

1 The Stage Is Set for War

TERMS & NAMES

- militarism
- Triple Alliance
- Kaiser Wilhelm II
- Triple Entente

MAIN IDEA

In Europe, military buildup, nationalistic feelings, and rival alliances set the stage for a continental war.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Ethnic conflict in the Balkan region, which helped start the war, continued to erupt in that area in the 1990s.

SETTING THE STAGE At the turn of the 20th century, the nations of Europe had been at peace with one another for nearly 30 years. An entire generation had grown up ignorant of the horrors of war. Some Europeans believed that progress had made war a thing of the past. Yet in little more than a decade, a massive war would engulf Europe and spread across the globe.

An Uneasy Peace Grips Europe

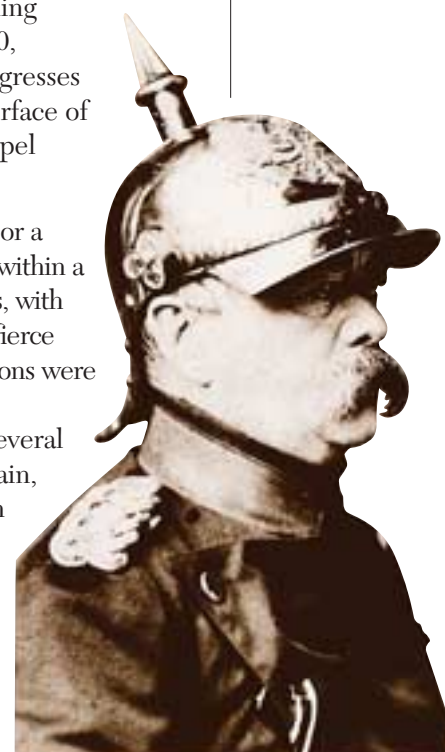
Efforts to outlaw war and achieve a permanent peace had been gaining momentum in Europe since the middle of the 19th century. By 1900, hundreds of peace organizations were active. In addition, peace congresses convened regularly between 1843 and 1907. However, below this surface of peace and goodwill, several forces were at work that would help propel Europe into war.

The Steady Rise of Nationalism One such force was nationalism, or a deep devotion to one's nation. Nationalism can serve as a unifying force within a country. However, it also can cause intense competition between nations, with each seeking to overpower the other. By the turn of the 20th century, a fierce rivalry indeed had developed among Europe's Great Powers. Those nations were Germany, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, and France.

This increasing rivalry among European nations stemmed from several sources. Competition for materials and markets was one. Great Britain, home of the Industrial Revolution, had long been Europe's leader in industry, finance, and shipping. After 1850, however, other nations began to challenge Britain's power. One such nation was Germany. Germany's many new industries made its economy the fastest-growing one on the continent. As a result, Germany competed with Great Britain for industrial dominance.

Nationalistic rivalries also grew out of territorial disputes. France, for example, had never gotten over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in the Franco-Prussian War (1870). Austria-Hungary and Russia both tried to dominate in the Balkans, a region in southeast Europe. Within the Balkans, the intense nationalism of Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, and other ethnic groups led to demands for independence.

Imperialism Another force that helped set the stage for war in Europe was imperialism. As Chapter 11 explained, the nations of Europe competed fiercely for colonies in Africa and Asia. The quest for colonies sometimes pushed European nations to the brink of war. In 1905 and again in 1911, Germany and France nearly fought over who would control Morocco, in northern Africa. With most of Europe supporting France, Germany eventually backed down. As European countries continued to compete for overseas empires, their sense of rivalry and mistrust of one another deepened.

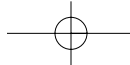


German chancellor Otto von Bismarck led his nation to victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The war, which earned Germany some French territory, increased tensions between the two nations.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Analyzing Issues

What helped fuel nationalistic rivalries among the countries of Europe?



The Growth of Militarism Beginning in the 1890s, increasing nationalism led to a dangerous European arms race. The nations of Europe believed that to be truly great, they needed to have a powerful military. By 1914, all the Great Powers except Britain had large standing armies. In addition, military experts stressed the importance of being able to quickly mobilize, or organize and move troops in case of a war. Generals in each country developed highly detailed plans for such a mobilization.

The policy of glorifying military power and keeping an army prepared for war was known as **militarism**. Having a large and strong standing army made citizens feel patriotic. However, it also frightened some people. As early as 1895, Frédéric Passy, a peace activist and future Nobel Peace Prize winner, expressed a concern that many shared:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The entire able-bodied population are preparing to massacre one another; though no one, it is true, wants to attack, and everybody protests his love of peace and determination to maintain it, yet the whole world feels that it only requires some unforeseen incident, some unpreventable accident, for the spark to fall in a flash . . . and blow all Europe sky-high.

FRÉDÉRIC PASSY, quoted in *Nobel: The Man and His Prizes*

Background

The Nobel Peace Prize is named after Alfred Nobel, a Swedish inventor and industrialist. He established a fund to award prizes annually for strides made in several categories, including the advancement of peace. Ironically, Nobel's most noteworthy invention was dynamite.

Vocabulary

chancellor: the chief minister of state in many European countries.

HISTORY MAKERS



Kaiser Wilhelm II
1859–1941

Wilhelm II was related to the leaders of two nations he eventually would engage in war. Wilhelm, George V of Great Britain, and Nicholas II of Russia were all cousins.

The Kaiser thought a great deal of himself and his place in history. Once, when a doctor told him he had a small cold, Wilhelm reportedly responded, "No, it is a big cold. Everything about me must be big."

The Kaiser also could be sly and deceitful. After he forced the popular Bismarck to resign, Wilhelm pretended to be upset. "I feel as sorrowful as though I had lost my grandfather all over again," he announced publicly. Most people, however, including Bismarck, were not fooled. In his retirement, the former chancellor grumbled that Wilhelm "thinks he knows better than anyone. He recognizes no authority but himself."

Tangled Alliances

The growing international rivalries had led to the creation of several military alliances among the Great Powers as early as the 1870s. This alliance system had been designed to keep peace in Europe. But it would instead help push the continent into war.

Bismarck Forges Early Pacts Between 1864 and 1871, Prussia's blood-and-iron chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, freely used war to unify Germany. After 1871, however, Bismarck declared Germany to be a "satisfied power." He then turned his energies to maintaining peace in Europe.

Bismarck saw France as the greatest threat to peace. He believed that France still wanted revenge for its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Bismarck's first goal, therefore, was to isolate France. "As long as it is without allies," Bismarck stressed, "France poses no danger to us." In 1879, Bismarck formed the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Three years later, Italy joined the two countries, forming the **Triple Alliance**. In 1887, Bismarck took yet another possible ally away from France by making a treaty with Russia.

Bismarck knew that his network of alliances was unstable. Two of Germany's allies, Russia and Austria, were themselves bitter rivals for the Balkans. The slightest shift in diplomatic winds could blow apart the fragile web of treaties.

Shifting Alliances Threaten Peace In 1890, Germany's foreign policy changed dramatically. That year, **Kaiser Wilhelm II**—who two years earlier had become ruler of Germany—forced Bismarck to resign. A proud and stubborn man, Wilhelm II did not wish to share power with anyone. Besides wanting to assert his own power, the new Kaiser was eager to show the world just how mighty Germany had become. The army was his greatest pride. "I and the army were born for one another," Wilhelm declared shortly after taking power.

Wilhelm set Germany on a new course. He let his nation's treaty with Russia lapse in 1890. Russia responded by forming a defensive military alliance with France in 1892 and 1894. Such an alliance had been Bismarck's fear. A war with either Russia or France would



Vocabulary

impulsive: inclined to act on a sudden feeling rather than thought.

make Germany the enemy of both. Germany would then be forced to fight a two-front war, or a war on both its eastern and western borders.

Next, the impulsive Kaiser, envious of Britain's large empire and mighty navy, decided to challenge Britain. During the 1890s, Germany built its own small colonial empire. At the same time, Wilhelm started a tremendous shipbuilding program in an effort to make the German navy equal to Britain's.

Alarmed, Great Britain began to enlarge its own fleet. In 1904, Britain formed an entente, or alliance, with France. In 1907, Britain made another entente, this time with both France and Russia. The **Triple Entente**, as it was called, did not bind Britain to fight with France and Russia. However, it did almost certainly ensure that Britain would not fight against them.

By 1907, two rival camps existed in Europe. On one side was the Triple Alliance—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. On the other side was the Triple Entente—Great Britain, France, and Russia. A dispute between two rival powers could draw the entire continent into war.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

B. Summarizing

Which countries made up the Triple Alliance? the Triple Entente?

Crisis in the Balkans

Nowhere was that dispute more likely to occur than on the Balkan Peninsula. This mountainous peninsula in the southeastern corner of Europe was home to an assortment of ethnic groups. With a long history of nationalist uprisings and ethnic clashes, the Balkans were known as the “powder keg” of Europe.

Europe's Powder Keg By the early 1900s, the Ottoman Empire—which included the Balkan region—was in rapid decline. While some Balkan groups struggled to free themselves from Ottoman rule, others already had succeeded in breaking away from their Turkish rulers. These peoples had formed new nations, including Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia.

Nationalism was a powerful force in these countries. Each group longed to extend its borders. Serbia, for example, had a large Slavic population. Serbia hoped to absorb all the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula. On this issue of Serbian nationalism, Russia and Austria-Hungary were in direct conflict. Russia, itself a mostly Slavic nation, supported Serbian nationalism. Austria, which feared rebellion among its small Slavic population, felt threatened by Serbia's growth. In addition, both Russia and Austria-Hungary had hoped to fill the power vacuum created by the Ottoman decline in the Balkans.

In 1908, Austria annexed, or took over, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Europe on the Eve of World War I, 1914



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER:

Interpreting Maps

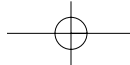
- Region** What countries made up the Balkans?
- Location** Based on the map, which alliance might have an advantage if war erupted? Why?

SPOTLIGHT ON

The Armenian Massacre

One group that suffered greatly for its independence efforts was the Armenians. By the 1880s, the roughly 2.5 million Christian Armenians in the Ottoman Empire had begun to demand their freedom. As a result, relations between the group and its Turkish rulers grew strained.

Throughout the 1890s, Turkish troops killed tens of thousands of Armenians. When World War I erupted in 1914, the Armenians pledged their support to the Turks' enemies. In response, the Turkish government deported nearly 2 million Armenians. Along the way, more than 600,000 died of starvation or were killed by Turkish soldiers.



Unresolved Problems

The Threats of Weapons and Terrorism

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was an act of terrorism. Terrorism is the use of violence or force against a person or property to gain a political or social objective. Acts of terrorism can include kidnappings, bombings, hijackings and other acts.

In the 20th century, the use of terrorism expanded greatly. Groups representing a variety of political views chose to use terrorism to try to achieve their goals. Modern terrorists often target innocent civilians, making the terrorism even more frightening.

Technological advances, such as automatic weapons and easily transported bombs, make the activity even more deadly. Mass media coverage expands the impact of the violent acts to all areas of the globe. **See Epilogue**, p. 602.

These were two Balkan areas with large Slavic populations. Serbian leaders, who had sought to rule these provinces, were outraged. The possibility of war arose. Russia offered Serbia full support, but the offer meant little. Russia was totally unprepared for war. When Germany stood firmly behind Austria, Russia and Serbia had to back down.

By 1914, tensions in the Balkan region were once again on the rise. Serbia had emerged victorious from several local conflicts. As a result, the nation had gained additional territory and a new confidence. It was more eager than ever to take Bosnia and Herzegovina away from Austria. In response, Austria-Hungary vowed to crush any Serbian effort to undermine its authority in the Balkans.

A Shot Rings Throughout Europe Into this poisoned atmosphere of mutual dislike and mistrust stepped the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophie. On June 28, 1914, the couple paid a state visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. It was to be their last. The royal pair were shot at point-blank range as they rode through the streets of Sarajevo in an open car. The killer was Gavrilo Princip, a 19-year-old member of the Black Hand. The Black Hand was a secret society committed to ridding Bosnia of Austrian rule.

Because the assassin was a Serbian, Austria decided to use the murders as an excuse to punish Serbia. An angry Kaiser Wilhelm II urged Austria to be aggressive, and he offered Germany's unconditional support. In effect this gave Austria license to do what it wanted with Serbia.

On July 23, Austria presented Serbia with an ultimatum. An ultimatum is a list of demands that if not met, will lead to serious consequences. The ultimatum was deliberately harsh. Demands included an end to all anti-Austrian activity. In addition, Serbian leaders would have had to allow Austrian officials into their country to conduct an investigation into the assassinations. Serbia knew that refusing the ultimatum would lead to war against the more powerful Austria. Therefore, Serbian leaders agreed to most of Austria's demands. They offered to have several others settled by an international conference.

Austria, however, was in no mood to negotiate. The nation's leaders, it seemed, had already settled on war. On July 28, Austria rejected Serbia's offer and declared war. That same day, Serbia's ally, Russia, took action. Russian leaders ordered the mobilization of troops toward the Austrian border.

Leaders all over Europe suddenly took alarm. The fragile European stability seemed about to collapse. The British foreign minister, the Italian government, and even Kaiser Wilhelm himself urged Austria and Russia to negotiate. But it was too late. The machinery of war had been set in motion.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Analyzing Issues

Explain the reasons for the hostility between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

Section 1 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- militarism
- Triple Alliance
- Kaiser Wilhelm II
- Triple Entente

2. TAKING NOTES

Create a time line of major events that led to World War I.



Write the lead paragraph of a news story about one event.

3. ANALYZING ISSUES

Why might the "machinery of war," set in motion by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, have been difficult to stop?

THINK ABOUT

- nationalism
- militarism
- the alliance system

4. ANALYZING THEMES

Power & Authority With another student, play the roles of Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm. In front of the class, debate each other over Germany's foreign policy goals.

THINK ABOUT

- the extent of Germany's "satisfaction" as a world power
- keeping Russia as an ally
- peace in Europe