Origins of World War I: Underlying Causes

I. Underlying causes
   A. **Nationalism** is the single most important underlying cause
      1. **Imperialism**, which in the 19th century was a form of nationalism, is a second important underlying cause.
   B. Another interpretation, somewhat different from the one I generally use, is not so much that the origins of the war lie in the growth of nationalism but in the attempt to resolve the "German Question," that is, the disruption to the traditional European balance of power caused by the creation of a powerful and united Germany, and the failure to find an accommodation for Germany’s ambitions.
      1. I do not believe that there is anything fundamentally wrong with this interpretation, nor that the two proposed here are mutually exclusive. The growth of German power is inseparable from the rise of nationalism following the French Revolution.
      2. My chief criticism of this approach is that too much focus on Germany will distort the importance of events in other countries, especially Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Balkans. Furthermore, the event which actually precipitated the war, the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, is motivated by Balkan nationalism.
      3. The chief criticism of my approach is that, while nationalism and international rivalry contribute to the conditions which led to war (underlying causes) they did not actually have to lead to war in any deterministic sense. The assassination of the Archduke resulted in a world conflagration largely because of the circumstances created by German diplomacy and by fears of growing German power.
      4. An outstanding proponent of the German Question interpretation is Donald Kagan, whose On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace is well worth your time reading: he also discusses the origins of the Second World War and the Cuban Missile Crisis in depth. Kagan is a brilliant and eloquent historian. He makes two points which are very important to remember in general:
         a. The actual outbreak of war does not lie with the underlying causes of war, but with the decisions of men. Those decisions are not predestined. Human beings choose a path that leads to war, either through design or error.
         b. The preservation of peace requires the same diligence and determination as a decision to go to war; perhaps more, since the diligence to preserve peace must be constantly wielded.

II. The Age of Bismarck
   A. **Otto von Bismarck** is the dominant statesman of the latter half of the 19th century.
      1. Career falls into two halves:
         a. Creation of the German Empire around the core of the Kingdom of
Prussia. During this period, he is aggressive and expansionist.

b. Protection of the German Empire by maintaining a balance of power and the "Concert of Europe." During this period, he is fundamental conservative, with little interest in further aggrandizement.

c. The traditional balance of power had been held by Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France. The Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) can be seen in part as a struggle by France to prevent the inordinate growth of Hapsburg power (Spain and Austria). The wars of the late 17th and early 18th century were aimed at preventing France under Louis XIV from achieving dominance in Europe. The wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon may be seen as a continuation of that struggle.

d. Bismarck must work within this system. In the first half of his career, he manipulates it in order to create a united Germany despite the certain opposition of France and Austria and the fears of Russia and Great Britain. In the second half, he strives to maintain the balance.

B. **Franco-Prussian War** (1871) results in the swift defeat of France and the creation of the German Empire. It is Bismarck's crowning achievement.

1. The **Treaty of Frankfurt** (1871) which ended the war was harsh

   a. France was required to pay an indemnity of Fr 5 billion ($1 billion)

   b. France yielded **Alsace-Lorraine**, on the west bank of the Rhine, with 5,000 sq. miles and 1.5 million population

      (1) The regions were originally German until the time of Louis XIV, when France conquered them. The population at that time was German, with a thin veneer of French nobility. Up to the present, the population is of both French and German origin, and possesses a peculiar dialect analogous to Spanglish in Miami.

      (2) Alsace-Lorraine was demanded by **Helmut von Moltke**, the Chief of the Prussian General Staff, for reasons of military security.

2. France is humiliated, and makes **revanche** a cornerstone of its foreign policy. From this moment on, all German planners--military or diplomatic--must plan on implacable French hostility.

C. **Realpolitik**: Bismarck created and tries to maintain his empire by use of **Realpolitik**, which emphasizes power and the cynical calculation of national interest. Morality and statesmanship are antithetical terms. The only thing that counts is the reality of power.

III. The Problem of Austria-Hungary

A. Ruler is **Franz-Josef** (1848-1918) whose personal goal was to die before his empire did.

B. Multi-ethnic, dual monarchy, a holdover from the dynastic states of the **ancien**
regime. Nationalism is a deadly threat to an anachronistic state such as Austria-Hungary.

C. Ethnic groups in Austria (according to the census of 1910)
   1. 28,500,000 total
      10,000,000 Germans
      2,000,000 Jews
      6,643,000 Czechs
      5,000,000 Poles
      4,000,000 Ukrainians
      2,600,000 Serbs
      800,000 Italians

D. Ethnic groups in Hungary
   1. 20,500,000 total
      8,700,000 Magyar
      2,000,000 Slovaks
      3,000,000 Croats and Slavonians
      500,000 Ruthenians
      3,000,000 Romanians
      850,000 Jews (Hall 445-6)

E. The Empire was absolutist, and theoretically rather a police state run by a huge bureaucracy. This is mitigated to a great deal in Austria by the easy-going temper of the dominant Germans accompanied by corruption of heroic proportions. Life under the Magyars was much more difficult. In both countries, most of the land was held in huge latifundia, the owners of which tended to dominate political life.
   1. In Hungary, only 6% of the population held the vote
   2. The Magyars systematically pursued a policy of Magyarization, persecuting all other language groups.
      a. Austro-Hungarian money was printed in German, Czech, Polish, Serbo-Croat (both in Latin and Cyrillic), Ruthene, Slovene, Italian, and Romanian on one side, and Magyar on the other.

F. Having been expelled from Germany by Bismarck, the Austrians must look to the Balkans for their interests and expansion.
   1. Rising nationalism in the Balkans does, in fact, threaten the very existence of the state. If each Balkan nationality achieved independence, Austria-Hungary would simply cease to exist. In particular, the existence of Serbia as a beacon of hope for South Slavs in the Empire is a threat.

G. Austria's interests in the Balkans brings it into direct conflict with Russia.

IV. Russia
A. Russia was the most autocratic of all European states, a nation of prodigious potential, but great weaknesses.
B. Cornerstones of Tsarist rule were
   1. orthodoxy: adherence to the state religion
2. autocracy: unquestioned supremacy of the tsar
3. nationalism: dedication to the regime

C. Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855) was a firm champion of autocracy, using troops to crush rebellions in Poland (1830), Romania (1848), and Hungary (1849). In addition, he won imperialist wars against Persia and Turkey.
1. Policies ended in the Crimean War (1851-6), which resulted in economic dislocations which in turn increased peasant unrest.

D. Russia is so backward socially and economically, that a major war leads to serious economic difficulties, which in turn makes the plight of the desperate peasants even worse. This breeds the conditions for revolution. This is true following the Russo-Japanese War in 1906 and the First World War in 1917.

E. Alexander II (r. 1855-1881) freed the serfs (most of the population) in 1861 during his Great Reform
1. These peasants were not extended unlimited personal freedom. Land and local government was in the hand of the village, the mir.

F. Alexander II introduces zemstvos, or district assemblies, which looked into local issues such as schools, public health and roads. Their role is limited.

G. However, Alexander crushes a revolt in Poland in 1863. Reactionary actions fosters the growth of radical organizations in Russia.

H. Young Russian intellectuals are drawn to nihilism, a term coined by Turgenev, and to the anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin, and engage in senseless violence. "They became full-time revolutionaries. Police bungling that would be unbelievable if it were not documented enabled these people to move freely around the country, to penetrate the police apparatus with their own agents, to escape from prison, and when jailed to keep in touch with their confederates." (Blum 225) Peasant reaction to these revolutionaries was bewilderment and suspicion.
1. Alexander II is assassinated in 1881.

I. Alexander III (1881-94) and Nicholas II (1894-1917) "were narrow-minded bigots of limited intelligence who surrounded themselves with extremely reactionary counselors." (Blum 226)

J. Development of parties despite repression
1. These parties are unlike Western political parties since all political activity is illegal. They have no role whatever in governing the nation, nor do they have any mass support. They are made up almost entirely of the intelligentsia, that is, the strata of educated bureaucrats and civil servants. "In the West, parties had been created only once it became possible to govern through elections and their purpose was to win the vote and then exercise power constitutionally. . . . In Russia, however, 'parties' emerged before elections and constitutional government existed. These parties therefore were in effect conspiracies designed more to promote revolution than to govern constitutionally." (Malia 71)

2. Constitutional Democratic Party or Kadets (from KD), appealing to
professionals

3. **Social Revolutionaries** or **SRs**, appealing to the peasants and advocating mass peasant rebellion.

4. **Social Democratic Labor Party** or **SDs**, (founded 1903) which split into **Bolsheviks** (demanding tight party control and imposition of a dictatorship of the proletariat with no collaboration with liberal-bourgeois elements; led by **Vladimir Ilich Lenin**) and **Mensheviks**, who believed Russia would require a transitional period between an essentially feudal state to a modern industrial state; during that period, liberals and socialists could cooperate. The Bolsheviks expel the Mensheviks in 1912.

K. Russian Foreign Policy

1. Since the time of Peter the Great, Russia had sought ice free ports. Closely associated with this desire was to secure control of the **Bosporus** and the **Dardanelles** and thus secure unrestricted access to the Eastern Mediterranean.
   a. Russia and the Ottoman Empire were therefore natural enemies.
   b. Russian Balkan claims are secondary to this drive for warm water ports.
   c. Nationalism had become a significant factor in the thinking of the small number of Russians whose opinions actually counted. In Russia, it took on a distinctly Slavic cast: **Pan-Slavism**, with Russia as the defender of the Southern Slavs, the New Rome, the heir to Constantinople.

(1) **Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky**’s “Marche Slav” is the best example of Pan-Slavism I know of; it was written, in fact, to raise money for medicine for the Balkan War in 1876. Tchaikovsky’s “1812 Overture” is another example.

(2) There is a German counterpart, even more powerful and better known: **Pan-Germanism**. Since the two concepts are paired, I will discuss Pan-Germanism here.

(a) The chief political spokesman of Pan-Germanism was the **Pan-German League**, founded in 1894. It was highly nationalist and racialist with a strong colonial agenda. Nationalism and imperialism are linked in their minds. Members were well connected in society, were vociferous, and their language was quite intemperate. Some of their ideas, especially the need for **Lebensraum**, with its racial basis, are inherited by the Nazis.

i) Members included the industrialist **Alfred von Hugenberg**, the sociologist **Max Weber**, the militarist **Friedrich von Bernhardi**.
ii) Pan-Germanism fitted in nicely with the naval policies of Alfred von Tirpitz.

iii) The best representative of the nationalist-racialist emotions of Pan-Germanism is Richard Wagner, especially in his Ring Cycle. The intense emotionalism of “The Ride of the Valkyries” may be juxtaposed with “Marche Slav>”

2. Great Britain comes into conflict with Russia over the issue of the Bosporus and Dardanelles, since a Russian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean would threaten their communications with India.
   a. After construction of the Suez Canal, Britain regards control of the Eastern Mediterranean as absolutely vital: ie closed to Russia, or at least, under British control.
   b. The vital national interests of Great Britain and Russia thus clash.

3. "The Eastern Question" Whether the various nationalities of Eastern Europe and the Balkans should obtain their independence and/or autonomy, and if so, under what conditions, or, if not, under whose rule should they remain? The region has a mixture of peoples in the Balkans--Albanians, Macedonians, Serbs, Rumanians, Croats, Ruthenes, Slovenes, Bosnians, Montenegrins, and Turks
   a. The presence of fellow Slavs in the Balkans permits Russia to inject an element of ideology in order to dress up its national goals.
   b. Russia and Austria-Hungary are natural enemies in the Balkans

L. Russo-Japanese War 1904-5
1. Russia completed the Trans-Siberian Railroad in 1903, and obtained a 25 year lease of the Liaotung Peninsula, extended its sphere of influence into Manchuria, and began penetration of Korea. This resulted in a conflict with Japan.
   a. Japan and Russia are natural enemies because of a mutual desire to influence Manchuria and Korea

2. Japanese launch a surprise attack on the Russian Pacific fleet at Port Arthur, and destroys it.

3. The Russian Baltic fleet is then destroyed in the naval battle of Tsushima Straits.

4. As a result of grotesque mismanagement, Russia loses the siege of Port Arthur.
   a. Payments sufficient to supply an army of 1,000,000 men failed to sustain an army of 250,000. (Fleming 20)

5. The Russo-Japanese War exposed the profound corruption of the Tsarist regime.

6. The Russo-Japanese War marks the emergence of Japan as a great power, and
also the first victory by a non-European nation over a European nation in modern times.

7. The war is brought to an end by Theodore Roosevelt in the Treaty of Portsmouth.

M. The Revolution of 1905

1. Widespread economic suffering coupled with an unpopular war shook the Tsarist regime to the core.

2. **Bloody Sunday**--a huge crowd of workers in St. Petersburg sought to deliver petitions to the Tsar. Nicholas responded by having troops fire into them, killing 1500 and wounded 3000 (Fleming 22). The "Little Father" had turned on his own people.

3. Peasants rebelled and looted manor houses; workers went out on strike. The sailors of the battleship Potemkin rebelled. A council or soviet of workers' deputies was established in St. Petersburg and emulated elsewhere. The empire was paralyzed by a general strike in October 1905.

4. Nicholas was forced to yield. His October Manifesto granted freedom of press, speech and assembly, and granted a parliament, or Duma. No laws were to be promulgated without the Duma's consent. Russia had become a constitutional monarchy.

5. The unrest is quelled by the use of troops from the front, who remained loyal to the Tsar.

   a. One key difference between 1905 and 1917 is that the Tsar and later the Kerensky government lost the support of the troops in 1917.

V. Bismarck's Alliances

A. Bismarck's goal is to isolate France and deny her allies which could encircle Germany.

1. The key to this is, in a world of five powers, to always be “a trois.” (Kagan 102)

B. **Dreikaiserbund** 1872 between Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. This was not a true alliance, but a statement of mutual solidarity between the three autocratic empires. The League fell apart as a result of the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78.

1. In 1875, rebellions broke out in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria (then Turkish), assisted by the Serbs, who aspired to be the catalyst for a Southern Slavic state (Yugoslavia). In 1877, Russia intervened, declaring war on Turkey and threatening to capture Istanbul until warnings from Austria and Great Britain led to a negotiated peace. The Treaty of San Stefano was quite favorable to Russia, but Great Britain and Austria were unwilling to accept it. Bismarck offered himself as an “honest broker,” and the result was the Congress of Berlin and the Treaty of Berlin (1878). This treaty sharply cut back Russian gains. Britain gained Cyprus. Austria-Hungary gained control of Bosnia-Herzegovina (technically, still part of the Ottoman Empire, and Austrian control was nominally “temporary.” Russia ended very angry with
both Austria and Germany.  (Kagan 103-107, Hall and Davis 456-478)

C.  **Dual Alliance** 1879 between Germany and Austria-Hungary, which pledged mutual support in the event Russia attacked either. Bismarck saw it as purely defensive, but Austria-Hungary tended to view it as a pledge of German support against Russia in the Balkans.

1.  In my opinion, tying German policy to Austria-Hungary was in the long run probably the worst mistake Bismarck ever made.

2.  Bismarck once remarked that every alliance has a horse and a rider, and “I intend to be the rider.” By 1914, however, German diplomatic blunders had led to a situation where Austria was effectively the rider.

D.  Renewal of the **Dreikaiserbund**: Russia knew an Austro-German treaty existed, but did not know the terms, and therefore sought reassurance from Bismarck.

1.  New Dreikaiserbund committed all three to friendly neutrality in the event of war with a fourth power (ie France vs. Germany) and additionally committed to consultation in the event of a change in the status quo in the Balkans or Ottoman Empire. The treaty was for 3 years and was renewed in 1884

E.  **Triple Alliance** 1882 between Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy. The treaty provided for mutual support in a war against France (ie Germany vs France or Italy vs. France) and Italian neutrality in an Austrian-Russian war.

1.  Italy joins an alliance with hated Austria because of anger over French seizure of Tunis.

2.  In the long run, this is probably a mistake since Italy was unable to stomach an alliance with Austria. On the other hand, Bismarck probably did not count much on Italian help. The treaty was useful in the short term.

F.  End of the Dreikaiserbund as a result of Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, using smaller nations as surrogates. Bulgaria in 1885 expels Russian officers and annexes Eastern Rumelia. Russia objects, but Austria backs Bulgaria. The incident wrecks the Dreikaiserbund.

G.  **Russo-German Reinsurance Treaty** 1887: provided for mutual neutrality in the event of war with a third party except for an aggressive war by Russia against Austria or an aggressive war by Germany against France (ie if France attacks Germany or Austria attacks Russia, the treaty is in force)

1.  This is the best move Bismarck made. If Russia remains neutral, then no combination of enemies would be sufficient to defeat Germany.

2.  Kagan, who believes that Germany caused World War I, makes the point at this stage, that, had Bismarck’s policies been continued, Germany and Britain together could have maintained the peace, regardless of whether they had an alliance or not, so long as both exerted themselves to prevent war. (116-7) Bismarck wanted nothing more; his successors did.

VI.  Wilhelm II Ruins Bismarck's work

A.  **Wilhelm II** becomes the German Emperor in 1888.

1.  The grandson of Queen Victoria, he is intelligent, but weak, headstrong, vacillating, arrogant, shallow, neurotic and suffered from an inferiority
complex (the result of a withered right arm).

2. Unfortunately, Bismarck's constitution allowed the Chancellor to govern
without parliamentary support, but not without the Kaiser's. Constitutionally,
the Kaiser ruled. The system worked under Wilhelm I, who understood his
limitations and allowed better men to govern. Under Wilhelm II, the system
leads to disaster.

3. Rarely has such a great, powerful, and sophisticated nation been led by so
juvenile a leader.

B. Bismarck is dismissed in 1890.
1. Successors are
   b. Prince Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst (1894-1900)
   c. Count Bernhard von Bülow (1900-09)
   d. Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg (1909-17)

2. All are mediocre men completely dependent on the Kaiser's whim

C. Germany refuses to renew the Reinsurance Treaty when it came up for renewal in
1890 just 5 days after Bismarck's dismissal. No satisfactory reason for the refusal
was ever given to the Russians. There does not appear to be a satisfactory reason
(that is, a rational one) at all.
1. Russia can only conclude that it must seek allies elsewhere. This is the first
and worst blunder committed by Wilhelm II. France is eager to offer herself
to the Tsar.

D. Franco-Russian alliance in 1894
1. If France is attacked by Germany or Italy supported by Germany, or Russia
attacked by Germany or by Austria supported by Germany, then the other will
go to war to assist its ally

2. The worst nightmare of the German General Staff is now realized: Germany
faces a two-front war between France and Russia. German military planning
is now predicated upon this assumption, and the terrible problem of defense
that it poses.

3. Massive French loans go to assist Russia in improving its defenses and war-
making capacity. Russian military strength, always potentially huge, was
steadily increasing, in spite of Tsarist inefficiency.
   a. In turn, this alarms German military planners, who eventually
      conclude around 1910 that if they must fight Russia at all, they must
      fight them soon
   b. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: (1) war with France is
      inevitable (2) Russia is allied with France (3) war with Russia is
      inevitable (4) Russia is rapidly gaining strength (5) it is better to fight
      Russia in 1914 than in 1918 when the rearmament program would be
      completed.

VII. Anglo-German Rivalry
1. An Anglo-German alliance was possible in the 1890's, since no vital interests
clashed directly. At the same time, there was very real friction between
England and Russia over Persia, Afghanistan, and China and between
England and France over Egypt and the Sudan.
a. Kaiser blamed his withered arm on his English mother, and hated
England because of it. The policy of a great nation is held captive to
an infantile personality
  (1) The Kaiser insists on a great navy. It is an issue on which he
      refused to compromise, even at the cost of domestic
difficulties. Given his constitutional position, this is an awful
mistake, on a level with allowing the Russian treaty to lapse.

2. German aspirations in Africa led them to support the Boers in the Boer War
1899-1902. The Kaiser's frequent public pronouncements were especially
inflammatory
a. The Kruger Telegram in 1895 sent to Paul Kruger, the head of the
   Boer Transvaal following the disastrous failure of the Jameson Raid
   (instigated by Cecil Rhodes) to seize the Transvaal for Great Britain,
proved to be very inflammatory.
b. While my sympathies are entirely with the Boers, who were attacked
   by Rhodes freebooters, Great Britain was very sensitive about their
   pre-eminent position on the Cape of Good Hope, did not accept
   Transvaal’s independence. The Kaiser’s language hinted strongly
   that Germany would be willing to intervene on behalf of the Boers at
   some future date.
c. The Kaiser followed up on this by other inflammatory remarks during
   the Boer War itself.

3. Naval arms race
a. Germany starts the arms race with the Navy Law of 1898, beginning
   the construction of a large, modern fleet.
b. The architect of this navy is Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz
   (1) Espouses a "risk fleet": "in order to protect German trade
       and commerce under existing conditions, only one thing will
       suffice, namely, Germany must possess a battle fleet of such
       a strength that even for the most powerful naval adversary, a
       war would involve such risks as to make that Power's own
       supremacy doubtful." (Turner 2)
   (2) Such a policy is foolish in the extreme, since not even Tirpitz
       believed that Germany could build a fleet capable of defeating
       the Royal Navy. He seems to have thought that the British
       would ally themselves with Germany out of fear.
   (3) The British could only view such provocative actions with
       alarm, since the only possible enemy was the Royal Navy.
       (a) Britain had already adopted the Two Power
Standard, ie the Royal Navy must be strong enough to defeat any two other navies.

(4) Germany is essentially a continental power. A navy is therefore for them a frill. German trade could flourish even in time of war, provided that Great Britain were neutral.

(5) Great Britain was essentially a naval power. Dominance of the high seas is a vital national interest. It has no choice but to respond to the German threat.

(6) When World War I finally broke out, it turned out that Tirpitz, for all his bluster, did not even have a war plan to use the navy. The High Seas Fleet was largely useless.

c. This is the Kaiser's second worst blunder, since it needlessly pushed England into the arms of the French.

d. England revolutionizes naval warfare by laying down Dreadnought, the first modern battleship, in 1905

e. Germany follows suit

f. In 1909, the shipbuilding reached a peak. Churchill wrote, “The Admiralty had demanded six ships, the economists offered four; and we finally compromised on eight.” (Qtd in Kagan 156)

g. By 1912, England has 18 dreadnoughts, Germany 9

VIII. Entente Cordiale 1904

A. Anglo-French colonial agreement 1904 resolves numerous points of friction

1. Gives England an insurance policy against an unpredictable Germany

2. Germans see it as part of a hostile encirclement

3. England recognizes French dominance in Morocco, France recognizes English dominance in Egypt

B. The Entente Cordiale is in no way an alliance, but it led to military discussions with extremely important implications. France agrees to withdraw its Atlantic navy to face the Italians and/or Austrians in the Mediterranean. In exchange, Britain promises to protect the French Channel ports from German attack. This creates a "moral obligation" on the part of the British to assist the French.

IX. The First Moroccan Crisis 1906

A. Morocco had boundaries with France along Algeria and also French West Africa. Frequent tribal revolts in Morocco spilled over into French territory. France had a legitimate interest in Morocco.

B. Germany had no legitimate national interests in Morocco, and little in the way of business interests. Provoking a crisis over Morocco was simple stupidity.

C. France takes steps to establish a protectorate over Morocco.

D. The Kaiser, visiting Tangier, supported Moroccan independence, creating a diplomatic uproar. He seems to have thought that he could break up the Entente Cordiale.

1. After the forced resignation of the French Foreign Minister, Del Cassé, Germany demands a conference at Algeciras
E. **Algeciras Conference** 1906: England, Italy, Russia, Spain, the U.S. all join France against Germany. Only Austria supports Germany.
   1. Technically, Moroccan independence is preserved, but the police was placed under French and Spanish control and a French controlled state bank established.
   2. The *Entente Cordiale* is strengthened, Great Britain now begins to make concessions to strengthen the balance of power in Europe, and Germany sees Austria as its only reliable ally.

X. **The Anglo-Russian Treaty** 1907 startles Germany by resolving festering disputes between the British and Russian Empires
   1. England's interest in Afghanistan is recognized, Tibet is neutral, and Persia divided between England and Russia.
   2. Germany is alarmed and feels that it needs Austria more than ever
   3. British concern over Germany has led it to seek reconciliation with its most persistent enemy since 1815.
   4. Russia, weakened by the Russo-Japanese War, also wants to reduce the list of its enemies.

XI. **Bosnian Crisis** 1908
   A. The *Young Turk* rebellion breaks out in the Ottoman Empire, which causes temporary confusion but also promises a revival of Turkish power, a prospect displeasing to both Austria and Russia.
   B. The Austrian Foreign Minister Count *Alois Aerenthal* and Russian Foreign Minister *Alexander Izvolsky* meet and agree that Austria should annex Bosnia-Herzegovina (a Turkish province) and Russia should open the Straits for warships. No date, however, was set.
      1. Austria's purpose is to damage Serbian aspirations, since Austria regards Serbia as the source of nationalist agitation within its own borders.
   C. Austria-Hungary unilaterally annexes Bosnia-Herzegovina, taking everyone by surprise.
      1. Turkish protests were ignored. Turkey is too weak to do anything.
      2. Serbia is furious, since Bosnia-Herzegovina has a large Serbian population, which now comes under the Austrian heel
      3. Britain coldly refuses to allow Russian warships the freedom of the Straits. Russia thus is denied its portion of the agreement.
   D. International tensions rise sharply
      1. Austria seeks German assurances. *Helmut von Moltke the Younger*, the Chief of the German General Staff, replies "the moment Russia mobilizes, Germany will also mobilize, and will unquestionably mobilize her whole army." (Turner 8) Moltke also predicts that Austria would, sooner or later, have to invade Serbia.
      2. Russia, weakened by the Russo-Japanese War, has no choice but to give in, but feels humiliated and will be less willing to back down in future.
      3. Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Austrian Chief of Staff, complains bitterly that
by not invading Serbia, Austria had lost its chance, and would eventually have to fight a multi-front war.

XII. The Daily Telegraph Interview 1908
A. During the same week as the Bosnian Crisis was precipitated, the Kaiser’s lengthy interview with a London newspaper was published. The Kaiser’s attempt to improve relations with Great Britain had precisely the opposite effect; his language demonstrated, in the words of his own foreign minister, “the Emperor’s intellectual extravagance, his incoherent disregard for facts, his complete lack of political moderation and balance, combined with an excessive urge towards . . . display.” (Massie 686)
   1. In other words, an inmate is running the asylum.

XIII. The Agadir Crisis 1911
A. German fell under the control of Foreign Secretary Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter
B. French control of Morocco led to a serious revolt in Fez. The French respond by moving in troops.
C. Kiderlen-Waechter believes he can use the crisis as an excuse to obtain concessions from France in Africa. Had he waited, however, the new French Prime Minister, Caillaux, would have made an offer without prompting. In another example of sheer stupidity, the Germans force the issue.
D. The Kaiser dispatches the gunboat Panther to the port of Agadir on the Atlantic in order to “protect German lives” although there were no Germans within 70 miles.
   1. Germany demands the French Congo.
E. David Lloyd George's Mansion House speech insisted that Britain be consulted. This was all the more shocking to the Germans because Lloyd George had not consulted the Cabinet (so there was no warning) and Lloyd George was known to be pro-German.
F. France cedes the French Congo to the Germans in return for German recognition of French claims in Morocco

XIII The Haldane Mission
A. The Germans passed a new Navy Bill in early 1912.
   1. Bethmann-Hollweg hoped to put an end to the naval arms race, and invited negotiations. The Cabinet sent Lord Haldane, who was friendly to Germany.
   2. Tirpitz, supported by the Kaiser, (Kagan 176-7) sabotaged the negotiations by demanding that Britain accept neutrality in any Franco-German conflict but also accept German naval aspirations. The Kaiser wrote, “I have shown the British that, when they touch our armaments, they bite on granite.” (177)
   3. A direct consequence of this diplomatic disaster was the Anglo-French Naval Agreement: Not only did Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, announce a naval increase, but France agreed to concentrate hser fleet in the Mediterranean while Great Britain moved most of its fleet to the North Sea and the Atlantic; this is significant in that it de facto commits England to the defense of the French Channel ports, and amounts to an implicit alliance.

XIV The Balkan Wars
G. **Italy vs. Turkey** 1911 over Tripoli, reveals Turkish weakness

H. **First Balkan War** 1912
1. Russia sees an opportunity and brokers the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912 which formed the basis of the Balkan League.
   a. Raymond Poincaré, on an official visit to St. Petersburg, correctly sees the treaty not only as a sword against Turkey, but Austria. Russia’s objective was an alliance to assist them against Austria. (Kagan 178)
   (1) Poincaré points out Russian military weakness. One result is very large French loans to Russia in 1913
2. The client states, however, had their own agenda—to drive Turkey out of Europe and to acquire territory. The *Balkan League*, consisting of Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece attacked Turkey.
   a. Serbia wanted ports on the Adriatic from Albania; Montenegro wanted territory in Albania; Bulgaria wanted Constantinople; Greece wanted as much as they could get.
3. The Turks are quickly overwhelmed and almost driven out of Europe, retaining only Constantinople
4. The victory of the Balkan League demonstrates Russian ascendancy in the Balkans and undermined Austrian security. Military men privately counted the bayonets of the Balkan League and added them to Russia's total.
   a. A. J. P. "Taylor says: 'The victory of Balkan nationalism was a disaster beyond remedy for the Habsburg Monarchy.' This was fully appreciated by the Austrian General Staff." (Turner 40)

I. Austria and Italy, fearing a Southern Slavic nation on the Adriatic, force Serbia to give up Albania, which had been a Serbian war objective.
1. Germany emphatically assures Austria of their support against Russia. Had Russia been ready to fight, war would have broken out in 1912.
2. The Russian War Minister Ger. V. Sukhomlinov proposes a partial mobilization against Austria. He is overruled. Two quotes should be borne in mind:
   a. French Gen. **Boisdeffre** to Alexander III in 1892: "*Mobilization means war.*"
   b. Minister of Finance **V. N. Kokovzov**: "no matter what we chose to call the projected measures, a mobilization remained a mobilization, to be countered by our adversaries by actual war." (Turner 45-6)
3. Bulgaria had seized Thrace and Macedonia, but now Serbia and Greece want compensation in Macedonia

J. **Second Balkan War** 1913
1. Bulgaria versus Greece, Serbia and Rumania
2. Bulgaria is quickly defeated after attacking Greece and Serbia
3. Greece, Serbia, and Rumania all gain territory at Bulgarian expense
4. War is seen as a victory for Russia and a defeat for Austria
5.