

DOCUMENT 1 OF 5
Imperialism

***SOURCE:** During the 1800s, European countries like Britain and France created massive empires that spanned the world. These empires provided their home countries with natural resources, economic power, and international prestige. By the 1900s, fierce rivalries had developed between these European empires. In a speech to the Reichstag (the German congress) in December of 1899, the German politician Bernhard von Bülow speaks of Germany's place in this imperialist world.*

“In the nineteenth century (1800s) England has increased its colonial empire further and further. The French have put down roots in North Africa and East Africa and created for themselves a new empire in the Far East. Russia has begun its mighty path of victory in Asia.

The English prime minister said a long time ago that the strong states were getting stronger and stronger and the weak ones were getting weaker and weaker. We don't want to step on the toes of any foreign power, but at the same time we don't want our own feet stepped on by any foreign power, and we don't intend to be shoved aside by any foreign power. If the English speak of a 'Greater Britain,' if the French speak of a 'New France,' if the Russians take over Asia; then we also have the right to a greater Germany! In the coming century the German people will be a hammer or an anvil. One hits, the other is hit.”

We cannot stand inactive on the side anymore. We cannot for the simple reason that we now have interests in all parts of the world. The rapid growth of our population, the unprecedented blossoming (*growing*) of our industries, the hard work of our merchants, and the mighty vitality (*energy*) of the German people have woven (*tied*) us into the world economy and pulled us into international politics.”

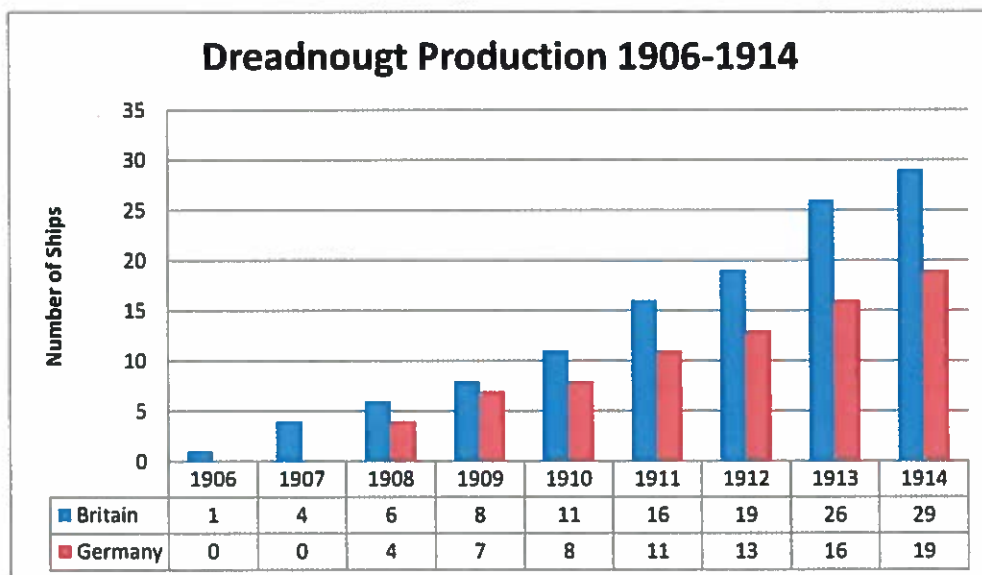
ANSWER the following questions:

1. What do you think Bulow means when he says Germany will either be a hammer or an anvil? Which do you think Germany would rather be? Why?
2. Why can Germany no longer “stand inactive?” What are some of the factors/motives for Imperialism that Bulow references?
3. How do you think Imperialism contributed to the start of the First World War?

What were the causes of World War I?

DOCUMENT 2 OF 5
Militarism (Naval Arms Race)

SOURCE: *The naval race between Germany and Great Britain between 1906 and 1914 created huge tension between both nations and it is seen as one of the causes of World War I. In 1906, Britain launched the first dreadnought - a new type of battleship that meant all others were obsolete and out-of-date before its awesome fire power. Germany responded, and the race was on. Below is a chart of dreadnought production between 1906-1914.*



ANSWER the following questions:

1. What is a dreadnought? What do you notice about British/German production of dreadnoughts between 1906 and 1914?
2. Why might Germany want control of the seas? Think back to Document 1. Why might Britain want control of the seas? Think about where Britain is located geographically.
3. How do you think the naval arms race contributed to the start of WWI?

What were the causes of World War I?

DOCUMENT 3 OF 5
Militarism (Views on War)

SOURCE: *The militarism leading up to World War I did not only involve the massive build-up of new weapons like dreadnoughts. It also involved Europe's attitude towards war. During the early 1900s, many governments pursued a policy of glorifying military power, and having a large and strong army made citizens feel patriotic. Below are two views on militarism prior to World War I.*

"This desire for peace has rendered most civilized nations weak. War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind. It cannot be dispensed with. Without it an unhealthy development will follow, which will prevent every advancement of real civilization. War is the father of all things."—General Treitschke, German military commander, 1899

"The entire able-bodied populations of Europe are preparing to massacre one another. Though no one wants to attack, and everybody professes (states) his love of peace and the determination to maintain it, the whole world feels that it only requires some unforeseen incident, some unpreventable accident, for the spark to fall in a flash and blow all Europe sky-high."—Frederic Passy, French peace activist, 1895

ANSWER the following questions:

1. How does General Treitschke view war? Is it a good or a bad thing? Explain.
2. How does Frederic Passy view the rise of militarism in Europe? What is he worried about? Explain.
3. How do you think militaristic views on war contributed to the start of World War I?

What were the causes of World War I?

DOCUMENT 4 OF 5
Nationalism

SOURCE: Nationalism began to develop in Europe during the 1800s. By the 1900s, many smaller European countries that were part of large empires began to experience Nationalism as well. The Balkans region of Austrian Empire was a particularly tense spot. It was home to a large amount of ethnic groups and had a history of uprisings. Below is a map of the ethnicities in the Austrian Empire (each color is a different group of people), as well as the oath of the Black Hand, a secret nationalist society founded in Serbia in 1908. At this time, Serbians were one of the groups controlled by the Austrian Empire.



"I, Milan Vasitch, by entering into the organization, do hereby swear by the blood of my forefathers, by my honor, by my life, and by all Serbs, that from this moment onward and until my death I shall faithfully serve this organization to achieve the unification of the Serbs and the creation of a Serbian Nation-State. I shall at all times be prepared to make any sacrifice for it. Unification or death!"—
Milan Vasitch, Oath of the Black Hand, 1908

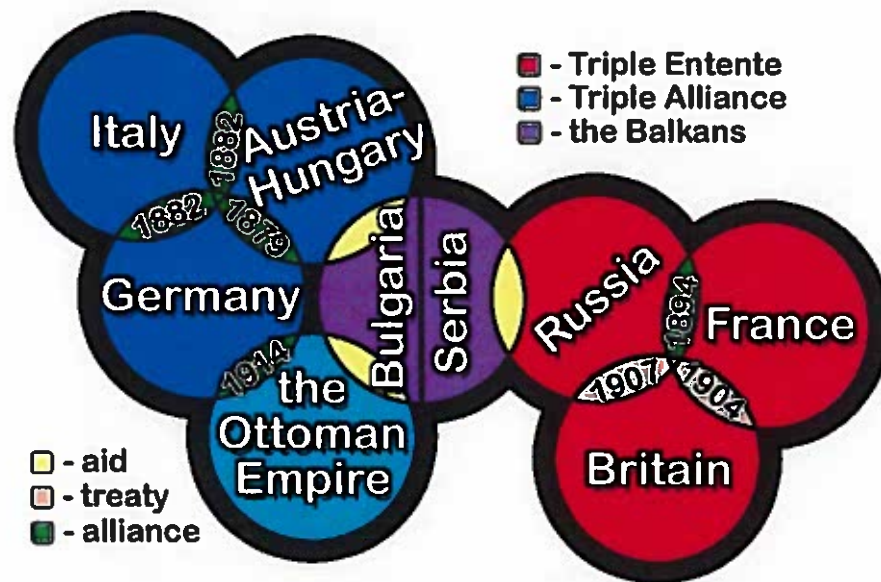
ANSWER the following questions:

1. How many different ethnic groups can you count using the map of the Austrian Empire? Remember, each color is a different one!
2. What does Milan Vasitch and the Black Hand organization desire? What are they willing to give up to achieve it? Who is standing in their way?
3. How do you think nationalism contributed to the start of World War I?

What were the causes of World War I?

DOCUMENT 5 OF 5
Alliances

SOURCE: *An alliance is an agreement made between two or more countries to give each other help if it is needed. Prior to the start of World War I, Europe divided into two solid alliance blocks: Germany and Austria-Hungary on one side, Britain, France, and Russia on the other. Below is a diagram of the two main alliances, known as the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, as well as an excerpt from the treaty that formed the Triple Alliance.*



“ARTICLE 3. If one, or two, of the Contracting Parties should be attacked and become engaged in a war with one or more Great Powers (*France, Britain, Russia*), all Contracting Parties shall be bound to lend help and assistance with all their forces.”—Article III of the Triple Alliance

ANSWER the following questions:

1. What countries make up the Triple Alliance? What countries make up the Triple Entente?
2. According to this treaty, what are the “Contracting Parties” required to do if one allied nation becomes engaged in a war with one or more “Great Powers”?
3. How do you think alliances contributed to the start of World War I?

What were the causes of World War I?