

1.1.3 Reasons for Imperial Expansion at the turn of the 20th century.

- At the turn of the 20th century many of the world's industrialized nations had already conquered territories around the world, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Why did these nations need more territory?

- Below are 5 of the main reasons for such expansion.
- 1) **Raw Materials:**
 - Increasing industrialization and a rising standard of living stimulated the need for raw materials (many from tropical areas).
 - Countries needed to secure these raw materials to sustain and grow a strong industrial base at home.
 - Therefore, the growing industrial nations needed to obtain lands where the raw material existed.
 - Areas in Africa and Asia could supply things like lumber and minerals which were needed.
 - 2) **Cheap Labour:**
 - Countries would occupy territory to obtain workers.
 - For example, Europeans needed labourers so they went to Africa and exploited the native population to obtain it.
 - Many of these natives were uprooted from their villages and compelled to work in forced labour camps.
 - The workers were used to directly gather the raw materials or work in the manufacturing of these goods. In turn the conquering nation would increase profits.
 - 3) **Prestige and Power:**
 - Countries would take control of a territory in order to become more powerful and increase national security by ensuring it did not fall into the hands of an enemy.
 - Also the greatness of a nation came to be measured largely in terms of its colonial possessions.
 - A country with many overseas territories strengthened its reputation throughout the world.
 - 4) **Markets:**
 - As industrialized nations grew they required not only the raw materials for productions but also the markets in which to sell their goods.
 - In order to sustain their growth, imperialist nations conquered areas that would serve as new markets for products and services produced at home.
 - 5) **Religion and Humanitarianism:**
 - Many western nations thought of their civilization as superior to those of Africa and Asia.
 - They felt duty bound to uplift and enlighten those whom they considered the more "backward" societies of the world.
 - This "White Man's Burden", as it was coined, also included the notion of converting these civilizations to Christianity.
 - For conquering imperialist nations this was the excuse used when they occupied and took over new lands.

1.1.4 Origins/Causes of W.W.I

- W.W.I may have started in **1914**, but the roots to its causes had been growing for many years prior to that.
- It is generally recognized that there were 4 main contributing factors to the outbreak of world war in 1914.

1) *Nationalism:*

- In the late 19th and early 20th centuries many of the nations of Europe were expressing strong feelings of nationalism that impacted the political climate within Europe.
- In France nationalistic feelings were high because of the German occupation of Alsace-Lorraine, which was populated mostly by French speaking people.
- In Austria-Hungary various ethnic groups (Serb, Croats, Slovaks, etc) wanted their freedoms and were expressing their own pride causing conflict within the country.
- German nationalism was growing due to their strong economy and desire to obtain territory and catch up to the other industrialized nations like Britain and France.
- Finally British nationalism was centered on the idea of their duty to the throne and the country.
- As a result, tensions among and within nations were high as clashing ideas and desires created conflict.

2) *Imperialism:*

- European nations were scrambling for colonies in Africa and Asia in the early 1900's (ex: France & Germany over Morocco).
- This era of imperialism came out of a country's need to search for raw materials, new markets and power. The acquisition of territories increased a nation's area of influence around the world.
- As each nation obtained more land tensions increased among the imperialist countries as each wanted more territory.

3) *Militarism:*

- An arms race grew out of the desires of imperialism and growing nationalism.
- European nations increased their military might.
- Many nations increased their military expenditures by as much as 300% in the years leading up to the start of the war.
- Germany was making an effort to challenge Britain for naval supremacy and become the dominant power in Europe.
- However, Britain was not about to relinquish its position as the world's leading power and embarked on a large-scale armament program.
- At the same time France and Russia made significant moves to increase the size of their armies.

4) *Alliance Systems:*

- In an attempt to protect the interests of nations and prevent war, countries formed military alliances.
- On one side there was the Triple Alliance and on the other the Triple Entente.
- Generally these alliances stated if one of the countries in the alliance were attacked then the others would support them.
- These alliances heightened tensions because any crisis affecting one nation affected its allies and it also raised the possibility that a single incident could lead to a general war.

1.1.5 German Alliances Pre-W.W.I

- German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, engineered a series of alliances between 1879 & 1887 which provided Europe with the illusion of peace and stability.
- These diplomatic initiatives were motivated almost entirely by Bismarck's wish to isolate France so that the French could not seek allies and plan revenge against Germany for being defeated in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71.
- In 1879 Bismarck and the Germans signed the **DUAL ALLIANCE** with Austria-Hungary and in 1882 he negotiated the **TRIPLE ALLIANCE** that drew Italy into the pact.
- The members of this alliance promised that if any one of them should be attacked, all three would wage warfare together against the aggressor.
- Finally in 1887 Bismarck persuaded Russia to sign a secret **REINSURANCE TREATY**, whereby Germany pledged its support to the Balkans while Russia assured Germany of its neutrality in the event of a French attack on Germany.
- **Bismarck had achieved his goal of isolating France and securing Germany.**

1.1.6 Chronology of the steps to war.

1. *June 28*: Archduke Ferdinand of Austria assassinated in Bosnian city of Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb nationalist.
2. *July 23*: Austrian government gives Serbia 48hr ultimatum; does not agree on all terms; begins to mobilize.
3. *July 28*: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia; Serbia turns to Russia for help
4. *July 29*: Czar Nicholas agrees to help Serbia and mobilizes army
5. *August 1*: Germany declares war on Russia; France mobilizes army
6. *August 2*: Germany invades Belgium as part of Schlieffen plan for attacking France
7. *August 3*: Germany declares war on France; Britain gives Germany an ultimatum to halt invasion of Belgium
8. *August 4*: No reply from Germany; Britain declares war on Germany; Canada automatically at war as part of British empire; US declares neutrality

1.1.7 Impact of Assassination on outbreak on WW1

- The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the summer of 1914 had a tremendous impact around the world.
 - For the parties initially involved with the incident the impact was felt almost instantaneously.
- 1) *Serbian Nationalism:*
 - The assassination of the archduke of Austria indicated how strong Serbian nationalism had become.
 - The Serbians wanted to unite all Serbs into one great independent nation, including those living under Austrian rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
 - A group known as the Black Hand (Serb nationalist organization) was dedicated to achieving this goal. They carried out the assassination and were subsequently found, arrested and tried for the crime.
 - 2) *Austria-Hungarian/Serbian Relations:*
 - The relationship had historically been rocky as Austria had possession of Serbian territories. After the assassination things worsened.
 - The Austrians gave Serbia an ultimatum which Serbia did not fully accept.
 - As a result, Austria took a tougher stand against Serbia because it wanted to crush Serb nationalism.
 - 3) *German Government Response:*
 - The Germans had at first asked Austria to use moderation in their response to Serbia, but were ignored.
 - However, they promised to give their full support to Austria in whatever action they wanted to take.
 - They believed that the Russians would not intervene.
 - 4) *Russian Mobilization:*
 - Once Austria declared war on Serbia, Russia mobilized its troops, Germany then threatened Russia and the wheels turned towards war.
 - The strong Russian stance started a chain of events that drew the remainder of Europe into war, as alliance partners honoured their agreement.

1.1.8 German and British attitudes toward war.

- Germany and Britain, on the eve of WW1, were **TWO** countries which had fundamentally different beliefs and values.
- However, each side came to see a need for war in order to settle the differences between them.
- Germany was a nation on the rise and looked to the future where they could expand their power and influence.
- Their attitude toward war was that it was a natural part of the growth of a nation, a necessity if the country was to achieve a higher standing in the world.
- The Germans also wanted to break the powerful Triple Entente which was blocking its emergence as a world power.
- The British were a nation built on tradition.

- They had become the world's most powerful nation and wished to maintain that standing by looking at the past.
- War would only be necessary if this tradition of power was threatened.
- For Germany, this was a war to change the world and for Britain it was to preserve it.
- Germany was being driven by a vision (to become the dominant world power) and Britain by tradition (to maintain the status quo).
- These conflicting views and beliefs placed these countries at opposite ends and each nation wanted to accomplish their goal.