

Key Concept 4.1: Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War, and eventually to efforts at transnational union.

Theme: World War I, caused by a complex interaction of long- and short-term factors, resulted in immense losses and disruptions for both victors and vanquished.

Aim: To what extent did M-A-I-N turn a regional Balkan dispute into a global conflict?

I- Militarism- the belief or desire of a government or people that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests.

a) The Anglo-German naval arms race

- 1) Germany sought a navy that could compete with Great Britain.
 - Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed Alfred von Tirpitz to build and lead the German navy.
- 2) Great Britain believed it was their geographic destiny to have the world's most powerful navy.
 - Used the "Two-Power Standard" to maintain its lead. (To possess at least twice the number of battleships as the next two largest naval powers combined.)
 - Developed the new "Dreadnought" class of ships, which further intensified the naval race.

"But just as the Hohenzollern eagle wiped the two-headed Austrian eagle off the field and clipped the wings of the Gallic cock (France), so with God's help and Your Majesty's strength and wisdom, it will also deal with the English leopard."

- Bernhard von Bülow, German chancellor (1900-09), to Kaiser Wilhelm II

"It is one of the ironies of history that Germany's embarkation on a course of global politics in the last decade of the nineteenth century and its construction of a great battle fleet to support that policy should have turned the attention of its great power rivals back to Europe. For the British saw in the German fleet a threat to the security of their home islands, to which all Britain's own imperial concerns were subordinate; to counter that threat the British not only built up their own fleet but formed alliances with their archrivals in the imperial field, France and Russia. The formation of these alliances, and the German belief that they had been formed for the encirclement and destruction of their newly formed empire, set the stage for World War I, a conflict that could more accurately be called a European civil war and one that hastened the end of Europe's global primacy."

Source: Great Power Diplomacy 1814-1914, Norman Rich (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc, 1992), p. 237.

b) The Franco-German standing army race

- 1) Germany regarded France as its natural enemy and competed to build Europe's most powerful standing army.
 - France was Germany's only real threat in continental Europe.
- 2) France sought to maintain its status in continental Europe and competed with Germany to have the most powerful standing army in Europe.
 - France was also motivated by **revanche**: revenge for losses from the Franco-Prussian War (Alsace & Lorraine).

II- Alliances- a union or association formed for mutual benefit, especially between countries or organizations.

a) 1871: The balance of power of Europe was upset by the decisive Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War and the creation of the German Empire.

- 1) Bismarck thereafter feared French revenge and negotiated treaties to isolate France.
- 2) Bismarck also feared Russia, especially after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when Russia blamed Germany for not gaining territory in the Balkans.

b) In 1879, the Dual Alliance emerged: Germany and Austria

- 1) Bismarck sought to thwart Russian expansion.
- 2) The Dual Alliance was based on German support for Austria in its struggle with Russia over expansion in the Balkans.

c) **Triple Alliance**, 1881: Italy joined Germany and Austria.

- 1) This was solely a defensive treaty for Italy. (They would only join the war if attacked)
- 2) Italy sought support for its imperialistic ambitions in the Mediterranean and Africa.

d) Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty, 1887.

- 1) It promised the neutrality of both Germany and Russia if either country went to war with another country.

- 2) Kaiser Wilhelm II refused to renew the reinsurance treaty after removing Bismarck in 1890.
 - This is seen as a diplomatic failure as Russia now had no assurance it was safe from a German invasion.
 - France courted Russia and the two became allies.
 - Germany, now out of necessity, developed closer ties to Austria.
- e) Entente Cordial, 1904: Due to the Anglo-German naval arms race, Britain and France settled all outstanding colonial disputes in Africa.
 - 1) France accepted British rule of the Sudan.
 - 2) Britain recognized French control of Morocco.
- f) **Triple Entente**, 1907: Britain, France, and Russia.
 - 1) It was formed to check the power of the Triple Alliance.

III- Imperialism

- a) Fashoda Crisis, 1898: Between Britain and France for control of a key section of Sudan.
 - 1) France sought an east-west corridor of colonies that would connect the Atlantic to the Nile.
 - 2) Britain sought a north-south corridor that would allow them to set up telegraph and railway lines from southern Africa to Egypt. (Cape Town to Cairo)
 - 3) A peaceful solution was brokered in hopes of establishing better relations due to a shared fear of German power.
- b) Moroccan Crisis
 - 1) Kaiser Wilhelm urged Moroccan independence despite it being a French colony.
 - 2) Tensions ran high but were settled diplomatically.
- c) Second Moroccan Crisis
 - 1) A German gunboat was sent to Morocco to protest the French occupation of Fez.
 - 2) Britain once again supported France.
 - 3) Germany backed down for a small piece of the French Congo
 - Germany also recognized that France had a special interest in Morocco.

IV- Nationalism

- a) Nationalism created a "powder keg" in the Balkans.
 - 1) The Ottoman Empire ("**the sick man of Europe**") receded from the Balkans leaving a power vacuum.
 - This was the so-called "Eastern Question".
- b) **Pan-Slavism**, a nationalist movement to unite all Slavic peoples, encouraged the Serbs, Bosnians, Slovenes, and Croats to seek a single political entity in Southeastern Europe. Supported by Russia in order to rival Western European powers.
 - 1) As the southern Slavs' "big brother" to the east, Russia focused on Balkan territories in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires after its humiliating loss in the Russo-Japanese War.
- c) Revanche: French desire for revenge against Germany
 - 1) French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)
 - 2) France's loss of Alsace-Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War
- d) Pan-Germanism: make Germany an imperial and military power

V- Immediate Causes of World War I

- a) June 28, 1914: **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, the Austrian heir to throne, was assassinated by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip (member of the ultra-nationalist Serbian "**Black Hand Society**") while visiting Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The Archduke Franz Ferdinand is one of the modern era's terrible ghosts, doomed to re-enact year after year his floundering final hours, ostrich feathers everywhere, his body bulging in an absurd uniform. He is always en route to that wrong turn which will bring him face to face with the depressed young man, sitting in a Sarajevo cafe mulling over the pathetic failure of his assassination plot, who is suddenly presented with the incredible reprieve. Betrayed by his useless security arrangements and daft, pop-eyed, mustachioed appearance, Franz Ferdinand seems to cry out to be killed and usher in a new and awful world."

Source: Danubia: A Personal History of Habsburg Europe, Simon Winder (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), p. 441.

- b) Kaiser Wilhelm II pledged unwavering support to Austria to punish Serbia: "**the blank check.**"