

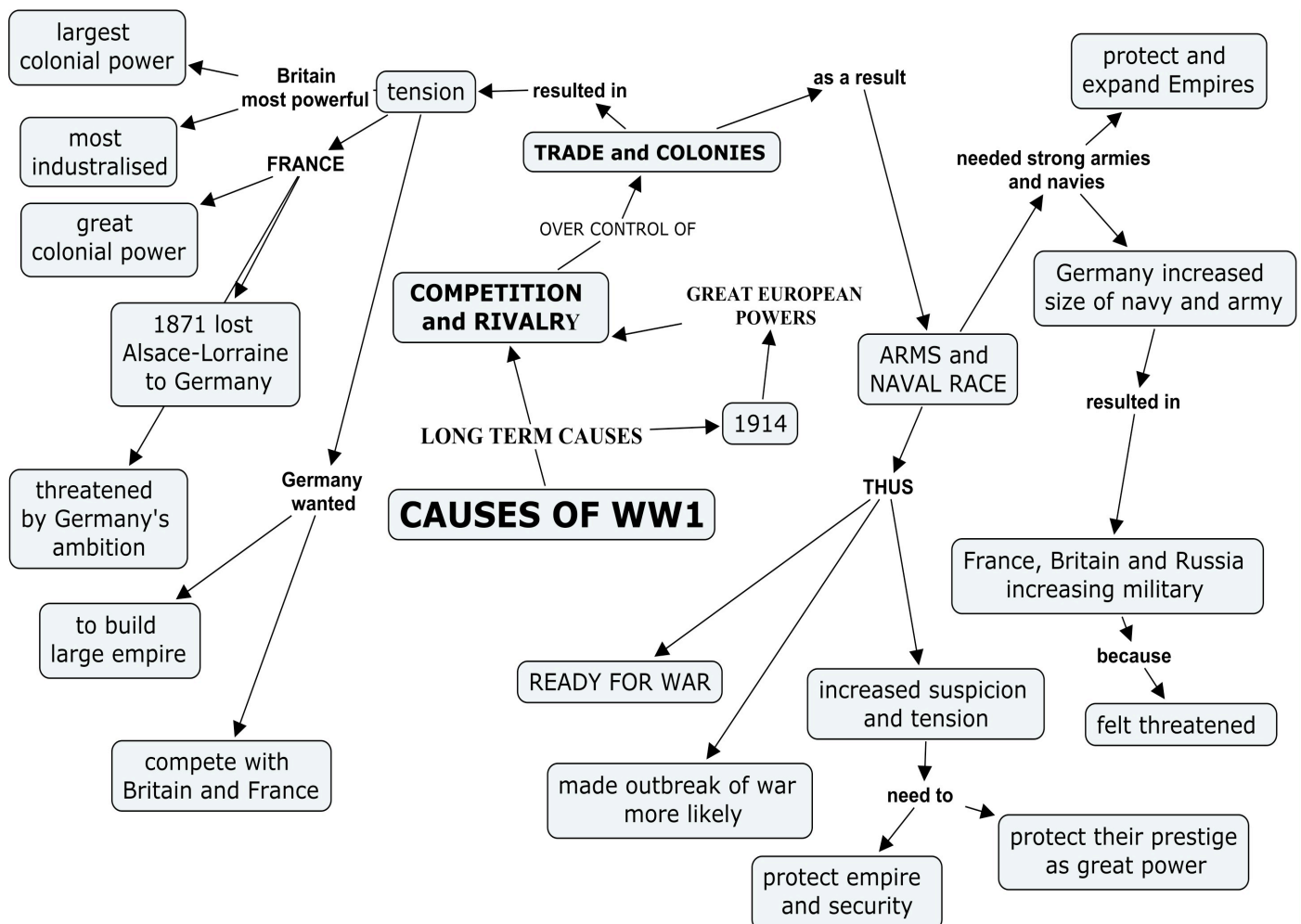
BAPTIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2014

Special Issue to Commemorate the tragedy of the First World War

•Long term Causes

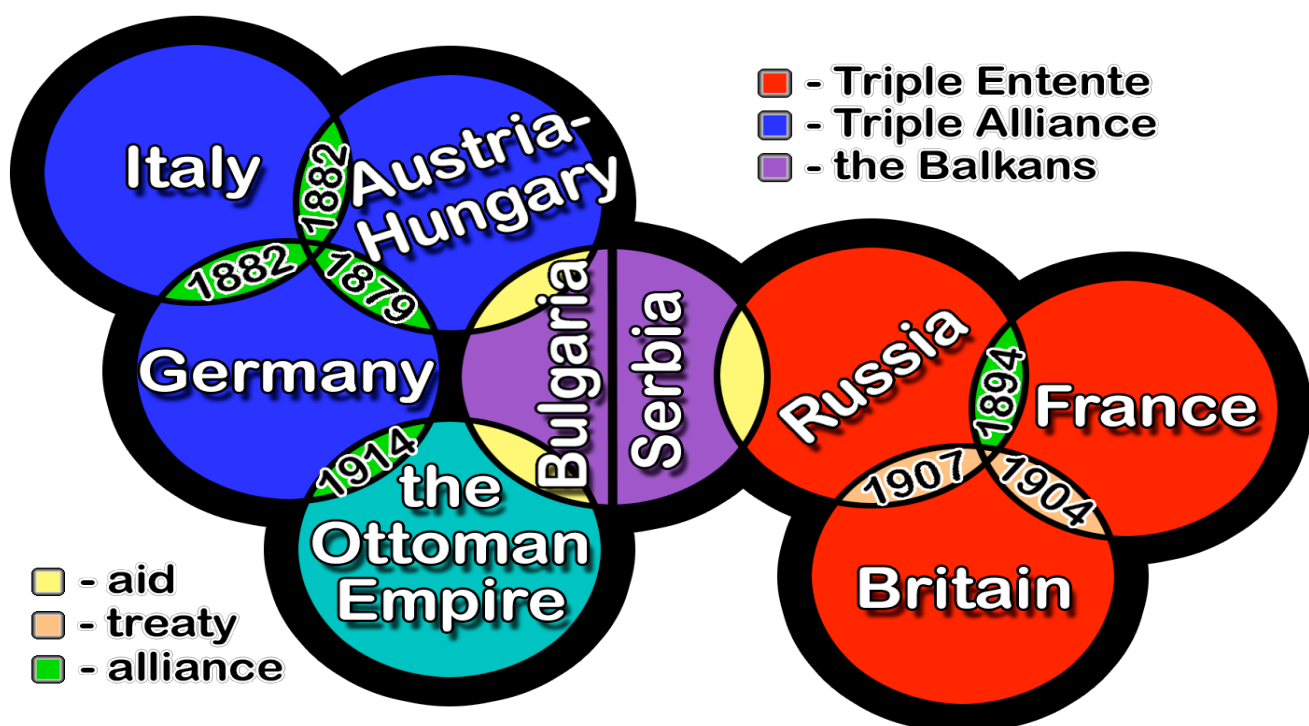
- 1 crumbling of the old empires of Europe
- 2 structures of alliances
- 3 nationalism & spheres of influence
- 4 arms race
- 5 economic rivalry
- 6 need for distraction from internal turmoil

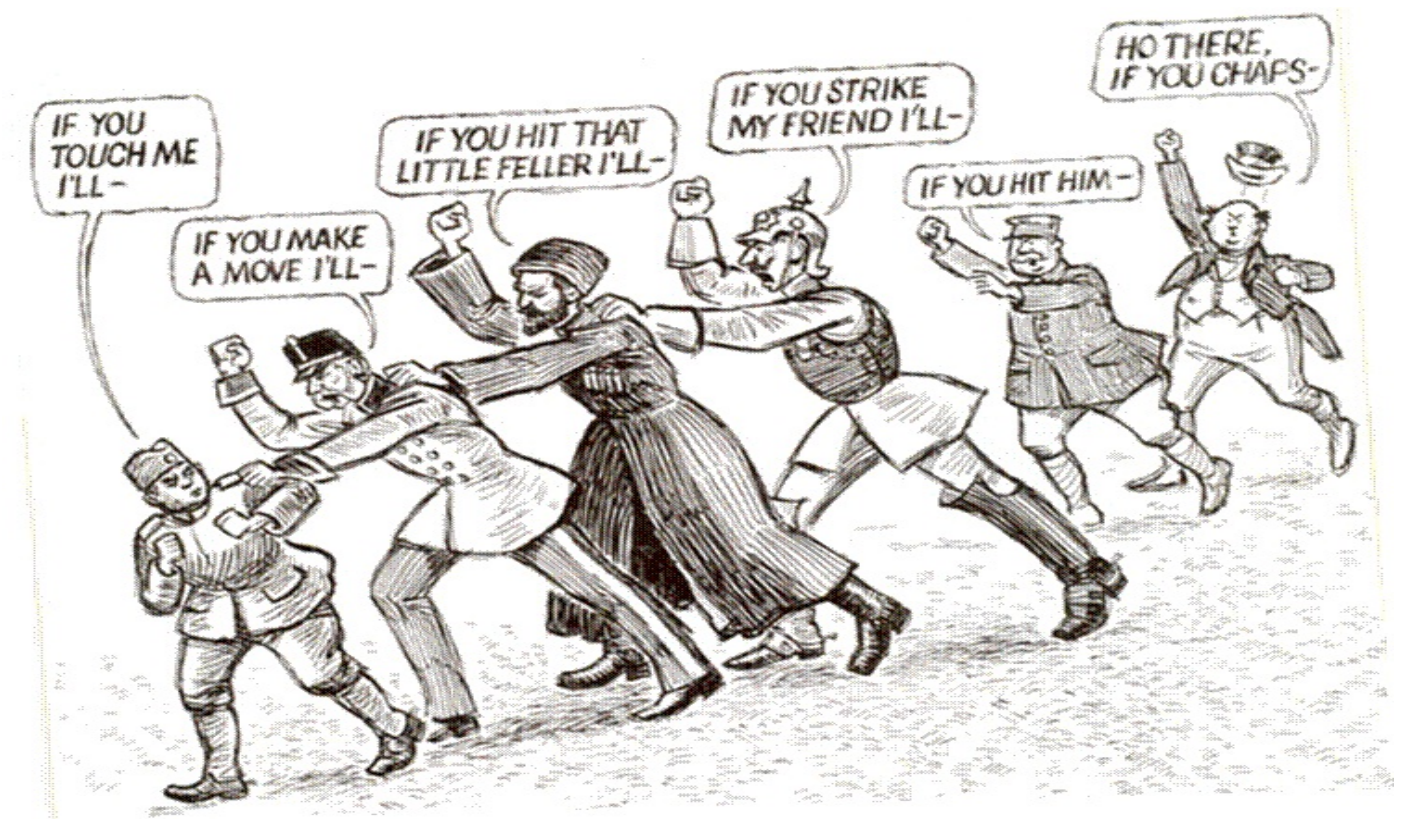


1 Crumbling of old empires of Europe

- ✚ Austria-Hungary was trying to cling to Balkan countries but was under threat – especially from Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania which all wanted both expansion and independence.
Hungary was also hankering for greater independence.
- ✚ Russia badly defeated in war with Japan in 1905 was afraid of losing parts of Poland and some of the fringe parts of the empire eg Georgia, Finland and the Baltic countries. It also felt guilty it had not given Serbia support in 1908.
- ✚ Britain divided over Ireland. The Home Rule Bill would have come into force in 1914 but the Northern Irish troops were refusing to enforce it.
- ✚ France having lost Alsace & Lorraine in 1871 to Germany wanted to get them back .
- ✚ Turkey/Ottoman Empire had been crumbling for about 100 years, and was threatened in particular by Greece over the Aegean islands.
- ✚ Germany was a very new unitary nation: it was concerned to centralize power so it did not want to encourage fragmentation.

2 Structures of alliances





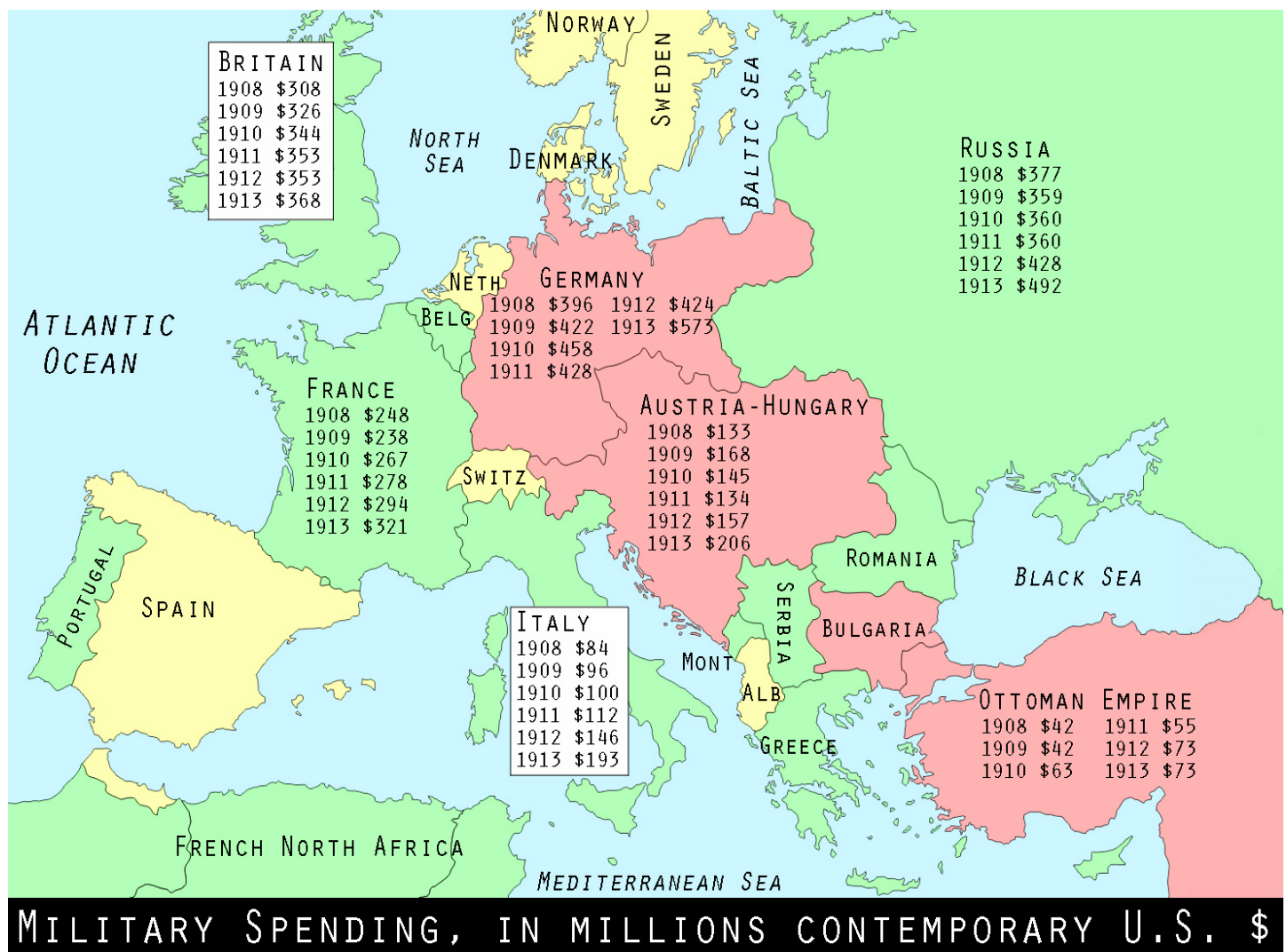
3 Nationalism and spheres of influence



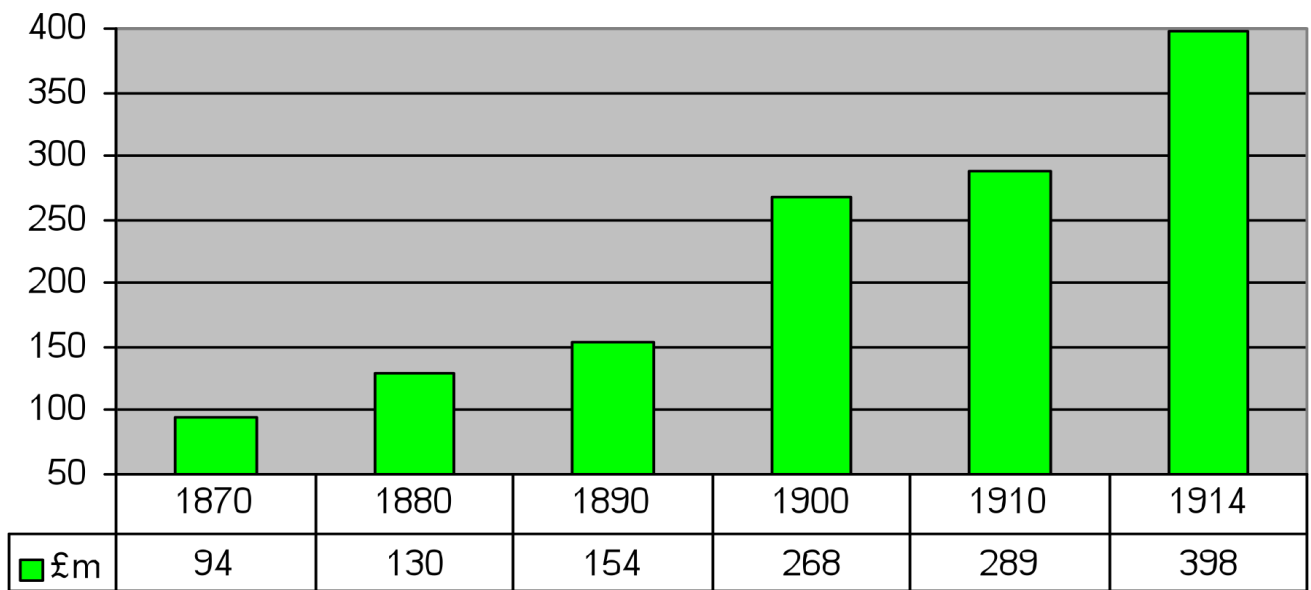
British policy was almost obsessed by the need to keep the trade routes to India under British control. However the Russians were anxious to acquire access to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus and so, to that end, allied with Serbia to increase their influence in the Balkans. The Austrian-Hungarian Empire saw the Balkans as its natural sphere of influence and in fact in 1908 had tightened its control on the area by taking full control in Bosnia–Herzegovina, which remained a grievance with the many Serbs who lived there.

Germany had seized the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in 1870 having humiliated France in a brief war and was also exerting an ever more powerful presence in Poland and the Baltic states. It was conscious of the great advantage that Britain's and, to a lesser extent, France's overseas empires gave them in trading opportunities.

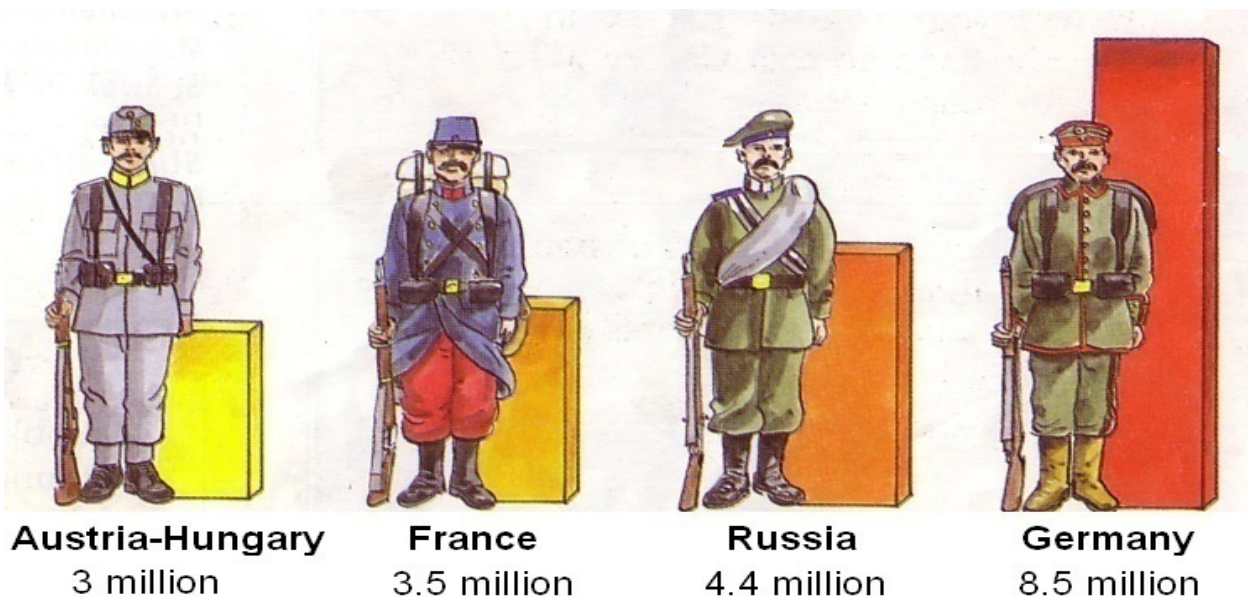
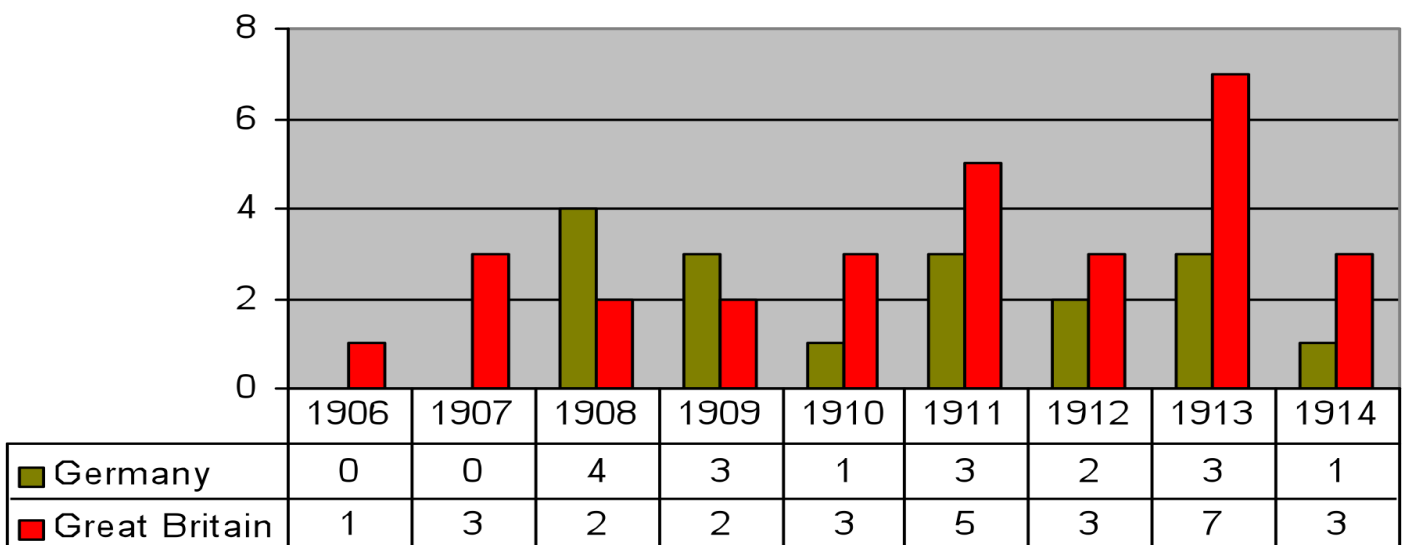
4 arms race



Defence Spending, 1870-1914



Building Dreadnoughts, 1906-1914



When Germany began to develop its navy in the early 1900s, Britain made a policy decision that its navy should never be less than over twice as large as that of Germany. But Britain's army was small in comparison with the armies of France, Germany, Russia and even Austria-Hungary.

The massive growth in the German army was, however, just as threatening to France and Russia as its developing navy was to Britain. There was a view developing that if Germany were to be restrained a war would have to come sooner rather than later. Although the Russian army was huge, it was not well equipped and the weak industrial infrastructure meant that it took a long time to mobilize and supply.

The French understanding was that it could safely keep its smallish fleet in the Mediterranean because France's northern flank would come under the protection of Britain's prodigious naval power. That enabled it to work to improve the land army that had fared so badly in the war with Germany in 1870.

5 economic rivalry

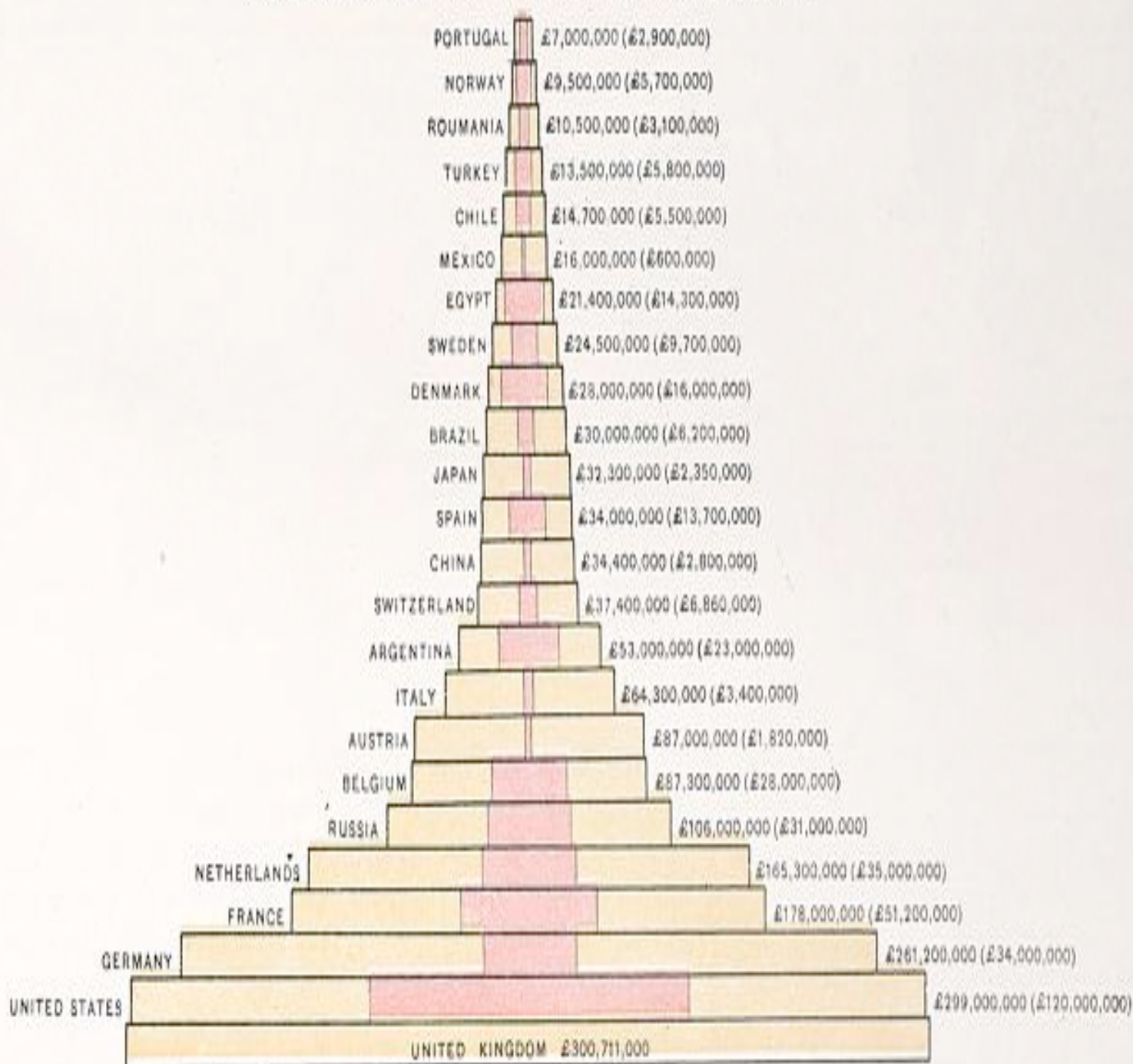
	Population In millions	Territory Million sq km	Hectares per head	Total GDP In \$billions	GDP \$ Per head
Russia	173.2	21.7	12.6	257.7	1488
France	39.8	0.5	1.3	138.7	3485
UK	46	0.3	0.7	226.4	4921
UK Empire	380.2	13.5	3.6	257.0	676
French Empire	48.3	10.7	22.1	31.5	652
USA	96.6	7.8	8.1	511.6	5301
Austria Hungary	50.6	0.6	1.2	100.5	1986
Germany	67.0	0.5	0.8	244.3	3648
German Empire	10.7	3.0	27.5	6.4	601
Ottoman Empire	23.0	1.8	7.7	25.3	1100

Until 1914, by virtually all measures, Britain was still world dominant in terms of trade. But the USA was growing rapidly and Britain feared that Germany would soon become dominant in Europe. Russia had enormous resources of raw materials and manpower but remained fragmented and technologically underdeveloped.

ANNUAL EXPORTS OF MERCHANDISE OF THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

(DOMESTIC PRODUCE AND MANUFACTURES)

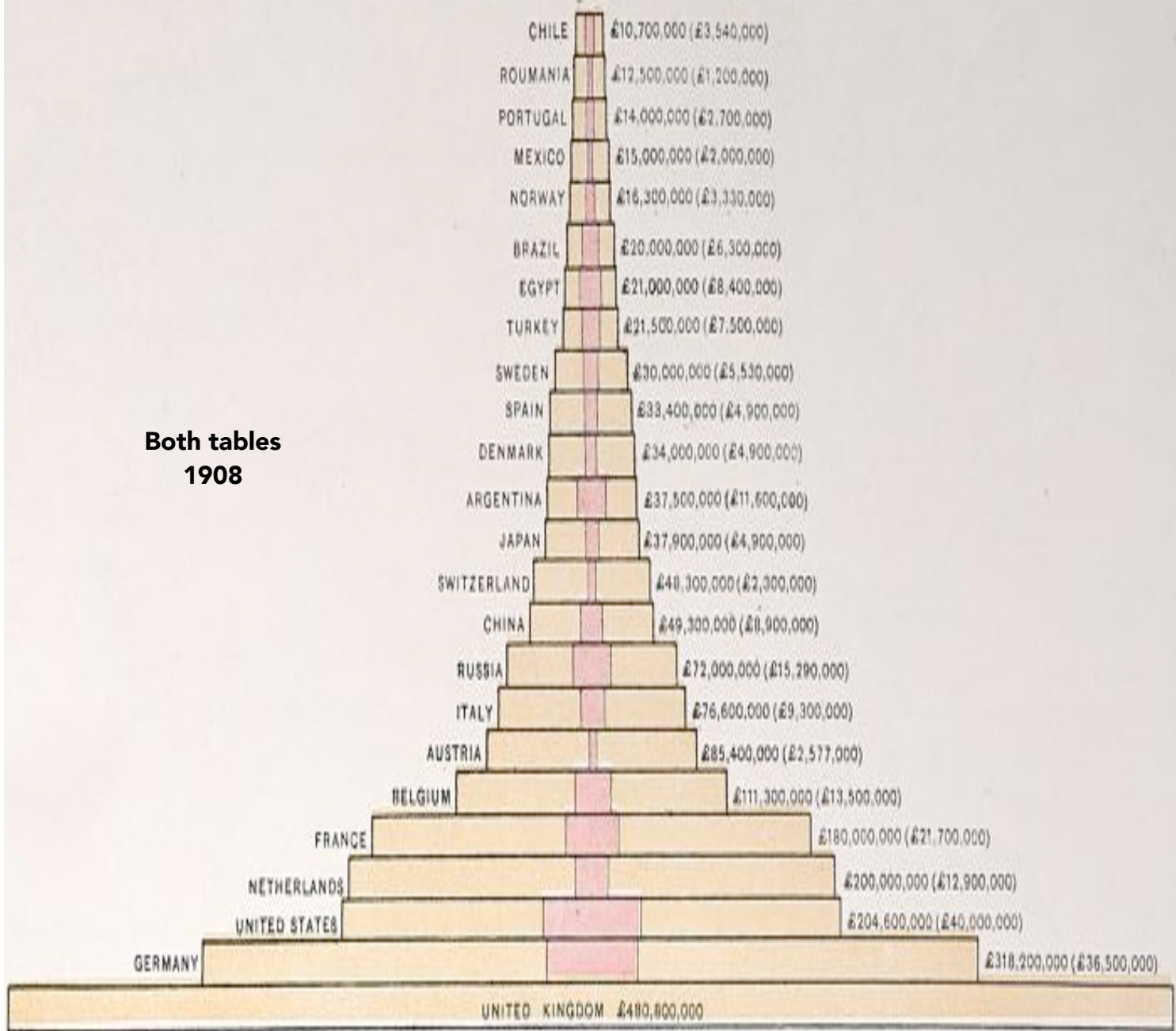
Exports to the United Kingdom are coloured red and the values are given within brackets.



ANNUAL IMPORTS OF MERCHANDISE OF THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD (FOR HOME CONSUMPTION ONLY)

Imports from the United Kingdom are coloured red and the values are given within brackets.

**Both tables
1908**



6 need for distraction from internal turmoil

The Tsar believed that a war with Austria-Hungary, triumphant, as it undoubtedly would be, given the guaranteed full support of France and the likely support of Britain, would do much to restore his flagging popularity and keep the army onside against the revolutionaries and reformers in Russia. The Austrian leadership was determined to squash the Serbs who had been fomenting trouble in the Balkans for many years. The Turks had seen the Ottoman Empire crumbling for about a

hundred years since Greece had gained its independence and were anxious to use a war as a way of re-imposing control over the Aegean.



But even the more stable Britain was not without its internal conflicts as this cartoon from Germany makes clear:

The one who rules the world at home.

It shows Britain being bugged by suffragettes, Irish catholics, etc. And as far as its enemies were concerned, though still described as the one who rules the world, was this not a good time to pull Britain down a peg?

short term causes

1 Assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo 28 June 1914

2 Faulty intelligence

3 Imprecise use of language resulting in misunderstanding & failure of diplomacy

4 The dangers of mobilisation

5 Underestimate of the cost and ineffectiveness of warfare

6 Desire of chiefs of staff to try out new technology

7 Failure of a policy of deterrence

Steps to War

For Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie to make a royal visit to Bosnia was already a risky undertaking given the threats that had been issued by the Black Hand Gang, the Serb terrorist group, but to choose St Vitus Day, June 28, was particularly insensitive. It was the national day, the anniversary of the Battle of the Field of Blackbirds in Kosovo 1389, when the Ottomans had crushed the Serbs and ended Serbia's independence as a country. Kosovo, the spiritual core of their country, had been regained by the Serbs from Turkey only the previous year and this would be the first commemoration of that day since then. Accordingly special nationalist celebrations had been planned. As was said at the time, "the holy flame of Kosovo which has inspired many generations of Serbs has now burst forth into a mighty fire."



Suicide bombers were prepared for the royal visit to Sarajevo with bombs strapped to their bodies each with a spare revolver in his pocket and packets of cyanide powder to take afterwards whether successful or

if caught. Scarcely any security precautions had been taken for the motorcade: the royal couple had even gone shopping in the bazaar totally unprotected; as it happened 28 June was also the royal couple's wedding anniversary and they wanted a relaxed celebration of a particularly good marriage.

Though meticulously planned the assassination attempt did not go well. The first assassin failed to throw his bomb. The second assassin threw his bomb but the driver saw it, accelerated and the bomb exploded behind the car targeted, only wounding the occupants of the next car. It would have been prudent to cut short the visit then, but instead the archduke insisted on treating the wounded and then carrying on regardless: "this man is clearly insane", he said – "let us proceed with the programme".

Of course he did not know that there were still five assassins left along the advertised route. In fact, four of them failed to launch their bombs – one because he did not want to harm the duchess. The other one, Princip, heard the explosion and thought that the attempt had been successful so had left his post to make sure that the successful assassin was dead and would not reveal the identities of the others. Just at that moment the motorcade went by and he saw the archduke alive, recognising his ostrich feather hat, and decided to take up a position for the return of car later in the day. The motorcade stopped at the town hall and the mayor delivered his prepared speech talking comically about the glory of the occasion only to be interrupted by the Archduke, at last realising the gravity of the occasion, loudly protesting "I came as your guest only to be greeted by bombs".

The plans for the afternoon were changed as the archduke wanted to visit the wounded in hospital and his wife cancelled her arranged visits so that she could accompany him. But no-one told the driver who stuck to the scheduled route which took them past the last of the prepared assassins. Someone then told the driver he had gone wrong and he stopped the car to turn round (it had no reverse gear so it had to be pushed) right in front of the assassin. Princip could not release the bomb but with the car almost stationary he had plenty of time to take aim and

so fired his revolver instead. His first shot hit the duchess in the stomach and the second the archduke in the neck. Both were fatal shots.

Franz Ferdinand was one of those historical characters who are best remembered for their death. It was said of him, "His most outstanding feature was his pronounced unpopularity at all levels of public life " (Robert A Kann). However, he was the living embodiment of the Holy Roman Empire, the last of the Habsburgs. Therefore what had remained silent in his life became eloquent in his death. His assassination was met by massive outrage in Austria, even by those who had showed scant respect for him while he was alive. The chief of staff at Vienna, Conrad's response was "War, war, war!" Even Bilinski the influential finance minister changed from being conciliatory to advocating war. Ironically the one man who would have urged caution was dead!! "The archduke was always against war!" said a senior Austrian diplomat.

There was little contrition shown by the official Serb government who claimed it was nothing to do with official Serbian politics. This was not true. In fact, Apis the head of the Black Hand movement that planned the assassination, was head of military intelligence in Belgrade.

The reaction across Europe to the Archduke's death varied: in Hungary there was relief. The political establishment feared his reforms! Hungarian politicians warned against war which they feared would destabilize Balkans, and in particular give Rumania an opportunity to assert itself against Hungary and expand into Hungarian territory with Serbian and Russian support. Thus Hungary wanted no action until Rumania had been pulled into an alliance with both Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. Bulgaria was also nervous of the Rumanian link with Serbia and Russia, but took the other option of siding openly with Austria.

The German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, was on his yacht at Kiel ready to race in a regatta when news of the assassination was flagged to him: he immediately went back to Berlin "to take things in hand and preserve the peace of Europe." The French President, Poincaré, had gone racing at Longchamps: in contrast with the Kaiser he stayed for the rest of the afternoon. Italians thought the assassination had saved the peace of Europe. Russians thought it served Austria-Hungary right for the high-

handed way it had treated Serbia and refused to believe that the Serbian government had been complicit in the assassination despite the evidence. Britain was characteristically tentative, warning Austria not to take action fearing that Russia would come to support of Serbia so sucking in Germany and France. But Britain put all the onus on Wilhem II to restrain Austria.

The Austrians were determined to teach Serbia a lesson and might have invaded then and there had not Hungary insisted on the Serbian government being given an opportunity to climb down and apologise for the outrage. Subsequently an ultimatum was drafted and sent to Belgrade. But Austria deliberately couched the ultimatum to Serbia in terms that Serbia could not possibly accept because deep down it believed that only a military attack would solve the problem! Austria was also confident that it had a "blank cheque" from Germany: that the full German military power would be mobilized if Russia came in on the side of Serbia. Dangerously, its policy was not based on its own military strength but on that of its allies. However, leaks from Italy and Berlin resulted in Russia knowing about the ultimatum even before the Serbs received it giving Russia the time to work out its response. The Tsar said on 16th July "no country can present demands to another unless it has decided to wage war." Serbia also already knew of the ultimatum before 20th July. But the actual wording of the ultimatum was not sent to Berlin until 22 July when it was already a *fait accompli*.

Poincaré went to St Petersburg to show French support for Russia over Serbia. He surprised the Russian politicians by sounding even more bellicose than their own war party. The Russian minister Sazonov complained that the crisis "was bad timing for us because our peasants are busy in their fields". The French Prime Minister, Viviani, who accompanied Poincaré, was so alarmed at Poincaré's belligerent attitude that he was taken ill and kept himself at a distance from the negotiations. Thus it appeared to Russia that there was no risk of France not supporting if Russia decided to make war in support of Serbia. Perhaps Poincaré saw this as the best means of keeping peace, thinking that if France showed great strength in supporting Russia and encouraging

Russia to intervene on the side of Serbia it would DETER Austria. At one of the evening dinners a colonel in the French delegation raise a toast "to the next war and certain victory". The Montenegrin Princess Anastasia said, "There's going to be a war, there will be nothing left of Austria, you're going to get back Alsace and Lorraine, our armies will meet in Berlin, Germany will be destroyed.....". This further worried Viviani who commented "I think this involves us a little too much in Russia's Balkan policy."

At cabinet on the 24 July (after a long discussion about Ulster which was top of the British government's agenda) Prime Minister Asquith said, "we are within measurable or imaginable distance of a real Armageddon which would dwarf the Ulster and Nationalist Volunteers to their true proportion. Happily there seems to be no reason why we should be anything other than spectators." Even if Belgian neutrality (treaty of 1839) were breached by Germany, Britain declared that any intervention would be only to protect British interests, not a matter of upholding the treaty.

On 26 July Russia decided on so-called "partial mobilization" of 1,700,000 men for an "energetic attack" on Austria Hungary as soon as it attacks Serbia. Serbia announced it would fight like lions and might be able to defeat Austria single-handed. The Tsar claimed Austria-Hungary would be defeated and dismembered and even if Germany entered the war to protect the Empire, the French would then invade from the west "so that victory against Germany is also certain".

Serbia's reply to the ultimatum was more conciliatory than had been predicted. It was not a total capitulation to its demands but it went at least some of the way. Indeed Kaiser Wilhelm, who was back cruising in the Baltic and hoping to keep out of complicated politics for a while at least, breathed a huge sigh of relief when he read Serbia's reply, saying "every cause for war has now vanished." But despite this, egged on by Bethmann Holweg, the German Chancellor, Emperor Franz Joseph declared war on Serbia.

Now attention turned to Britain. The Kaiser was determined to keep Britain neutral but France believed that Britain would not allow

France to be defeated by Germany. However, there were sufficient doubts in Paris for France to make clear to Russia on 30th July that it should not appear to be the aggressor for fear that Britain might not enter war if that were the case. The Tsar accordingly was hesitant about ordering full mobilization. His order was "Do not stop Russian mobilization. Mobilize but do not concentrate." On the 30th July the Russian naval minister signed mobilization papers with a heavy heart: "The Russian navy is not fit to take on the Germans!" It desperately needed the British fleet. In the Russian high command there was an "Atmosphere of prayers: the rooms were full of icons".

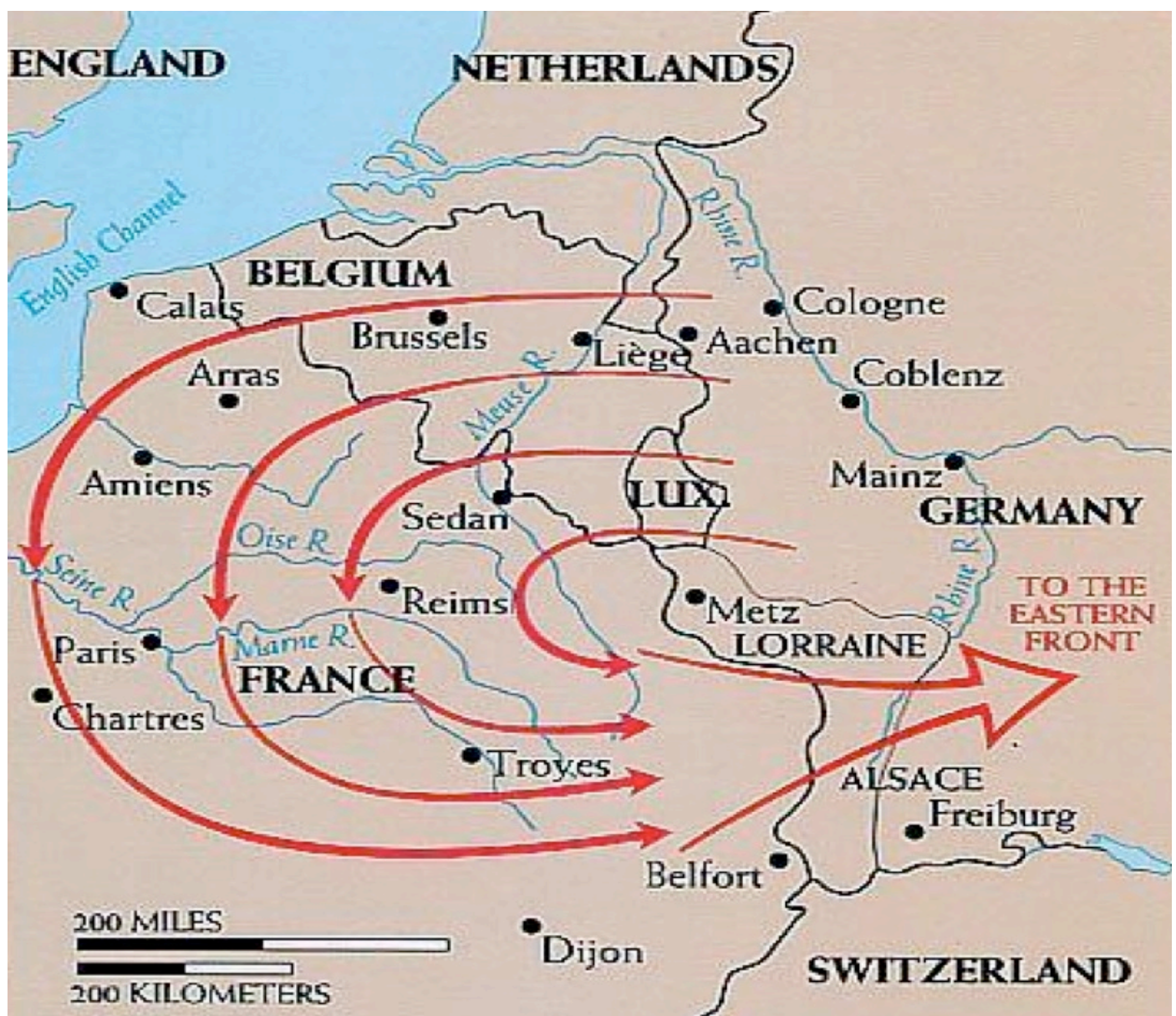
Throughout this crisis the reigning monarchs of Russia, Germany and Britain kept in touch. They were all 1st cousins. However, the various telegrams and letters they sent were neither secret nor private; they were all carefully vetted by diplomatic staff. On 30th a telegram arrived in St Petersburg, signed Willy, warning of a "calamity we both want to avoid." This elicited the Tsar's response "I will not be responsible for monstrous slaughter!" and so he refused general mobilization for 1 more day, but when he was told that Austria had already mobilized he soon caved in to his military advisors and ordered full mobilization.

Wilhelm believed George V would ensure neutrality. But the Kaiser not as powerful either as he thought he was or as historians have claimed he was. Bethmann Hollweg ran German policy. On 30 July, Grey warned Germany that Britain would intervene if France was threatened by Germany. On 1 August Germany mobilized. The Schlieffen Plan a strategy made in the early years of the century, but still adhered to, made it imperative to attack France first.

On 1st August, immediately after German mobilization had been decided upon, a new intervention from Grey hinted that provided Germany honoured the neutrality of France, Britain and France would stay out of the war. It is doubtful if this ever had French agreement. The German military chief, Moltke, said that it would be suicidal for Germany to leave its western flank unprotected and prone to attack from France. Nevertheless, ignoring Moltke's advice and causing his massive displeasure, the Kaiser sent orders to Trier to halt the attack.

The Germans gave the British until 3rd August to come up with definite proposals of French/British neutrality. But Grey was not so specific later in the day and made it clear that any violation of Belgian neutrality would result in British intervention. Whichever way we read it Grey's responses on 1st August were contradictory. Was he playing for time? Or was he afraid of disagreement in cabinet if he had not been seen to try every avenue? In any event British mixed signals failed to restrain Russia and only confused Germany.

The Schlieffen Plan



Without the cast-iron guarantee Wilhelm thought he was getting from Britain, he was unable to halt the war machine; France believed that

only a guarantee to come into the war on its side would restrain Germany. France was totally dependent on the British navy. It was therefore desperate to ensure British support. On the same day the British fleet was mobilized (without cabinet approval on Churchill's decision). At that point, 75% British cabinet was still against intervention (according to Churchill). Morley & Simon proposed a declaration that under no circumstances would Britain enter war. On the other side, Churchill demanded immediate mobilization knowing that the Tories in opposition supported intervention and a failure to go to war could bring down the government.

On 2nd August the cabinet agreed to intervene if the German navy crossed the North Sea or entered the Channel. Later in day the cabinet agreed to declare war if Germany entered Belgium. Morley & Burns accordingly resigned. Grey pointed out that the French fleet was in the Mediterranean because it had depended on the British fleet to defend the channel and North west coast. If France had to withdraw from the Mediterranean to protect its own Northern ports, would Italy then dominate the Mediterranean the routes to India. His speech finally satisfied the House of Commons to support an ultimatum being sent to Germany

So Grey/Asquith/Churchill prevailed. If all three had carried out their threatened resignation it would have brought down the government weakened already by the army's mutiny in Ulster. In the mind of the Foreign Office there was also a fear of Russia-German entente if France were to prove to be an unreliable ally to Russia.

"Should the war come and England (sic) stand aside one of 2 things must happen:

- a) either Germany and Austria win crush France and humiliate Russia.

- b) or France and Russia win.

Either way what then would the position be of a friendless England? What about India and the Mediterranean?" Therefore British intervention was seen as a means both of appeasing and tethering Russia and opposing and containing Germany.

On the 2nd August Germany sent Belgium an ultimatum. It hoped Belgium would give Germany freedom of passage to attack France. Germany even promised to compensate Belgium if it were damaged in the process. This was clearly an attempt to keep Britain neutral. But because Moltke was anxious that the German attack should not lose tempo, Belgium was only given 12 hours to reply. Albert, the Belgian king, seeing it as a matter of honour, decided to fight. The German response was supercilious in the extreme: "poor fools! Why don't they get out of the way of the steamroller?" Even after a bloody defeat at Liege Belgium still refused Germany safe passage. The strength of Belgian resistance provided the first sign that the war was to be much less straightforward than anyone had anticipated. In their haste to press forward their advantage Germany had to resort to terrorising the civilian population which made intervention easier for the British government to sell to its people.

So by 3rd August the war no longer about Serbia (which was the real cause) but about Belgium, simply because of the inflexibility of the German war machine. A major European War had not been expected. It had been assumed that the diplomatic crisis of the Balkans would be smudged and fudged diplomatically, possibly with some small localised conflicts as in past. It had not been discussed seriously by the British cabinet until 3 days before war was declared. Commentators wrote that it came like a "Peal of thunder out of a cloudless sky". When Russia mobilized the people had no idea who the enemy was: "it is China" they said, "we have pushed too far into Mongolia; then it was rumoured it was England. Only 4 days later did the truth emerge and then no-one believed it!" So why did it happen?

There was faulty intelligence – and false assumptions. German politicians (though not von Moltke) believed Russia strong and France weak (based on the easy victory in 1870) and failed to realize that invading Belgium would bring Britain into the war. They rightly thought that Britain had nothing to gain from the war and would stay out of it as it had done in 1870.

The Russian military, embarrassed by defeat in the war with Japan

of 1905, and by its failure to protect Bosnia in 1908, was determined to show it was still a strong power. Serbia would probably have submitted to the Austrian ultimatum if Russia had not given guarantees of support. Austria-Hungary foolishly failed to accept Serbia's partial climb down over the ultimatum although it realized that without German support it could not be enforced.

Chiefs of staff in all countries were foolishly bellicose and looking for some action. Though the British land army was woefully under prepared and under equipped, it hoped that its navy would be able to bring blockade pressure to bear on Germany and that the large Russian and French armies would be strong enough to defeat Germany on the land. However, though the Russian army was large, it was outdated and under supplied with sub standard equipment. France wanted war because it saw victory over Germany as the only way to get back Alsace & Lorraine. It, too, overestimated Russian strength. All sides underestimated the way technology had changed the nature of warfare, and the potential loss of life, despite the appalling evidence of the American Civil War. The conclusion drawn by a recent historian notes:

"They were "Sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing haunted by dreams yet blind to the horror they were about to bring into the world" (Christopher Clark 2012).

Cost of war

In terms of loss of human life, the First World War was unprecedented. The number of war dead (i.e. those killed in action or from wounds received in action) was about 9 million. To these figures must be added the 15 million men who were crippled by their service in the First World War. In Germany alone, 2.7 million soldiers returned home with permanent disabilities. Only 800,000 of them received invalidity pensions. The ongoing cost of the war can be seen in the fact that, in Britain during the late 1930s, 639,000 ex-soldiers and officers were still drawing disability pensions. This figure includes 65,000 men whose disabilities were not physical but mental. Some servicemen were so traumatised by their experiences in the First World War that they spent

countries	Total mobilized	killed	wounded	Prisoners & missing	Total casualties	%
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000	76.3
British Empire	8,904,467	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235	35.8
France	8,410, 000	1,357,800	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800	73.3
Italy	5,615,000	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000	39.1
USA	4,355,000	116,516	204,002	4,500	323,018	7.1
Japan	800,000	300	907	3	1,210	0.2
Romania	750,000	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706	71.4
Serbia	707,343	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106	46.8
Belgium	267,000	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061	34.9
Greece	230,000	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000	11.7
Portugal	100,000	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291	33.3
Montenegro	50,000	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000	40.0
Total Russian allied	42,188,810	5,142,631	12,800,706	4,121,090	22,062,427	52.3
Germany	11,000,000	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,800	7,142,558	64.9
Austria-Hungary	7,800,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000	90.0
Turkey	2,850,000	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000	34.2
Bulgaria	1,200,000	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919	22.2
Total AH allies	22,850,000	3,386,200	8,388,448	3,629,829	15,404,477	67.4
GRAND TOTAL	65,038,810	8,528,831	21,189,154	7,750,919	37,466,904	57.5

the rest of their lives in hospital.

Victims of the First World War were not confined to the battlefield. To the figures of military casualties should be added the number of civilians killed in the war by various causes estimated at least 7 million:

- Turkey: 2,150,000
- Russia: 2,000,000
- Germany: 760,000
- Serbia: 650,000
- Austria-Hungary: 300,000
- Bulgaria: 275,000
- Romania: 275,000
- Greece: 132,000
- France: 40,000
- Britain: 30,633
- Belgium: 30,000

As many as 750,000 German civilians died as a result of the Allied trade blockade. In addition millions of civilians and soldiers alike were killed by the virulent influenza pandemic that left none of the warring countries untouched in 1918 and 1919. In addition, there were the many millions of largely silent victims of the Great War: the widows, parents, siblings, children and friends who lost loved ones between 1914 and 1918. Historians have only recently turned their attention to the many ways in which survivors sought to cope with the grief caused by these innumerable personal losses. Their full cost is incalculable.

In economic terms, the First World War, fought at an estimated cost of \$208 billion, caused the greatest global depression of the 20th century. Debts accrued by all of the major combatants, with the notable exception of the USA, stalked the post-war economic world. Unemployment was rife. Inflation dramatically increased the cost of living, most famously in Weimar Germany, where hyperinflation meant that, by December 1923, a loaf of bread cost 428 billion marks. The First World War abruptly ended a period of relative economic prosperity, replacing it with two decades of economic misery.

The First World War also created a series of refugee crises, as the conflict forced whole populations - Armenians, Belgians, and Jews in Russia's Polish provinces - to flee from their homes to safer areas. The end of the war promised little better, creating a muddled legacy of displaced peoples throughout central and Eastern Europe.

Post-war peace settlements in the Balkans and Anatolia, for example, led to the 'repatriation' of 1.2 million Greeks and 500,000 Turks. The truncation of German territory in Europe left roughly 9.5 million German speakers living outside the boundaries of the Weimar

republic after the war. Many of the issues associated most readily with the Second World War - pogroms, refugee crises, forced transfers of populations, and genocide - had, in fact, already emerged in the First World War.

One of the most significant outrages was the Armenia massacre: radical Turkish leaders called the Young Turks saw the Christian Armenian community as a dangerous 5th column likely to side with a Russian invasion. So they attempted to exterminate all Armenians or, at very least, clear Turkey of them by their forced expulsion into concentration camps. Small children and old people were marched over mountains and in circles, without food and water, literally until they died. The authorities in Trebizond, on the Black Sea coast, did vary this routine: they loaded Armenians on barges and sank them out at sea.

The barbaric treatment of the Armenian women went even further. In her memoir, *Ravished Armenia*, Aurora Mardiganian described being raped and thrown into a harem. Unlike thousands of other Armenian girls who were discarded after being defiled, she managed to escape. In the city of Malatia, she saw 16 Christian girls crucified: "Each girl had been nailed alive upon her cross, spikes through her feet and hands, only their hair blown by the wind, covered their bodies." All in all, the evidence points to a total of at least 1.5 million Armenians being killed.

Conclusions

"What must strike any twenty-first-century reader who follows the course of the summer crisis of 1914 is its raw modernity. It began with a squad of suicide bombers and a cavalcade of automobiles. Behind the outrage at Sarajevo was an avowedly terrorist organization with a cult of sacrifice, death and revenge; but this organization was extra-territorial, without a clear geographical or political location; it was scattered in cells across political borders, it was unaccountable, its links to any sovereign government were oblique, hidden and certainly very difficult to discern from outside the organization. Indeed, one could even say that July 1914 is less remote from us - less illegible - now than it was in the 1980s. Since the end of the Cold War, a system of global

bipolar stability has made way for a more complex and unpredictable array of forces, including declining empires and rising powers - a state of affairs which invites comparison with the Europe of 1914." Christopher Clark, 2012.

As pointed out in a recent article in the Economist the parallels with our own world are uncanny. "The United States is Britain, the superpower on the wane, unable to guarantee global security. Its main trading partner, China, plays the part of Germany, a new economic power bristling with nationalist indignation and building up its armed forces rapidly. Modern Japan is France, an ally of the retreating hegemon and a declining regional power. The parallels are not exact but they are close enough for the world to be on its guard.

But the most troubling similarity between 1914 and now is complacency. Businesspeople today are like businesspeople then: too busy making money to notice the serpents flickering at the bottom of their trading screens. Politicians are playing with nationalism just as they did 100 years ago. China's leaders whip up Japanophobia, using it as cover for economic reforms, while Shinzo Abe stirs Japanese nationalism for similar reasons. India may next year elect Narendra Modi, a Hindu nationalist who refuses to atone for a pogrom against Muslims in the state he runs and who would have his finger on the button of a potential nuclear conflict with his Muslim neighbours in Pakistan. Vladimir Putin has been content to watch Syria rip itself apart. And the European Union, which came together in reaction to the bloodshed of the 20th century, is looking more fractious and riven by incipient nationalism than at any point since its formation." And there are plenty of suicide bombers to provide a random spark to ignite the whole box of fireworks. The explosive situation in the Ukraine given the clash of Western and Russian interests is not so remote from that of the Balkans of 1914. And lurking too, ominously, in the background is the potential maverick state of North Korea, so authoritatively condemned in a recent report from the UN for its human rights outrages yet with the potential to terrorise with its newly acquired nuclear weapons.

Ironically the war of 1914 broke out while Christians were gathering in Switzerland to try to find ways of defusing the crisis. Their conferences had to be abandoned and the delegates given safe passage home. In the immediate wake of this failure the Fellowship of Reconciliation was founded in 1914. Christian peacemakers left it too late then: if we leave it too late this time there may not be another time.

Please will members contact membership secretary, Tina Parsons, to give her their email addresses; it will help the committee keep in touch with members more effectively and much more cheaply than by snail mail.
t.parsons.oxford@btopenworld.com

BPF AGM

Baptist Assembly

Saturday 10 May 1.30 - 2.00pm

Lounge of the Good Shepherd with St John Church, at the corner of Bromford Lane and Lyttleton Street, West Bromwich, B70 7HP.

about 5 minutes walk from Bethel Convention Centre.

A good resource for peace materials re WW1

<http://librarysocietyfriendsblog.wordpress.com/2014/03/17/library-resources-for-researching-world-war-i-friends-peace-committee/>

There is a Baptist Peace Fellowship group on Facebook.

All members are encouraged to join it to enable current debate and campaigning. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BPFUK/>

