible, at least, not to them all; it leads to the immediate occupation of their territories. If the Power which they join is victorious, it gains such a preponderance, that, even though their existence may have been guaranteed as the price of their co-operation, they must in the long run disappear in a re-arrangement corresponding to actual power. If their ally is defeated; they fall with him a prey to the enemy.

“The German States have thus just as much to fear a complete union as a serious breach between Austria and Prussia. If the latter should occur, they must take sides, and their choice will be determined above all things by their geographical position.

“To no human intelligence can it be given to trace in advance the course of such great political events, upon which not only the permanent interests of States, but also the sympathies and antipathies of rulers, the insight and energy of cabinets at the critical moment, and internal disturbances or popular risings often exercise an effective, though incalculable, impulsion. Yet the following points may be assumed with some degree of certainty:—

"A war between Austria and Prussia will draw all Europe into the conflict.

"France is to be regarded as Prussia's enemy, and will aim at the conquest of all the Rhine-lands, which Austria will not oppose.

"Russia, and probably England, too, will be on Prussia's side, but the direct help of the one does not become available until late, that of the other will have no decisive influence.

"In Belgium and Holland, as in Italy, there will be help for Prussia.

"The North German States cannot, without immediately renouncing their existence, evade co-operation with Prussia; Saxony alone, at least its Government, can, and will, certainly stand with Austria.

"The South German Courts, on the other hand, will probably form a neutral league, not despising the protectorate of France; for in a war between the members of the German confederacy, the fundamental laws of the confederacy can have no validity.

"If it comes to a breach between Austria and Prussia, there may arise from the conflict, according to its issue, a powerful empire under the rule of Habsburg or of Hohenzollern; but Germany will have to pay for this eventual unity by the loss of provinces in the East and West.

"The result, which we require to enable us to form a judgment of the initial military situation, can be reached only along the slippery but inevitable path of political speculation. It is enough, however, to see:—

"1. That Austria, in a war against Prussia, cannot completely denude the defences of her Eastern frontiers.

"For although it is true that the weight of Russia's forces does not begin to tell until a late stage, yet Russia has at all times forces enough at hand in the kingdom of Poland, in Volhynia, Podolia, and Bessarabia to create most serious embarrassments for the Austrian Empire by taking advantage of the disaffection which prevails among the Hungarian and Slavonian populations.

"2. Another part of the Austrian Army will be fully occupied in Italy.

"For although, during the conflict against Prussia, Austria cannot think of the reconquest of Lombardy, she will still have to defend Venetia against Piedmont.

"3. But Prussia in her turn will not be able to bring up her two army corps from the Rhine to protect the Marks and Silesia.

"These corps will operate upon the Rhine in connection with Belgian, Dutch, and probably English, auxiliaries.

"4. The contingents of the 10th Federal Corps can be counted upon only to observe Denmark or, if the case should arise, to form a support on the Rhine; for the advance of the French there endangers Hanover and even Oldenburg.

"On the other hand, Prussia can freely dispose of all the seven army corps of her Eastern provinces.

"If one or another of the remaining German States should join Prussia that will be a help which has not been counted upon in advance."

The results of the political enquiry are next applied to a calculation of the forces available on both sides:—

	Men.
Austria cannot possibly leave in Italy less than	95,000
nor on her Eastern frontier less than	72,000
and as neither of these forces would be locally sufficient she will probably hold in reserve to send either to Italy or to the Eastern frontier, as the case may be, the 7th corps now at Treviso	40,000
while she must keep up as garrisons in Dalmatia, Croatia, etc., and in the fortresses of the German Confederation	40,000
Total	247,000
Balance available against Prussia	235,000
Less garrison in Bohemia and Moravia	40,000
Balance	195,000
Add Saxon Army	25,000
Total	220,000

To assemble this force on the line Prague—Olmütz will require about four weeks, and to concentrate it on the upper Elbe a somewhat longer time; probably not less than six weeks altogether. The Saxon Army could be ready at Pirna in a fortnight, and it would be possible for the Austrians, before their whole force was ready, so to reinforce the Saxons as to be able to take the offensive after four weeks with 100,000 men.

Moltke proposes to assemble the seven Prussian corps at the following places:—

- IV. Delitsch and Halle.
- III. Torgau and Herzberg.
- II. Wittenberg.
- I. Jüterbog.
- G. Baruth.
- V. Spremberg.
- VI. Striegau and Schweidnitz.

From these points it will be possible in two marches to concentrate at Torgau-Herzberg 165,000 men, or at Dresden in five marches 198,000 men. In the latter case IV., III., and II. would advance on the left bank of the Elbe; I., Guard, and V. on the right bank, seeing that either force will be stronger than anything which the enemy can possibly have assembled in time at Dresden. The Saxon Army, if it holds its ground, should be at once attacked, and Dresden occupied and fortified either for defence or for a further offensive. The six Prussian corps would then advance into Bohemia on the right bank of the Elbe, the VI. Corps co-operating with them through Trautenau. Then follows a very careful exposition of the strategical motives upon which these proposals are based. It is so admirable an example of Moltke's way of considering such questions, that the more important part of it must be given in full:—



"If Prussia intended an *aggressive* war against Austria she would assemble her army in Silesia, of which the frontier is distant only 140 miles from Vienna. Berlin would be sufficiently protected by an army corps at Torgau, and in less than six weeks 200,000 men would stand facing the Sudetes ready for invasion.

"Possibly Austria might be completely surprised, but it would be well to consider whether, in opposition to the power of the Empire, which increases for resistance with time, Prussia would be able to maintain her initial success, for it must be remembered that the strategical offensive, differing in this from the tactical offensive, undoubtedly presupposes a far greater development of force than the strategical defensive.

"Moreover, in that case very different political conditions would present themselves than those which were assumed in the preceding study, neither Russia nor any other Power, except perhaps Sardinia, would support aggressive action on the part of Prussia.

"An aggressive war, however, lies altogether outside the bounds of a study which contemplates, in the first instance, only territorial defence in the narrower sense. We have here to consider only the case of Prussia being attacked by Austria, which, however, in no way excludes that kind of offensive that may develop from the measures adopted in the first instance for defence.

"If the purpose of Austria in the war is the overthrow of the Prussian monarchy, she will operate with her principal army directly towards Berlin, which is only ninety-four miles from the Southern frontier.

"The occupation of our capital by the enemy cannot indeed decide the campaign, but the material and moral disadvantages involved in the loss of Berlin do not require to be pointed out.

"A rapid advance of the Austrians to this important point of junction of all our railways and principal communications will interfere with the assembly of our corps approaching from the East and the West. Berlin itself is not fortified. An army told off to defend it against an attack from the South is confined to a narrow strip of ground in its front; if it is thrown back beyond Berlin a few marches bring it to the sea. Our whole theatre of war has a depth of only 187 miles. No third fortress closes the space, 140 miles wide, between Torgau and Glogau, none of the great rivers which offer protection against the East and the West bars the advance of the enemy in this direction.

"If Austria aimed at an object of less magnitude it would probably be the reconquest of Silesia.

"The capital of this province, too, is not fortified, and can be reached in a few marches from the district where the Elbe rises. Schweidnitz in its present condition cannot be defended, Glatz can be rendered harmless by the occupation of the mountain passes, Neisse and Cosel are fifty-six and eighty-four miles away from the enemy's line of advance.

"But it would be more difficult for the enemy to keep his position in Silesia. By his march upon Breslau we gain time to collect all our forces on the middle Oder, and if the possession cannot be rendered secure without the defeat of our army in the field Austria will do better at once

to seek that army in the direction of Berlin and to conquer Silesia in Brandenburg.

“This is the shortest way to the most complete and rapid decision, and it is conceivable that the Austrians should set all their forces in motion towards this one goal, neglecting Silesia for the time. But we shall see that a rightly-conducted defence will, after all, compel the enemy, as he continues his advance towards Berlin, to extend his base so as to include Silesia. And, as it is always important at the final conclusion of peace to be in actual possession of the land which you intend to keep, and as a serious menace to the capital is extraordinarily facilitated by the occupation of Silesia, and the possession of its rich resources, it follows that the most advantageous, and, therefore, most probable, plan, is for Austria to direct the principal operation against the Marks, and at the same time a minor operation against Silesia.

“From Bohemia, Austria threatens alike Silesia and the Marks. A concentration of the Austrian Army behind the Giant Mountains and the Mountains of Lusatia, keeps us until the last moment in uncertainty of the enemy's intentions. The direction of the railways and the fertility of the country favour the advance and the supply of large masses of troops. Mountain ranges cover the concentration, Theresienstadt, Prague, and Josephstadt protect the railway lines and magazines, which can be filled from the richest cornfields of the Empire. Lastly, an army assembled in Northern Bohemia guarantees for the policy of Saxony the necessary backing, and for her army a near support or protection in case of retreat.

“It can, therefore, scarcely be doubtful that the first assembly of the Austrian Army destined to act against Prussia will take place upon and in front of the line Prague—Pardubitz.

“If the Austrians, with their main force, should advance on the left bank of the Elbe, they would come upon our line of fortresses, Torgau—Wittenberg—Magdeburg, and we, acting from a central point should render very difficult for them their subsequent passage of the river. They will, therefore, to facilitate their first deployment, make use of the left bank only so far as they are masters of the Elbe, that is, in favourable circumstances only as far as Dresden. Their chief line of march lies on the right bank, and leads through the Lusatian Mountains. The army advancing by this route against the Marks remains also in the closest possible connection with a minor army advancing through Trautenuau against Breslau. Upon the front, only 56 miles long, between Teplitz and Reichenberg, both of which end points are reached by the railway, there are seven good roads for the passage across the mountains: Teplitz—Dresden, Aussig—Pirna, Tetschen—Schandau, Kamnitz—Schluckenau, Haida—Rumburg, Gabel—Löbau, Reichenberg—Görlitz.

“Thus, only three days after the declaration of war, there may be of these columns: 3 at Dresden, 3 at Bischofswerda, 1 at Görlitz, or 1 at Dresden, 5 at Bautzen, 1 at Görlitz, according as the position of the Prussian forces makes it desirable to act with stronger forces upon the Elbe, or upon the upper Spree. One additional march suffices to unite almost the whole force between the two rivers named if the approach of

a decision should render this necessary. Further towards Berlin lead, it is true, only two metalled high roads, that from Dresden by Herzberg, and that from Bautzen by Cottbus, which at the named points are 47 miles apart, and only then begin to converge again. But the country is in general passable, and between the two high roads there are roads suitable for vehicles from Radeburg to Schlieben, from Königsbrück to Dahme, and from Kamenz to Luckau. At the river Dahme all these roads pass between the Black Elster and the Spree-Wald, which are only 21 miles apart. It would be practicable to push forward an advance guard along the central one of these roads so far in front and in such strength that it could, even though giving ground, resist a hostile attack from the North for twenty-four hours, in order to gain time for the other columns to concentrate at Dahme, Finsterwalde or Ruhland. If the enemy's attack came from the West the left wing column, marching along the Herzberg high road, would have to cover the other columns, and to fall back upon them if necessary. No doubt in that case this road would be lost; in any case it passes too near to the fortresses on the Elbe for the invading army to be able to count very much upon it. But on account of the distance of the Cottbus high road the concentration of all the forces for a decisive battle cannot be effected in one day; if the opponent presses forward vigorously, the second and the third roads will be lost, and the Cottbus road itself threatened. It thus becomes clear how important for the Austrian attack is the possibility of a retreat upon Silesia. No doubt this implies that the subordinate army from Trautenau has at the same time reached at least Liegnitz, has driven the defender back upon Breslau, or, in case he uncovers Breslau and retires upon Glogau, keeps him sufficiently occupied and secures for the principal army the line of communication through Bautzen and Görlitz.

"If in the preceding paragraphs the operations most advantageous for the Austrians, which therefore they will most probably select, has been correctly ascertained, the main outlines of the most effective defence may be deduced from it.

"Our political frontier towards the South stretches from Berun to Erfurt, about 470 miles. The better front of defence passes behind the Giant Mountains and the Erzgebirge, and has almost the same extent. The enemy from Prague can reach Schweidnitz and Torgau in about the same time. Roads and railways assist the advance in both directions. If it were possible to defend a line of this extent from a single point, Görlitz would be the place of assembly for our forces, based upon the largest part of the monarchy and connected by railways with Breslau, Posen, and Berlin. But we have already seen that the districts threatened have a very different value for us, and that we may expose Silesia to a temporary invasion, while the occupation of Berlin would involve very serious disadvantages. However favourable the prospect of success, we could not march into Silesia against the minor army advancing through Trautenau without leaving the Marks entirely open to the enemy's principal army, and, seeing that neither the concentration of the Austrian Army in Northern Bohemia, the establishment of magazines there, nor

even the partial crossing of the frontier, will give us any definite indication of the direction in which the enemy is aiming his principal blow, we are compelled so to arrange our first concentration that it can immediately oppose the more dangerous of the two operations of the enemy by a defensive which will not exclude a subsequent offensive.

"The first concentration of our principal force must, therefore, be placed further West than Görlitz and nearer to the Elbe, and Silesia must be protected by a separate portion of the army.

"We have now at once to decide whether we choose the direct or an indirect defence of the capital. If we choose a position anywhere between Bohemia and Berlin with our retreat to Berlin, we can on the defensive keep the enemy at a distance from the capital only by accepting at some natural or artificial line of defence a frontal battle. If in this battle we are defeated by the enemy's superior numbers, we shall lose not only the battle but Berlin as well, and run the risk, if vigorously pursued, of being driven back to Stettin. If Berlin were fortified in the style of a great entrenched camp, it might well be assumed that the enemy's movement would there come to a standstill, the more so as he must invest Torgau and Wittenberg. But in that case we, too, should be tied to Berlin; we should have lost a considerable belt of territory, and the enemy could meanwhile complete the conquest of Silesia.

"The conditions are quite changed if we arrange for a retreat not to Berlin but behind the Elbe.

"We do not believe that a flank position behind the Elbe will hold the enemy spellbound or hinder him from advancing past it towards Berlin, but we expect this result from an offensive based upon the Elbe.

"It was shown that any attack from the West compels the enemy to front towards the West, to collect his forces on one of the more Easterly parallel roads, to abandon the most direct road, the high road through Jüterbog, and to look round for other communications towards his rear, because in this new situation ours all lead us on to his left flank.

"If the offensive stroke delivered from the Elbe succeeds, it drives the enemy away from Bohemia, and back upon the, as yet, unconquered Silesia. If it fails, we shall find behind the river a more complete and nearer protection than by retreating Northwards, and the strong places secure to us the possibility of again advancing across the river after the shortest respite.

"This indirect defence will last the longer the higher up the river it begins, for if we were compelled to withdraw to the left bank at Dresden or Riesa, we should still be able to advance again on to the right bank at Torgau or Wittenberg. It will be the more effective the further down stream it is continued. For from Wittenberg, where our own retreat will be secured, we shall be operating directly upon the rear of the enemy who has advanced against Berlin.

"This, however, presupposes that Berlin itself can be protected for a few days, either by fortification or by the occupation of a line of defence to the South of the city. If that were not the case, the indirect defence

would end at Wittenberg ; it would have then to pass into direct defence, that is, we should have to hurry to reach Berlin before the enemy.

“Here comes out clearly the importance of a protection for the capital by works of some kind, without its being decided whether this should be effected by the fortification of Berlin itself, or of some position further South.

“If the line of the Nuthe and the Notte can be so prepared that it can be held even for a short time by a comparatively weak corps, that course is strategically to be preferred even to the fortification proper of Berlin. For this line covers Berlin and Potsdam at the same time, and as it is only two marches from Wittenberg its existence increases the swift and powerful effect of an operation based upon that fortress, and if necessary also upon a bridge head at the mouth of the Elster.

“It will be seen from these considerations that, though our first concentration is assumed on the Elbe, we by no means intend to choose it behind the river upon the left bank. There, if we remained passive, we should probably not be attacked at all ; we should be compelled to advance to the offensive and we shall therefore do better at once to assemble our troops on the right bank, only with the conscious intention, in case retreat should become necessary, to retire not towards Berlin, but across the river. It is, of course, evident that if in every offensive advance we attack the enemy on his flank, that is, in a direction which, in case we succeed, drives him away from his base, we too on our side in case of failure shall be driven back in a direction which would separate us from the bulk of our own territory. But the difference which here tells in our favour is that a great river with protected crossings immediately stops the pursuit in a direction which would be ruinous for us and enables us to renew our advance, and this is the exceedingly great advantage in which we find ourselves and of which the enemy is devoid. No group of fortresses would be able to secure for us the advantage which in this case a line of fortresses procures, especially if Dresden as a fortified point should also be in our power.

“If we can occupy Dresden earlier than the Austrians and can there establish ourselves, we should compel Saxony to go with us. If she did not, the Saxon Army must either withdraw into Bohemia or once more shut itself up in a fortified camp at Pirna ; in either case, we should lay hands upon the rich resources of the country. If our principal force is assembled at Dresden (in this case on the left bank of the Elbe) the enemy cannot venture during his first advance through the mountains to employ the roads on both sides of the river—he must decide for one or the other bank. If he chooses the left bank we shall find opportunity when he debouches from the Erzgebirge to take the offensive against his columns separated by the deep rocky valleys. If, in spite of that, he succeeded in uniting them we should withdraw through Dresden, and the enemy would have to force the passage at some point in the face of our army. If the Austrians, as is probable, confine themselves only to the roads through the Lusatian Mountains from Kamnitz to Reichenberg then the menace to their left flank and to their communications with Bohemia

begins already from Dresden. That they should operate from Görlitz behind the Spree and the Spree-Wald against Berlin is not to be apprehended, for our base on the Elbe allows us to follow them in the direction of Spremberg. The line of the river with its fortresses offers us far greater advantages by lying parallel with the direction of the enemy's operations than if it formed a barrier crossing that direction.

“That in the active defence based upon the Elbe decisive battles must take place immediately, is in no way to be regarded as a disadvantage. It would be a complete mistake to wish to save up our army. Once we have our corps together, there is nothing to be hoped for from further waiting; on the contrary, it would be very difficult to supply them long in that close concentration which is necessary for battle, and we cannot quickly enough bring about the decisive actions. The main decision must take place South of Berlin, and it is therefore of the greatest importance to be as strong as possible there. Still we shall not leave Silesia entirely unprotected, even if it were only in order not to allow the enemy to use this province as a safe base for his main operation.”

The only remaining question is the amount of force required for the protection of Silesia. Moltke thinks one corps sufficient, for if the main attack of the Austrians takes the direction of Berlin, they can spare only a small force to attack Silesia, while if their main army moves upon Breslau, the main Prussian attack will act against it. The one Prussian corps must be posted near Striegau, on the line between Josephstadt and Breslau, and its retreat will be chosen not upon Breslau, which is unfortified, but upon Glogau.

Here, then, we have as early as 1860 Moltke's fundamental idea. His object is to collect as much of his force as possible into a single army, from which he will make no unnecessary detachment. He is obliged to take away two corps to parry the attacks of France and the South German States, and one to meet the possibility of the Austrians choosing an advance into Silesia, which, though it is less dangerous than an advance upon Berlin, might be embarrassing at the outset of the campaign. His immediate object is to be ready in strength to repel the most dangerous blow which the Austrians could possibly deliver, and he has thoroughly thought out all the necessities of the defensive. But the plan contemplates the earliest possible passage from the defensive to the offensive, which is to be conducted by an advance on the right bank of the Elbe, that is, between the river represented by the line Dresden—Prague and the parallel line of the Giant Mountains. So soon as the offensive begins, this direction facilitates the co-operation of the VI. Corps from Silesia.

(The German text on page 8 speaks of the co-operation of the V. Corps through Trautenau, but V. must be a misprint for VI.)

The plan thus worked out in 1860 is the basis of all Moltke's subsequent deliberations during the next six years, and although the plan actually adopted appears at first sight to be quite different, it is, in fact, only a modification of the original design caused by a close study

of the actual arrangements of the Austrians, and by a thorough analysis of the possibilities of their action based upon those arrangements.

In June, 1862, a different political situation arose. The Prussian Government sent an ultimatum to that of Hesse, and there was, for a few days, a possibility that Prussia would be suddenly compelled to fight all her enemies at once, including France. Moltke decides that if war should break out he must use four army corps against France and South Germany, and that he will collect the remaining five on the Northern border of Saxony, seize Dresden, and take the offensive into Bohemia through the passes of the Lusatian Mountains. The short memoir in which this plan is discussed shows Moltke at his best, for his character is only half revealed, except in the face of a great emergency, such as he was here prepared to face. It is followed by a paper examining minutely the mode of operations to be adopted for the capture of the Saxon Army, the plan starting from a close examination of Frederick the Great's operations for the same object in 1756.

In the winter of 1865 to 1866, Moltke again works out his plans for a war against Austria, again starting from the political situation at the time. He now assumes that, at least at the beginning of the war, France will not move; he counts upon a larger portion of the Austrian Army than in 1860, expecting them to have available against Prussia 240,000 men, who will be reinforced by 25,000 Saxons. He presumes that the Austrian objective will be Berlin, and proposes to resist it by striking upon the Austrian flank with an army based upon the fortresses of the Elbe. He considers that he requires one corps, VIII., at Mainz, to keep South Germany quiet, and that he will have eight corps available against Austria. The question is: Where shall he concentrate his main force—in Lusatia, or in Upper Silesia? Upper Silesia would be the place of assembly nearest to Vienna, and would be suitable if the object were the immediate offensive. But an offensive of that kind involves that the army which undertakes it shall be ready first in superior force; he considers that the Austrians can assemble in Northern Bohemia in about the same time as the Prussians in Lusatia, but the Prussian assembly would be delayed if the district chosen were in Upper Silesia, while the Austrian assembly would be speedier if the place of concentration were in Moravia, to protect Vienna against the Prussian offensive. Accordingly, if Upper Silesia were chosen, the Prussian Army would not be first ready in superior force. Moreover, eight Prussian corps—247,000 men—are not a force strong enough for a prolonged offensive towards Vienna, and the position in Upper Silesia is too far away to give the certainty of preventing an Austrian advance through the Lusatian Mountains upon Berlin. Upper Silesia, therefore, must be rejected, and the choice is between assembling the army behind the Giant Mountains or behind the Lusatian Mountains. The position behind the Lusatian Mountains is better, because these mountains have a better set of roads favouring a Prussian advance, and because if the army is placed here there is no need for a separate force to prevent an Austrian advance towards Berlin. Moreover, the army if defeated in Lusatia can retreat across the Elbe, and if victorious has before

it a clear road to Vienna, unprotected by fortresses; whereas an army placed behind the Giant Mountains, if beaten, gains no advantage for the defence of Berlin by retreating across the Oder, and if victorious must weaken itself during the advance towards Vienna by detachments to observe the fortresses of Olmütz and Brünn.

In order to concentrate the Prussian Army on the line Dresden—Görlitz, Dresden must be seized at once. For this purpose a force must be sent forward on the day that mobilisation is ordered, without waiting for its reservists. The army can then be ready on the line chosen in fourteen days after mobilisation is complete. Half will assemble at Dresden and the other half at Görlitz, and these two halves can unite for defence in two days at Bautzen, for attack in three days on the Iser. The points of assembly for the Prussian corps are:—

VII., IV., and G.—Dresden and East of Dresden.

I., II., and III.—Görlitz and West of Görlitz.

V. and VI.—Freiburg and Schweidnitz.

If the Austrians advance towards Berlin there will be a decisive battle at once. If, instead, they advance into Silesia, V. and VI. will retire towards Görlitz, and the main Prussian Army will either march West through Görlitz to meet the Austrians, or will advance through the mountains into Northern Bohemia, and thus compel the Austrians to form front to a flank.

It will be seen that this plan is substantially the same as that of 1860. The Prussian Army is to advance in the general direction Löbau—Königgrätz. Moltke now expects to employ eight corps instead of seven against Austria, and uses the additional corps to reinforce his minor army in Silesia. This is the beginning of a modification of his plan which leads him gradually to strengthen his left wing at the expense of the right wing.

In the course of February, the relations between Prussia and Austria became so strained as to make war seem inevitable. On the 28th of February there was a council at Berlin in which the question was considered whether Prussia ought at once to arm. Moltke's opinion was that it was not yet necessary. The reasons for this opinion he had worked out in a paper dated February 22nd, in which he calculated that the Austrians could assemble in Northern Bohemia:—

In twenty-one days - - - 100,000 men

In twenty-eight days - - - 150,000 „

In thirty-six days - - - 200,000 „

and that eight more days would be required before they could cross the frontier, making in all six weeks from the date when the Austrian mobilisation should be ordered before they could attack in earnest. He thinks that Prussia may wait with the order to mobilise until there is conclusive evidence that the Austrians have begun the process, evidence which will consist in the purchase of horses on a large scale and the transport of reservists to Italy. This paper contains the first of a series of careful calculations as to the time within which the Austrians can place a given force at a given point.



Early in March, we find Moltke discussing with Bismarck the conditions of a treaty with Italy. He proposes that both parties shall pledge themselves in case of war with Austria not to lay down their arms nor to make peace until each of them has attained the object of the war, which he defines in the words: "Not merely that Venetia and Bohemia shall be in the occupation of the allies, but that Austria shall have acquiesced in the definitive cession of these lands." From this passage, taken in connection with the political sketch of 1860, it must be inferred that Moltke's estimate of the political results to be obtained by the war was very much higher than Bismarck's, for Moltke's language implies that he expected Prussia, if victorious, to annex all the small German States and Bohemia. This is a point which, in considering the events of 1866, must never be lost sight of. Moltke's position was merely that of an adviser to the King, and his absolute loyalty, carried almost to self-effacement, is perhaps the noblest trait of his character. So far did it go, that as long as he lived Moltke was ready to sacrifice his own reputation to that of his master. He knew, of course, that his papers were preserved, and that the truth would sooner or later be known. The truth is that Moltke had a clearer eye and a stronger purpose than Bismarck himself. It is the fate of every great man that his greatness can never be fully appreciated by anyone of smaller mould. Neither the King nor Bismarck dared risk themselves upon Moltke's judgment; had they done so, they would have played a bolder game for higher stakes, and would in all probability have gained an even more splendid success than they did.

On the 28th of March another council was held. The paper which Moltke wrote as a preparation for the opinion which he then gave begins: "Austria has taken the initiative in the preparation for war, and thereby gained the advantage of being able to assemble an army in Bohemia in less time than we shall require to place an equal force at a single point in opposition to it."

"Even if we had at once replied with preparatory or partial measures, this could not have been avoided. It is the result of the readiness for war—of the distribution—of the Austrian forces, and of the first resolve."

Here we have the first hint, of which the clearness is unmistakable, that Moltke thought the war inevitable and that the right course was to have taken the initiative at once, and to have struck down Austria before she could be ready. There can be little doubt that the hesitation to adopt this course came from the King. Moltke accepts this hesitation; he calculates that at present the utmost Austria could do would be to undertake a premature and hurried advance towards Berlin with 100,000 men. He shows that no very great harm can come from such an attempt, and sketches the minor measures which he holds to be now desirable to guard against such an eventuality, which he will meet by the offensive defence based on the Elbe, projected in 1860. He now contemplates bringing the VIII. Corps also to the principal army, that is, using all the nine Prussian corps against Austria. The minor measures proposed in this paper were ordered next day.

On the 30th, he makes a careful review of the progress of the Austrian armaments. He thinks that a small force should be assembled at Görlitz without delay to prevent an Austrian raid in the direction of the important railway centre at Kohlfurt, and that, if the Austrian armaments continue and if policy still prevents the mobilisation of the whole Prussian Army, the V. and VI. Corps at any rate ought to be mobilised without any further delay. In this paper he is decidedly of opinion that Prussia ought not to delay by another day the mobilisation of her whole Army.

On March 31st, he again examines what the Austrian measures already taken will enable the Austrians to do. If mobilisation is now ordered simultaneously in Berlin and in Vienna, our force when ready will be undoubtedly very superior to that which the Austrians can have ready by the same time, and the defective railway system of Austria will give us all the great military advantages of the initiative. In twenty-seven days we shall have in the field 285,000 men, while the Austrians will not yet have 175,000. But Prussia must be careful not to choose for the assembly of her corps points which could be reached by the Austrian forces already assembled in Bohemia. The points threatened are Görlitz and the part of Silesia between Breslau and Josephstadt. Moltke proposes to assemble the 9th Division at Görlitz, the 11th at Freiburg, and the 12th at Frankenstein, in order to cover the assembly of the Prussian corps in those districts.

On the 2nd of April, he thoroughly clears his mind upon the situation as it stands at that moment, and works out a memoir of which the substance is that success depends upon Prussia's resolving to fight before the Austrians have made up their minds, and if possible immediately. Prussia with five railways can place her army on the frontier in 25 days, while Austria needs 45 days to collect 200,000 men. There have been reports that Bavaria is arming. Moltke thinks the Bavarian Army of no very serious importance, and that the only grave danger to be apprehended from Bavaria's deciding to act with Austria is that she may lend the Austrians her railway from Regensburg to Pilsen, and thereby enable them to shorten by 15 days the time required to bring up their army into Northern Bohemia. He is now quite determined to use all the nine corps against Austria.

Next day, April 3rd, he writes a short note to Roon, of which he sends a copy to the King. It contains the detail of his calculation of the forces available on given dates. The important passage is: "If we start with the actual situation of to-day, and assume that both sides begin to mobilise at the same time, the forces available on each side, beginning from the first day, will be as follows:—

	Austrians.	Prussians.
On the 8th day - - - - -	50,000	
On the 14th day (add 24,000 Saxons) - - -	74,000	33,000
On the 18th day (43,000 men from Galicia, Moravia, and Austria) - - - -	117,000	143,000
On the 25th day (42,000 men from Austria and Hungary) - - - - -	159,000	285,000

	Austrians.	Prussians.
On the 28th day (20,000 men from Austria and Hungary) - - - - -	170,000	285,000.
On the 42nd day (60,000 men from Austria and Hungary) - - - - -	230,000	285,000

"Accordingly, the chances for Prussia lie between the 18th and 42nd days.

"Every day during which Austria arms, while we do not, must be deducted from this incomparably important period of operations."

This letter frightened the King. Roon was evidently afraid that instead of inducing His Majesty to act at once, it would have the effect of disposing him to delay or to make peace; and he writes to Moltke begging him to say something reassuring to the King. Moltke replies: "That the Austrians, if we give them time, can bring together almost as many troops as we can is nothing new. I have explained this in all the conferences that have been held. The essential point, however, is not the number of troops, but the time within which they are available on each side. The object of the table at the close of my letter was to make quite clear the manifest advantages which we shall have for a period of three whole weeks if we take the initiative, or at least mobilise not later than the Austrians. . . . ."

"It can be no one's intention to persuade the King to undertake a war like this, but only to render it easier for him to make up his mind by truly and clearly explaining the real situation."

On the 3rd of April, the day of the note to Roon and the King, Moltke worked out the various possible openings of the campaign, starting from the assumption that Austria orders mobilisation on that day, and that Prussia delays the order until April 15th. He first assumes an Austrian offensive towards Berlin, and satisfies himself that the arrangements he contemplates must render it quite hopeless. Then he examines an Austrian offensive towards Breslau, and convinces himself that it must come to a standstill in front of Glogau by April 30th. He next analyses the situation on the assumption that both sides order mobilisation on the same day, and that the 9th, 11th, and 12th Prussian Divisions are ready at the points selected by him in his memoir of March 31st. He examines the possibilities of an Austrian offensive directed against Silesia, or through Görlitz, or down the bank of the Elbe. In any case, the numerical conditions must be fatal to the Austrian enterprise. Then he analyses the conditions in case the Austrians remain on the defensive in Saxony, in Northern Bohemia, or in Moravia. The result is, that in every case but the last Prussia will have at the decisive battle a greatly superior force. But he thinks it improbable that the Austrians will keep their main army waiting at Olmütz to be attacked, because such a course involves the sacrifice without a blow of all Bohemia.

On the 9th and 10th of April, he again works out the possibilities on the assumption that both sides mobilise on the same day. His plan of assembling the army remains substantially the same as in the winter, but he starts further back, before the projected invasion of

Saxony, and includes the VII. Corps from the Rhine Province. The Guard which, being recruited all over the monarchy, requires a longer time than any other corps to call in its reserves, he assembles at Berlin, and fixes at Halle the point of assembly of IV., VII., and VIII. As before, I., II., and III. are at Görlitz, and V. and VI. near Schweidnitz. He works out first the Austrian offensive against Berlin. This would leave the Austrians just equal to the Prussians in Silesia and in Lusatia, but the Prussians would have over, without any Austrians in front of them, IV., VII., VIII., and the Guard. Thus the march on Berlin would be fatal to the Austrians. In order to protect Berlin no change in the Prussian plan is required, except to place an advance guard of the Guard at Jüterbog. The Austrians might try an advance on the left bank of the Elbe to disturb the Prussian concentration at Halle or Torgau. To prevent this, he will occupy Leipzig. This Austrian advance would lead to a battle at Dresden, in which the Austrians would have no superiority, while the Prussian Army from Görlitz would advance towards the Elbe and cut off their retreat. An Austrian advance against Görlitz would lead to nothing except that the Prussian troops *en route* for that place would be debarked at a point further North. But if the Austrians should advance against Breslau, they would seriously disturb the Prussian arrangements in Silesia, although in the long run the move would be disastrous to the Austrians, for the Prussians from Dresden and Görlitz would cut off their retreat.

Moltke very much dislikes the idea that the Austrians can cause him inconvenience in Silesia. Accordingly on April 12th he tries to find out what is the worst the Austrians can do against Breslau. He concludes that this is really the only direction in which an Austrian offensive could have serious consequences and to meet it resolves to reinforce his Silesian Army by moving I. from Görlitz towards Landeshut, and sending II. not to Görlitz but to Hirschberg.

On April 14th, Moltke writes to the King a letter in which he very clearly explains the conclusions to which he has been brought by the various studies which have been reviewed. After enumerating the points at which he now proposes to assemble the several army corps, he says that in selecting these points he has been guided by two considerations, first of all the desirability of reducing the period of transport to the shortest possible time by making full use of all the through lines of railway; and secondly, the importance of placing as strong a force as possible in Silesia, the region from which the offensive can be taken by the shortest route in the direction most dangerous to the enemy. He lays particular stress on the need for a special effort to have the Guard Corps ready soon, and to bring it quickly up to the front. On the 20th, he again reviews the situation, in a memoir in which his scheme for the concentration of the Army is definitively laid down. The points of assembly are:—

- VIII. Zeitz.
- VII. Halle.
- IV. Herzberg.
- G. Spremberg.

- III. Görlitz.
  - I. Greiffenberg.
  - V. Schweidnitz.
- VI. 11 Div. Schweidnitz.  
12 Div. Neisse.
- II. Frankenstein.

The first points of concentration for the seven Prussian corps (he thinks it possible that VII. and VIII. may after all not be available), are upon the line from Herzberg to Neisse, which is 187 miles long. These corps will all be up on the 25th day, by which time the Austrians cannot have more than 100,000 men. Accordingly the Austrians cannot prevent the Prussians from concentrating their 200,000 men at some point in Bohemia. He has now altered the centre of gravity of his concentration, for whereas in the winter he proposed to assemble six corps in Lusatia and one in Silesia, he now has five corps in Silesia and two in Lusatia. The reason for this change is partly that an Austrian attack against Silesia is the operation most probably to be expected, and partly because a Prussian attack starting from Silesia must drive the Austrians across the Elbe and away from their communications, while a Prussian attack from Lusatia would push the Austrians back towards Olmütz and Vienna. On April 27th, Moltke reports to the King. The arrangements which this report suggests show only a trifling change from those of the 20th, the points of assembly being changed for VIII. from Zeitz to Halle, for VII. from Halle to Elsterwerda, for II. from Frankenstein to Schweidnitz and for I. from Greiffenberg to Frankenstein. These changes for II. and I. probably arise from a re-arrangement of the details of railway transport.

On the 28th and 29th April, no mobilisation having as yet been ordered, Moltke again reviews the situation. He notes what troops the Austrians now have in Bohemia, and what reinforcements they can bring up during the next 30 days, the result being that by the 25th day, when the Prussian deployment will be complete, the Austrians will have:—

At Dresden, 30,000 + 24,000 = 54,000, opposed by our VIII., IV., VII., and Guard = 125,000.

At Trautenau 30,000, opposed by our V., II., and 11th Division = 80,000.

At Oswiecim 18,000, opposed by our 12th Division, 12,000.

At Jung-Bunzlau 60,000.

The substance of Moltke's analysis, of which these figures form the basis, is as follows:—

If the Austrians send their first reinforcements to their left wing on the Iser, their right wing at Josephstadt will be so inferior to our Silesian army as to draw upon itself a crushing defeat, and expose all their communications. If they send all their reinforcements to Josephstadt they will be equal to our Silesian army, which will have to remain on the defensive; but their army on the Iser will be exposed to twice its own

numbers, and will have to retreat, though it can evade a battle, which the force at Josephstadt cannot do if our Silesian army attacks it.

The most probable case being that the Austrian reinforcements will go to Josephstadt, it is desirable to strengthen our left wing, and to have it ready as soon as possible. Of this, however, at the start the railway communications will not admit.

If we find at the beginning that the Austrians have not entered Saxony, and have not their principal force beyond the Iser, we must try to reinforce the Silesian army by, at least, part of the III. Corps from Görlitz.

If the Austrians bring up all they possibly can, they will, on the 31st day, have 116,000 men near Josephstadt. We should have against them III., V., II., I., and 11th Division—145,000, or, at least, 130,000 men.

If, then, the Austrians have entered Saxony, or stand beyond the Iser with the Saxons, our Silesian army must take the offensive at once. If the Austrians have only an army of observation on the Iser and their main force at Josephstadt, we must send III. to the Silesian army, which must still take the offensive.

If the Austrians assemble all their forces at once on the Upper Elbe, we may, perhaps, be obliged to give up this decisive operation.

If the Silesian army, having an equal force in front of it, is prevented from debouching from the mountains, our first army must disengage it, which it cannot do before the forty-second day, by which time the Austrians will be 200,000 strong. Even, then, however, allowing for necessary detachments, our armies will have 250,000 men. The most probable situation on the 30th day is:—

<i>Münchengrätz.</i>			
Austrians	-	-	100,000
Half of VIII., IV., VII., and Guard*	-	-	114,000
<i>Josephstadt.</i>			
Austrians	-	-	100,000
Half of III., V., II., I., and half of VI.	-	-	130,000
<i>Upper Silesia.</i>			
Austrians	-	-	18,000
Prussians, 12th Division	-	-	12,000

The decisive battle must come almost at once, and it is impossible to speculate on what will follow that.

About the same time Moltke examines the question, where it will be most useful at the outset to assemble Corps I. and II. If put at Görlitz he will not be able to bring them up in time for a decisive battle at Dresden, though he might move them from Görlitz to Schluckenau, where they would endanger the Austrian retreat from Dresden. Apparently he infers, though he does not expressly say, that I. and II. will be most useful in Silesia.

On the 2nd of May, he is of opinion that if, as he thinks probable, the Austrians have already finished their mobilisation, and are ready to begin their railway transport, they can, by the 25th of May, assemble

162,000 men in Saxony, Northern Bohemia, and at Josephstadt, and can, by the 5th of June, bring up this number to 225,000.

If the Prussian mobilisation is delayed until the 10th of May, the Austrians will be able to begin the campaign with the total just named. In that case, Prussia would have to abandon the advantages of an offensive starting from Silesia because it would be impossible to assemble there a force equal to that of the Austrians. He then examines what, on this new hypothesis, would be the chances of an Austrian offensive towards Berlin, and again concludes that the most advantageous move for the Austrians would be in the direction of Breslau. He sees no means of preventing this if Prussia further postpones arming, and if his general plans are not to be abandoned. Accordingly, he considers it absolutely necessary without further delay to concentrate V. and VI., that is, to mobilise these two corps. He then analyses, on the assumption that this has been done, and that the general mobilisation of the Prussian Army is ordered not later than the 10th of May, the results of an Austrian offensive along each of the possible lines of operation: from their left, from their centre, and from their right. In each case he is satisfied with the numerical conditions under which a battle would be fought.

The first part of the correspondence is brought to a close by a couple of letters to the Minister of War and one to Colonel von Stosch, at that time Chief of the Staff of the IV. Army Corps. From the letter to Stosch we learn that almost all the Prussian army corps had by the end of April revised their mobilisation tables and shortened the period which they required to be ready to march, the Guard having effected the process so thoroughly as to have shortened by twenty-two days the period which must elapse before it could move. Moltke was anxious that the IV. Corps should work out for itself a similar simplification of its arrangements. One of the letters to Roon proposes arrangements for the management of the railways during mobilisation and war.

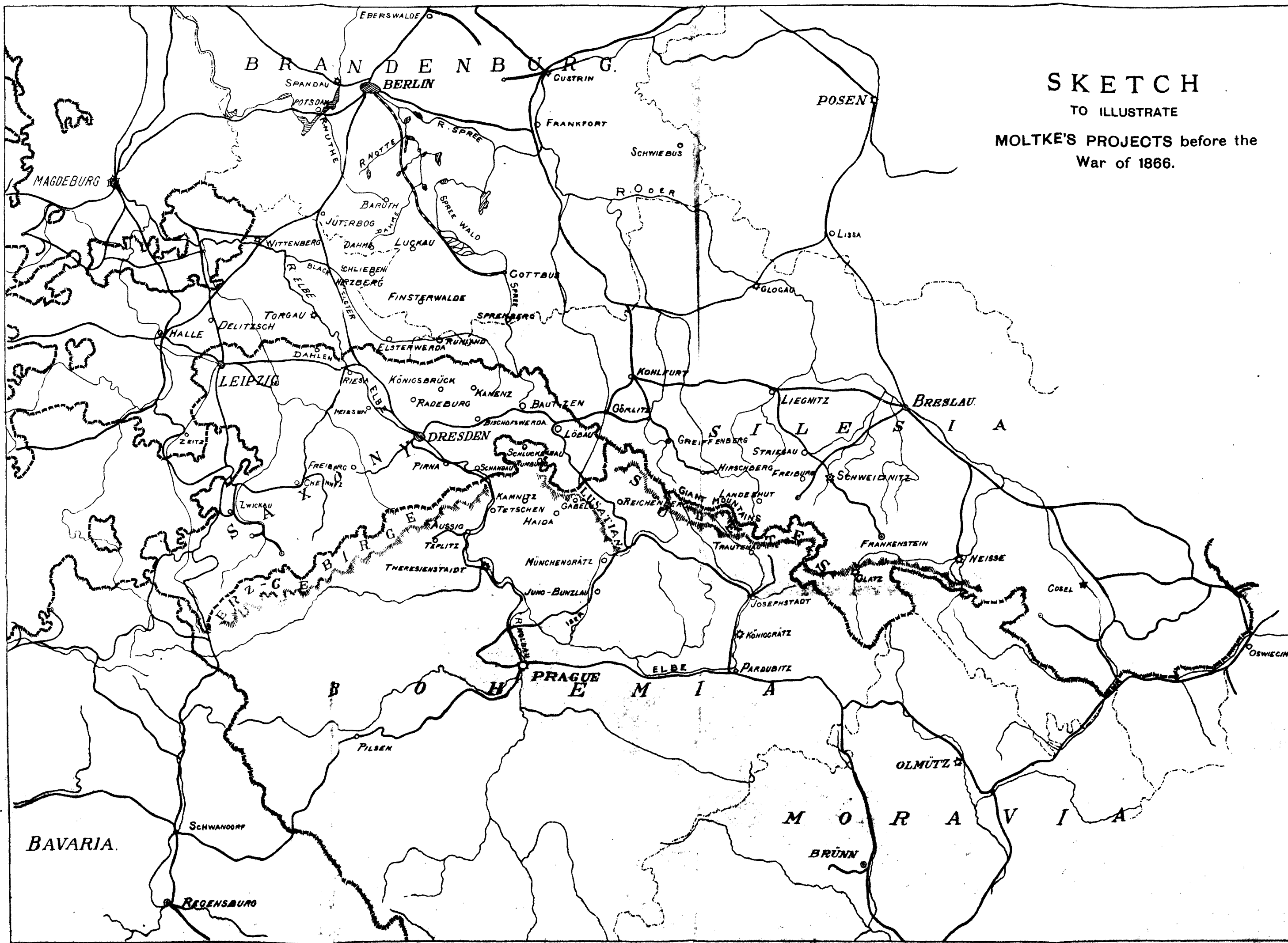
This preliminary correspondence shows the two sides of Moltke's character. Of the military situation his grip is perfect from the beginning, though his mastery is veiled by the fact that his papers reveal the cautious working of his mind. His first care is for defence, and his project to frustrate an Austrian invasion of Prussia will be recognised as a masterpiece. But, whilst thus making himself secure, he never loses sight of his main purpose, which is to break the power of Austria. He sees that by prompt decision and resolute action it will be possible for Prussia during the first three weeks of the campaign to attack the Austrian Army with a force so largely outnumbering it as to give every probability of a complete victory at the very outset. When we remember that the forces on the field of Königgrätz were equal, we can imagine what sort of a defeat would have been given to the Austrians if Moltke's views had been adopted from the beginning. But Moltke was never led by his insight into what was possible to part from his sense of what was practicable. He accepted the position in which he found himself of an adviser. He laid before the King his view of what could be done if a prompt decision

were reached, but in proportion as he saw that the decision would be delayed he modified his plans to meet the changed conditions created by postponement. He carefully draws the line between what is necessary for sure defence and those extra advantages in attack which will be gained by promptitude. While he makes no attempt to insist on the acceptance of his brilliant programme of attack, he resolutely demands, as they become necessary, the adoption of such measures as are, in his opinion, needful for complete defence. A more modest character is not known to history.

The campaign of 1866 is, perhaps, the most brilliant and the most decisive on record. When it was over, Moltke was, with difficulty, persuaded to attend a great dinner in Berlin, and to allow his name to be coupled with the toast of the victorious Army. In his brief reply, he said that, in the name of the Army, he could accept the kind things which had been said only with an important qualification: the Army had not been exposed to the severest trial, that of resistance after defeat; it was therefore impossible to speak without reserve of its good qualities, though they might hope that it would have stood even that supreme test. These were the words of the man who knew while he was speaking that, had his advice been followed, the campaign would have been far more brilliant and far more decisive, and the results even greater than they were. Thirty years have passed, Moltke is in his grave, and now, for the first time, the world learns that Königgrätz was not the victory that Moltke wished, not the decisive blow for which he was prepared, but only a make-shift, only the best that he could do for a Government which had temporised until its best opportunity was past.



SKETCH  
TO ILLUSTRATE  
MOLTKE'S PROJECTS before the  
War of 1866.



1:1,500,000.  
ENGLISH MILES

J. W. Neumann & Co. Litho. Leipzig.

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