

Forum:	The Crisis Committee
Issue:	Resolving the July Crisis (1914)
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Introduction

The July Crisis in Europe began in 1914 and quickly led to the beginning of the First World War. Sparked because of an assassination of an Austro-Hungarian royal, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo on the 28th of June, 1914 leading to the declarations of war between the European powers. The entire crisis only lasted 5 weeks before the unfortunate occurrence of the First World war. Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination only tipped Europe of the brink of chaos with Europe already having tensions between the nations, despite politicians desperately trying to prevent a war from happening their efforts were futile. The First World War was ultimately a brutal conflict that led to the deaths of around 20 million, as well as countless war crimes being committed. This chair report would aim to provide context to the crisis as well as guide delegates into resolving the crisis.

Definition of Key Terms

Unification of Germany (1871)

In 1871 Germany unified into one from multiple German speaking states. This affected the power balance in Europe and was achieved after the Franco-Prussian War. The unified Germany was ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm I. Austria-Hungary

This is the dual monarchy of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary, this was formed in 1867. Austria-Hungary had two separate governments but had shared a monarch and had some common ground in their system. Austria-Hungary had lots of divisions from within and between the ethnic groups. **Triple Entente** This is the alliance between Great Britain, France, and Russia. The Triple Entente was designed to counter the rising power of Germany and her allies in Europe. This alliance also became the core of the Allied Powers of World War 1.

Triple Alliance

This was the alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, crafted by Otto von Bismark. This was done to balance the power of the Triple entente and prevent France from taking actions against Germany through other alliances.

Nationalism

This was where someone would believe that the culture and the goals of that nation would come first. Nationalism is usually paired with the need for independence of the nation.

Pan-Slavism

This was a movement calling for the independence and unity of the Slavic peoples through having the same national and cultural beliefs. This was extremely influential in the Balkan and would lead to the Balkan wars as well as the Ottoman Empires demise.

The Balkan Wars

These were a series of wars between states that had just gained independence against the Ottoman Empire aiming to expand their territory.

Black Hand

This was an underground Serbian nationalist organization. They were known from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and wanted a Greater Serbia to be created.

Franco-Prussian war

This was a conflict between the French Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia this led to the unification of Germany. The war also led to long tensions between France and Germany especially due to the lose of Alsace-Lorraine, a French area.

Militarism

This is the belief that governments should have a strong military and respond aggressively to threats that would endanger national interest.

Ottoman Empire

This was an empire that had control over large parts of the Balkans, north Africa, and the Middle East. However, by the 19th and 20th centuries they had been in decline and struggled with maintain their status. This was a issue as the territories they had would be contest to other European nations.

History & Developments

From the early 19th century to 1914, Europe was in a divided state geopolitically. In 1871, the unification of Germany tipped the power balance in Europe. The new unified Germany was then further strengthened with their alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879 (Imperial War Museums). As Germany was growing in power other European powers had grown in their fear and encouraged nations to enter into agreements for example the alliance between Russia and France in 1893. Britain also entered into negotiations for agreements between France and Russia from 1904 despite having seen them as enemies. The formation of these agreements gave Germany a new

fear of being surrounded by other European powers that will work against them. This all led to extremely high tensions in the European landscape.

Nationalism in Europe

Nationalism became increasingly prevalent in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. The nationalism in Europe can be rooted in their desire to self-rule and their desire to expand their power and influence. The need to expand their influences would lead to competition and tensions between them, leaving a ticking bomb in Europe to be dealt with (“To What Extent Was Nationalism the Main Cause of WWI?”).

Slavic Nationalism

The Balkans had been a region that major European powers all wanted to get a piece of, and on top of those ambitions there had been the formation of independent states of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania. The formation of the independent states was driven by the rising nationalism in the region amongst those that are native to the Balkans. There were movements between these nations to enlarge their borders over what their ethnic group was in majority of. This desire for more territory ultimately led to conflict with the Ottoman Empire which originally ruled these regions. These disputes would have led to the Balkan wars (“The Balkan Powder Keg | History of Western Civilization II”).

Out of all the forms of nationalism in the Balkans at this time the Slavic nationalism perhaps had the greatest impact on the outbreak of war out of all of the nationalist movements at the time in history. The belief that fueled those in the Slavic region was Pan-Slavism. Slavic nationalism had the deepest impact in Serbia which had been increasing in power in the 19th and 20th centuries (Southey and Thompson). However, in the mentioned time period the Austro-Hungarian Empire had control over the region. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Vienna led to young Serbians joining radical groups such as the ‘Black Hand’. These groups would often preach a message of driving Austria-Hungary away from the Balkans and create a strong unified Serbia for the Slavic people. These messages would have led to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

Austria-Hungary’s Challenges

The Austro-Hungarian empire spread almost 700,000 square kilometers and contained 52 million people. Austria-Hungary consisted 11 major ethnic groups that had it’s roots in all surrounding European nations. Much like their German neighbors it was rapidly modernizing and was ruled by militarists and industrialists. Austria-Hungary was focused on expanding into the Balkans and created tension with Russia who was their close neighbor (Llewellyn and Thompson, “Austria-Hungary before World War I”). Austria-Hungary also had a conscription law where all eighteen-year-old men needed to participate in a lottery to then join the military.

The main challenge for Austria-Hungary is how it contained too many different ethnic groups, this made it very hard to unify and rule Austria-Hungary successfully. In fact, Austro-Hungary didn't even have their own official language which proves extremely unhelpful in trying to rule a nation ("Austria-Hungary / 1.0 / Handbook - 1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia"). Austria-Hungary was also split into two; it had 2 different constitutions from Hungary and Austria, administrative system, citizenship and language. It was then joined together by a common ruler who was the emperor of Austria and also the king of Hungary. They would also have a joint military, ministry of foreign affairs, common currency, and a common trade policy. This made Austria-Hungary extremely important to trade in Europe; however, having two complete different systems also led to it being extremely difficult to rule effectively.

German Nationalism

Germany was established in 1871 inheriting twenty-five German-speaking states and was bordered by lots of European powers including France and Russia. The joining of these German-speaking states led to a belief amongst Germans that it was crucial for a unified Germany despite being difficult as each of these states would have similarities but also their differences. The German Nationalists believed in that for a united Germany they must be unified in race, culture, language and power. These ideas sent a wave of patriotism across the German people and it can be reflected in how Germany had decisive leaders, been extremely technologically advanced, and having a powerful economy. Germany also had a powerful army and navy from one of the twenty-five states, Prussia (Llewellyn and Thompson, "Germany before World War I").

Germany began the process of unification in 1848 with movements in Prussia, Bavaria, Badena and Saxony all for a unified Germany. The most important moment in German Nationalism was the Franco-Prussian War, these led to the negotiations of a unified Germany which were conducted by Otto von Bismarck. This led to the creation of the 'Second Reich' under Kaiser Wilhelm I along with Bismarck. Bismarck only served with one purpose of increasing the power of the Prussian state. Bismarck has helped Germany secure her borders and negotiated peace deals to help maintain a balance of power within Europe. This was referred to Kaiser Wilhelm I as "juggling on horseback" (Sherry).

Germany had secured strong borders as well as increased in their power since their formation. This meant more nationalism in Germany. The nationalism in Germany was directly proportional to the power of the German military and it's might. This effect was only furthered when Kaiser Wilhelm II came into power in 1888. He focused on transforming Germany into a global power which led to tensions rising with Britain as Wilhelm II was jealous of what Britain was being able to achieve (*How Did Nationalism Lead to WWI?*).

Military Alliances and Arms Races

Europe had been a powdered keg while constantly having more powder being added to it. The military alliances certainly is an addition to the keg, The rising nationalism in Europe leads to a belief that our country must be stronger than the other. This belief leads to everyone being on edge from the lowly peasant to the politicians resulting in a delicate situation that would be worsened with future threats.

Triple Entente

The Triple Entente is the alliance Great Britain, France and Russia, and was the center of the Allied powers in the First World War. This was originally rooted from the Franco-Russian Alliance and was formalized by two separate treaties, one Anglo-French Entente Cordiale of 1904, the other the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 (“Triple Entente”). The Triple Entente was formed to combat the threat of a German takeover of Europe and was made to prevent a German or Austrian-Hungarian threat. The members of the Triple Entente are enemies to Austria-Hungary as well as Germany. The Russian’s perceived a threat from Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and the areas controlled by the failing Ottoman Empire. Germany has been long enemies of France and the French have a motive of regaining Alsace-Lorraine after having that territory taken over in the Franco-Prussian War (Billington). This alliance added stress to the nations of Germany and Austria-Hungary in needing to make a response that did not escalate things further.

Triple Alliance

The Triple Alliance was the response to the Triple Entente by Germany and Austria-Hungary. They formed an alliance between themselves as well as the Kingdom of Italy. This was the brainchild of Bismarck in preventing further escalation with the Triple Entente, the forming of this alliance was an extremely meticulous process. Bismarck had put in realpolitik considerations and was based on practicality rather than idealistic polices. The formation of this kept other European nations from aligning themselves against Germany. This greatly helped deescalate tensions in Europe at the time because during this present Bismarck also kept good relations with Russia and provoking Britan. The formation of the alliance also allowed Bismarck to balance the claims over the territories between Austria-Hungary and Russia for the Balkans and the failing Ottoman Empire (Billington). This helped steer Europe away from a major conflict as there is now once again equal powers on both sides.

The Effect of Alliances

The alliances not only protected threats from other alliances but it also guaranteed a full European war. The protection roots from how a alliance can counterbalance another which was previously mentioned. However, in the alliances if one member was attacked the other members of the alliance would defend them. This meant that there would certainly be war if there was the attack of one nation.

Growing Militarism

Militarism in Europe at the time took place in the form of increasing the power of their military through bettering their military technology, increasing the men in the armies, pouring money into their armies or navies; but at the end of the day it was to beat their opponents in their military ability. Kaiser Wilhelm II had a focus on improving Germany's global power and how he saw fit to do so was to increase the military strength of Germany, and this was an extremely offensive play. An example of how militarism leads to increased tensions is how Britain and Germany were competing in having the strongest Navy starting in 1900. There was a race in developing the more advanced type of battleship and led to a constant loop of fear and continuing to militarize and in the end hopefully they will have a stronger military which can be seen as a threat which finally heightens tensions (History Skills).

Militarism is also closely linked with nationalism and imperialism. Often, military power is seen as a metric for the overall strength of a nation which meant for a state to be powerful they must have a powerful military to protect itself and its beliefs. Militarism was also helpful in advancing a country's political and economic interests as the development of new technologies could lead to more trade. A strong economy is also a metric for a strong country (History). It can be seen here how a strong military is often what nationalists want out of their nations and what they see as important.

Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (June 28, 1914)

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand has been regarded as one of the most important and impactful assassinations in history. This moment has been referred to as the spark that lit the powdered keg of Europe and sent it to war. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand only had its effect due to the nationalism of Serbs as well as the general political situation in Europe.

Visit to Sarajevo

Franz Ferdinand visited the province of Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 28, 1914, the visit of the Archduke was an unpopular one especially considering the region, the Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina borders Serbia while Serbia has long wanted to take Bosnia. To make the situation even worse the date of June 28th is a sensitive one in Serbian history where it remembered the Turkish victory over Serbia in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. The visit combined with the date only added fuel to the anger of Serbian nationalists. The archduke has been travelling on an open-topped car. While the car was driving along an avenue in the middle of a large crowd one of the audience had thrown a grenade at the car. The explosion had been behind the vehicle as it had bounced off it injury members of the audience. Instead of proceeding with the original plans the Archduke had decided to visit the hospital to check on one of the injured police officers. This change of plan meant Franz Ferdinand and his company would be exposed for a longer period of time and gave a Slav nationalist the opportunity to assassinate Franz Ferdinand, and this time it was successful (Backhouse).

Gavrilo Gavrilo Princip was the Slav nationalist that successfully assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand. He had been born into a Bosnian Serb peasant family and had been trained to be a terrorist by the Black Hand, which was a Serbian mob. Gavrilo Princip and four other revolutionaries all wanted a powerful united Serbia and which they believed the assassination of Franz Ferdinand would contribute to that goal (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica). Gavrilo Princip was sentenced to 20 years of prison; however, before he was able to serve his sentence he had died due to an amputation of his arm because of tuberculosis.

Reaction of Austria-Hungary

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand began the rapid deterioration of Europe and led to the First World War. Franz Ferdinand was an archduke and a close relative to the Emperor Franz Josef. This led to Austria-Hungary immediately playing a strong response. Austria-Hungary went to gain support from Germany to punish Serbia. They then sent an ultimatum to Serbia, which was phrased in a way that it was impossible for Serbia to accept. Serbia had wanted to settle the dispute through the method of an ultimatum to resolve the dispute but Austria-Hungary immediately declared war on Serbia exactly a month after Ferdinand's death (Greenspan). Because of the alliances made between the nations Europe directly entered into the war.

Austria-Hungary's Response and Germany's "Blank Cheque"

Germany deciding to support Austria-Hungary in the aggressive approach escalated the war. Serbia being in bed with Russia would also lead to Serbia cooperating with France and Great Britain. A war in the Balkans would then be heightened into a European one. Kaiser Wilhelm pledged Germany's unconditional support for Austria-Hungary in what Austria chooses to do with Serbia. The Austrian Foreign Ministry sent a delegate to Berlin who carried a memorandum stating the need for hard action in the Balkans as well as personal letter from Emperor Franz Josef to Kaiser Wilhelm. Both of these stated the need for Austria-Hungary to go into alliance with Bulgaria which Germany had thought as a potential Balkan ally. However, Bulgaria gradually leaned towards joining with Serbia and Russia. This demonstrates the issues with having alliances with other nations demonstrating how escalated tensions could be. The blank check ultimately led to Germany's involvement into the issue and will lead up the breakout of the First World War.

Major Parties Involved

Empire of Austria Hungary

As the dominant power in the Balkans, Austria-Hungary is thoroughly involved in the region's politics.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1848 resulted in the homogenous Empire of Austria pivoting to multicultural Austria-Hungary, which reflected the tensions between the many ethnicities under the empire. Despite the

internal tensions, Austria-Hungary continued to seek dominance over the Balkans, exemplified by the annexation of Bosnia in 1908. Since the annexation, tensions have been high among the Austro-Hungarians and neighbouring nations such as Serbia, which at that point had a large population of Serbs in now Austro-Hungarian Bosnia. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand provides a great excuse for absorbing Serbia into the empire. However, the fragile state of the empire calls into question the imperialistic instincts of the leadership.

Empire of Russia

With a Balkan powder keg lit, the Russian Empire assumes the position of guardian of the Balkans. Over the past century, Russia had gradually established a sphere of influence over the emerging independent Slavic nation-states. The Russian Tsars promised to protect all Slavs, including the ratification of the Russo-Serbian Alliance in 1807. Russia's intention of guarding Slavic nations from encroaching Austrian and Ottoman Empires was more of a strategic benefit for Russia than a moral one. By wedding Russian influence in the Balkans, the Russian Empire could practically cut both of their greatest rivals, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, from gaining any more strength. It is imperative for Russia to honour its defence pacts with Slavic nations and to weaken both Austria-Hungary and the crippling Ottoman Empire.

Kingdom of Germany

Germany, an empire boxed in from east and west, must break the deadlock. The Dual Alliance of 1891 between France and Russia harboured deep suspicions and animosity from Germany as this military pact effectively limited Germany's potential avenues for expansion. As a contingency, Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen developed a military strategy for a possible war between France and Russia that required invading through Belgium to defeat France hurriedly before the Russian military could fully mobilize. When a crisis developed in the Balkans between a Russian-protected Slav nation and Germany's allies, Kaiser Wilhelm and his government sensed weakness to be exploited. This provided Germany with ripe conditions to execute the Schlieffen Plan to break out of the boundaries and dominate the European continent. It is in Germany's best interest to support Austria-Hungary unconditionally during the July Crisis.

Kingdom of Serbia

Despite being an independent nation for almost half a century, Serbia's sovereignty has always been at risk. Trapped between the empires of Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans, relations have been perpetually tight in the region. The Balkan Wars established Serbia as a prominent independent power in the Balkans, and one which Austria-Hungary saw fit to eventually absorb. Relations between the two nations became tense once Serbs living in Bosnia became Austro-Hungarian subjects in 1908, fostering deep resentment toward Austria-Hungary. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand perpetrated by a Serb-nationalist terrorist group provided the Austro-Hungarians with justifiable means to absorb Serbia into the empire. The July crisis, though sparked from Bosnia and Serbia, centred mostly around the largest European powers striking at political vulnerabilities. Nonetheless, Serbia aims to liberate fellow Serbs from Austro-Hungarian-occupied Bosnia, reject the overbearing ultimatum issued by Austria-Hungary and hold out against the Central Powers with Russian support.

Third French Republic

The aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and the rise of Germany harbours deep animosity in the resurging French Republic. The ceding of Alsace Lorraine to Germany and the German occupation of Paris in 1871 deeply scarred the French spirit, fostering fear and hatred toward the rising star of Europe. In 1891, France and Russia signed the Dual Alliance to proclaim solidarity in containing Germany. Since the war, the monarchy had been abolished one final time, and the French military and industry had rehabilitated itself and once again presented France as a dominant European power that other powers could as easily push around. French interests were also at that time firmly present in Africa in the wake of the scramble for the continent, which conflicted with Germany due to German colonial aspirations following the unification of all the German states. The July Crisis poses an opportunity for the Dual Alliance to contain German expansionism in favour of both French and Russian endeavours.

United Kingdom

Exiting the Pax Britannica, Britain's place in the world is to maintain its dominance. As the leading power during the Industrial Revolution, steadfastness during the Napoleonic Wars and the general stability of the British political climate established Britain as the de facto leader of Europe. As such, Britain invested heavily in expanding their empire, especially during the Scramble for Africa. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a rising power in Europe sought to disrupt the status quo and the peace that emerged in continental Europe post-1815. Germany's very present involvement in colonizing Africa, waging war in Europe, and naval arms race provoked the United Kingdom. As the July Crisis developed, Britain proposed to mediate differences, which was rejected by both Germany and Austria-Hungary and was subsequently followed by the outbreak of war. Britain has no interest in engaging the Central Powers. However, their guarantee of Belgian sovereignty as a result of the treaty of London in 1830 will force Britain's hand. Furthermore, Britain seeks to continue expanding its Empire with German colonies in Africa and the Pacific ripe for pickings. Britain had a particular interest in acquiring the German colony of East Africa as it would enable the British to actualize the colonial fantasy of building a railway from Cairo to Capetown.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event Name	Description
June 28 th , 1914	Assassination of Archduke Franze Ferdinand	
July 5 th , 1914	Germany offers Austria Hungary a “Blank cheque” promising to an unconditional ally	
July 23 rd , 1914	Austria-Hungary issues ultimatum to Serbia	
July 25 th , 1914	Serbia replies to ultimatum meeting almost none of the demands	
July 26 th , 1914	United Kingdom proposes mediation conference	
July 28 th , 1914	Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia	
July 30 th , 1914	Russia starts mobilizing armed forces	
August 1 st , 1914	Germany declares war on Russia	
August 3 rd , 1914	Germany declares war on Germany	
August 4 th , 1914	United Kingdom declares war on Germany	
August 6 th , 1914	Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia	

Possible Solutions

All relevant participants in this crisis have to tread lightly to avoid an all-out global war. For there to be any sort of coherent agreement, major parties could accept the offer from Great Britain for a mediation conference. During this

conference, the would-be allied powers would offer some sort of compromise to appease the Austro-Hungarians, such as offering Serbia as a protectorate or vassal under the empire. If this scenario is successful, this will prevent an all-out European war that would escalate into a global catastrophe while maintaining the goals of most European nations. However, as the prelude to the Second World War exemplified, appeasement only breeds ambition, and all the efforts proposed from this potential mediatory conference could be futile a few months down the line.

As it would play out historically, war broke out as a result of nationalistic and imperial ambition embodied especially by Germany and Austria-Hungary. A potential path for exploiting this crisis would be for the Central Power to adhere to the Schlieffen plan. Austria-Hungary would swiftly invade Serbia, provoking a War with Russia and, by default, France. Then Germany would maneuver through Belgium to strike at the heart of France, which by extension would mean War with the United Kingdom. A possibility to mitigate the British threat would be to surprise attack the United Kingdom with Germany's newly amassed fleet with state-of-the-art battleships and to utilize the novel Zeppelin fleet to assist in such surprise attacks. For Germany and Austria-Hungary to win this conflict, both empires must keep the war mobile and prevent a stalemate from occurring, which would annihilate momentum.

Alternatively, the Allied position would be strengthened if the Central Powers were more isolated during this crisis. A potential path for either preventing war or smothering the Central Powers would be for the Allied powers to build a grand coalition that would blockade and starve Germany and Austria-Hungary. As the two largest expansionist pariahs in Europe, neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary made many friends other than each other and Italy, a nation which later switched sides during the Great War. If the Allies hastily mustered a military alliance of virtually all Europeans, both neighbouring or not, to essentially starve or intimidate Germany and Austria-Hungary to back down with a hurriedly organized military force. This potential outcome could retain the status quo perpetuated by the Pax Britannica.

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