

Origins of World War I

Causes of World War I

- **NIMS**
 - o Nationalism, Imperialism, Militarism, alliance

Nationalism

- Fierce Competition
 - o Each state was motivated only by its own self interest
 - o States acted to the benefit of the state
 - o Economic competition
 - o Competing colonial rivalries
- Acceptability of war
 - o A way of preserving power
- Fear of internal conflict (and nationalisms)
 - o **“Active policy”** smothers internal differences
 - o Hope that external threats can trump internal conflicts
 - o Nationalists without states created internal fights
 - o Poles, Irish, etc. were not happy being ruled by others
- Popular support for war
 - o Individuals liked the idea of war and were excited about it
 - o Volunteers for the army
 - o Even socialists as individuals joined
 - o Other possibilities:
 - o economic capitalism wanted war profits
 - Profitability of war for manufacturers of war materials
 - Bullets, artillery, etc...
 - o Competition for raw materials and markets
 - Some industrialists would get profit from new markets and materials
- General expectation for a quick and successful war

Imperialism

- Ambition to be seen as a great power
- **First Moroccan Crisis 1905**
 - o Big crisis over Morocco
 - France, Britain, and Germany
 - o Scramble for Africa

Militarism

- Large armies
 - o European armies **doubled** in size between 1870 and 1914
 - Russia had the largest army with 1.3 million
 - France and Germany had 900,000 each
 - Britain, Italy, Austria had 250,000-500,000 each
 - German Naval Build-up
- Increased influence of military leaders
 - o Plans



Alliances

- 1879 - Germany and Austria
 - o Italy joined Germany and Austria 1882 to make **Triple Alliance**
 - o Support existing political order
 - They wanted to keep things as they were
- 1887 Reinsurance Treaty - Germany and Russia
 - o Bismarck did not want a Russian-French alliance
 - Makes an alliance with Russia
 - o Not aggressive enough for Kaiser
 - Bismarck fired
 - o Reinsurance Treaty not renewed
- 1894 - Franco-Russian Alliance
- 1894 Entente Cordiale - Britain and France
- **1907 Triple Entente** - Russia joined the Entente powers (Britain and France)

Origins of the War

- Everyone claimed to be fighting a defensive war for the “fatherland”
- Illusions
 - o Short – Any war would be quick and easy
 - o War = “glorious adventure”
 - Brings out the best in people
 - Self-sacrifice, heroism, nobility

Balkan Crises

- **Bosnian crisis of 1907-08**
 - o Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - To prevent Serbia from growing
 - Feared Serbia expanding will cause Serbs in the Austrian empire to want to join Serbia
 - Feared spread to the other nationalities
 - o Russia backed Serbia and Serbia prepared for war against Austria
 - Russia sees self as protector of Slavic peoples
 - o Kaiser William II forced Russia to back off by threatening war with Germany
 - Russia accepted that Austria will annex these territories
 - Russia felt humiliated and vowed revenge
- **First Balkan War 1912**
 - o Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece created the Balkan League and fought the Ottoman Empire
 - Conquered Macedonia and Albania
 - Could not agree on how to divide the land
- **Second Balkan War 1913**
 - o Serbia, Greece, Romania, and the Ottoman Empire against Bulgaria
 - Bulgaria lost and got only a little piece of Macedonia
- London Conference
 - o Serbia and Greece got most of the rest of the land
 - Serbia not satisfied because Austria did not let Serbia get Albania
 - Port on the Adriatic Sea is what they really wanted
 - Albania was made independent



- Results
 - o Serbia viewed Austria as evil monsters
 - o Russia was upset
 - they were backing the Slavs
 - Russia prepares for war
 - o Austria saw Serbia as a mortal danger
 - Nationalism would destroy the empire
 - o France and Russia renewed their alliance and
 - Promised not to back down next time
 - o France and Britain drew closer
- By 1914 Triple Alliance and Triple Entente were armed and ready for an outbreak of war

The July Crisis

- Trigger: assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand was in Sarajevo
 - Bosnian nationalist Gavrilo Princip decided to shoot the Archduke.
 - o Austria suspected the Serbian government was involved
 - Organized by the **Black Hand**
 - Secret nationalist society that wanted a Pan-Slavic country
 - Dragutin Ddimitrijevic head of Serbian intelligence
 - Also head of Black Hand
 - Ordered the murder
 - Serbian Prime Minister tried and failed to stop the assassination
- Tensions rise quickly
 - o Austria worried about Russian reaction
 - Consulted Germany and got a **“blank cheque”**
 - o Austria was nervous about Russia
 - Germany said they could do whatever they want
 - o Austrian ultimatum to Serbia
 - To avoid war:
 - Serbia should prevent all anti-Austrian or pro Greater Serbian expression propaganda
 - Austria can “help” investigate the murder
 - Serbia refused to give control of the investigation to Austria
 - Only agreed to limit press
- Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914
 - o Russia wanted to support Serbia
 - Czar tried to order a partial mobilization but the General Staff said it was too hard to do a “partial mobilization”
 - full mobilization July 29
 - Knew the Germans would consider this an act of war
 - o **Willi-Nikki Letters**
 - Germans tried to prevent Russian mobilization
 - it takes Russia longer to mobilize
 - Germans and Russians both know that Germany can mobilize faster



