Leading up to the resignation, there were several factors that came into play. There was the rise of the Social Democratic Party and the era of Kaiser Wilhelm II, which came to clash against Bismarck’s more conservative ideals. It was viewed that Bismarck did his job and did it well, but that his time was up, it was the time for the rule of the people. A combination of the rise of the Social Democratic Party and Kaiser Wilhelm II’s more modern, bottom-up idea of ruling brought upon by the changing times was what ushered Bismarck out. Bismarck’s chancellorship was mostly in and at its prime during the rule of William I. When William II entered office, tensions were virtually nonexistent, but over the next two years, they grew to the point of resignation. Starting with the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, their relationship started to chafe. The Reinsurance Treaty was a secret treaty that protected Germany against a two-front war. It protected Germany from war with Russia if Germany invaded France, and protected Russia from war with Germany if Russia attacked Austria-Hungary. There are many reasons why supporting either Bismarck’s desire to renew and Wilhelm’s decision not to renew it. My personal belief is that Wilhelm wanted a unified allegiance with Austria-Hungary, a nation which they had much stronger relations with. Also, they wanted stronger ties with England. Bismarck played the more conservative card, and wanted to defend what he could instead of taking the risk of potentially fighting a two-front war. Next, and I believe was the most important of the butting of heads between the two leaders, was the Cabinet Order of 1852, and Wilhelm’s attempt to suspend and overturn it. It essentially eliminated the role of the chancellor. The Cabinet Order of 1852 made the chancellor as the median between the cabinet and the Kaiser. The Kaiser could not directly talk to the cabinet, and whatever the cabinet had to say to the Kaiser had to go through the chancellor’s desk first; then the chancellor will decide what goes to the desk of the Kaiser. The chancellor would be a “filter” between the cabinet and the Kaiser. By attempting to suspend and remove this cabinet order, it essentially removed the role of the chancellor; why else would they need him? Why should Wilhelm have to go behind Bismarck’s back to talk to the cabinet? Then came the Ruhr Coal Miner’s Strike, which Wilhelm publicly embarrassed and bypassed the will of Bismarck. The strikers wanted better treatment and better hours. Bismarck again took the more conservative approach, and let them strike. Bismarck wanted to let them strike, and exemplify them to impose more concrete anti-socialist legislation. On the other hand, Wilhelm again went behind Bismarck’s back and talked with the employers to negotiate a contract. I believe he did this to appeal to the Social Democratic Party, since he sided with the employees who were striking. In the end, Wilhelm *and* Bismarck were shamed. This lead to the straw that broke the camel’s back, which was Bismarck’s attempt at instituting *permanent* anti-socialist legislation. Bismarck passed legislation behind Wilhelm’s back, but when the bill reached the Reichstag, it failed. So when this didn’t pass and it got to the desk of Wilhelm, it really shamed Bismarck. His hands were tied, and next thing you know, he submits his letter of resignation (my source exploration document). On March 18th 1890, Bismarck officially resigned from his chancellorship, to which Wilhelm appointed Caprivi to the post (Caprivi immediately suspended the Cabinet Order of 1852). This led to a global response to what had happened to the Blood and Iron Chancellor.

I found one particular article in the San Francisco Chronicle, entitled *Bismarck Resigns; the Iron Chancellor Steps Down; his Quarrel with the Emperor; the Socialist Party Believed to be the Cause*. It had correspondents from all over reporting back to them about how the people of that nation respond, or would respond. Starting with France, they had major concerns with safety of their country. Since the chancellor was stable and maintained a solid relationship between the two nations, what would happen with this Kaiser who is trying to change everything? There was nothing to say that Wilhelm II won’t invade France. On the other hand, tensions with Austria were said to have reduced. They applauded the Emperor for wanting more transparency, and believed that it secured a positive place for them in future relations. The stock market (Bourse) started the day very poorly in response to the news, but recovered and grew throughout the day, which is interesting. The New York City German population took the more old-fashioned yet understanding role, that one would expect. Since they were removed from the situation, many of whom have not seen the Fatherland since leaving, they appreciated everything Bismarck did for them, but knew that it was only a matter of time until he was to resign. Americans (particularly New Yorkers) saw that it was inevitable, but were also afraid with the possibility of the spread of socialism, a fear that many have had here for the past century. The London perspective was a little different, that they took the more political approach of saying that they each played their cards against each other to result in this feud which led to the inevitable resignation.