

## Causes of WWI

- ✦ Europe had been drifting slowly toward war for decades
    - ✦ Only a matter of time before conflict broke out
      - ✦ **Four long term causes** of the war
        - ✦ **Imperialism, Nationalism, Militarism** (an arms race) & **Alliance system**
          - ✦ There were also territorial disputes in Europe that contributed to the problems between nations
            - ✦ Between France & Germany in particular
  - ✦ **Imperialism** – most European countries were rivals for control of colonies all over the world
    - ✦ **Morocco** (North Africa) – **1904** – **French establish sphere of influence** with British approval
      - ✦ **Germans unhappy** with the arrangement
        - ✦ **1911** - Send the **gunboat Panther** to encourage Moroccans to rise up against the French
        - ✦ French respond by mobilizing army
          - ✦ **War is narrowly avoided through diplomacy**
            - ✦ Was an early test of the French/British alliance
  - ✦ **Russo-Japanese War** (1904-1905)
    - ✦ Rivalry between Russia & Japan for control of Manchuria & Korea
- ✦ **Nationalism** – everyone thought they were the best
  - ✦ Britain – World's #1 empire
  - ✦ France – Angry with Germany over territorial disputes, etc.
  - ✦ Germany – Cocky – looking for a fight
- ✦ **Militarism (Arms Race)** – countries were building huge armies & navies
  - ✦ 1904 – British develop the **dreadnought** – heavily armed battleship
    - ✦ Other navies copy the design
  - ✦ Countries also start to form small **airforces** (Zeppelins & planes)
- ✦ **Alliance System** – 2 sides
  - ✦ **Triple Alliance & Triple Entente**
    - ✦ **Alliance = formal agreement ... Entente = informal understanding of support**
    - ✦ Each group promised to come to the aid of each other if one was attacked
      - ✦ All that was needed was a spark to ignite a war
- ✦ There were territorial disputes that threatened to cause war
  - ✦ **Alsace & Lorraine** (Germany & France)

### **Triple Alliance – Formed 1882**

- Germany
- Austria-Hungary
- Italy

### **Triple Entente – Formed 1907**

- Great Britain
- France
- Russia

- ✦ Bosnia-Herzegovina (Serbia & Austria-Hungary)
- ✦ Short term cause of the war – assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria (June 28, 1914)
  - ✦ Next in line for throne
  - ✦ Came to Bosnia to tour Sarajevo
    - ✦ Serbian nationalist group – Black Hand – plotted to kill him
      - ✦ Serbs wanted Bosnia from Austria
        - ✦ Gavrilo Princip shoots the Archduke & his wife
- ✦ The Balkans considered the “powder keg of Europe”
  - ✦ Controlled by Ottomans until 1911
    - ✦ Newly independent countries were all unstable
      - ✦ Serbia wanted Bosnia-Herzegovina
        - ✦ Backed by Russians
      - ✦ Romania – looking to get land from Austria-Hungary
      - ✦ Bulgaria – wanted land from Greece & Romania
        - ✦ Lost land to them in 2<sup>nd</sup> Balkan War (1913)
    - ✦ Austria-Hungary & Russia - 2 main rivals for Balkan control
      - ✦ Assassination of Franz Ferdinand the final step
        - ✦ Austria-Hungary sends Serbia an ultimatum (7/23/14)
          - ✦ Refusing Austrian demands would mean war
            - ✦ Austrians intended to punish Serbia
        - ✦ Before issuing ultimatum – Austria consulted Germany
          - ✦ Germany gave Austria a “blank check” of support
            - ✦ Austria declares war with Serbia on 7/28/14
      - ✦ Serbia asked the Russians for help
        - ✦ Russians mobilized (prepared army to fight) 7/30/14 – moved troops toward Aust. & Ger.
      - ✦ Germany saw Russian mobilization along their borders as an act of war
        - ✦ 8/1/14 – Germany declares war on Russia
        - ✦ 8/3/14 – Ger. declares war on France (ally of Ru)
          - ✦ Had asked what France intended to do but French did not respond
        - ✦ 8/4/14 – Ger. invades neutral Belgium
        - ✦ 8/4/14 – Britain declares war on Ger.