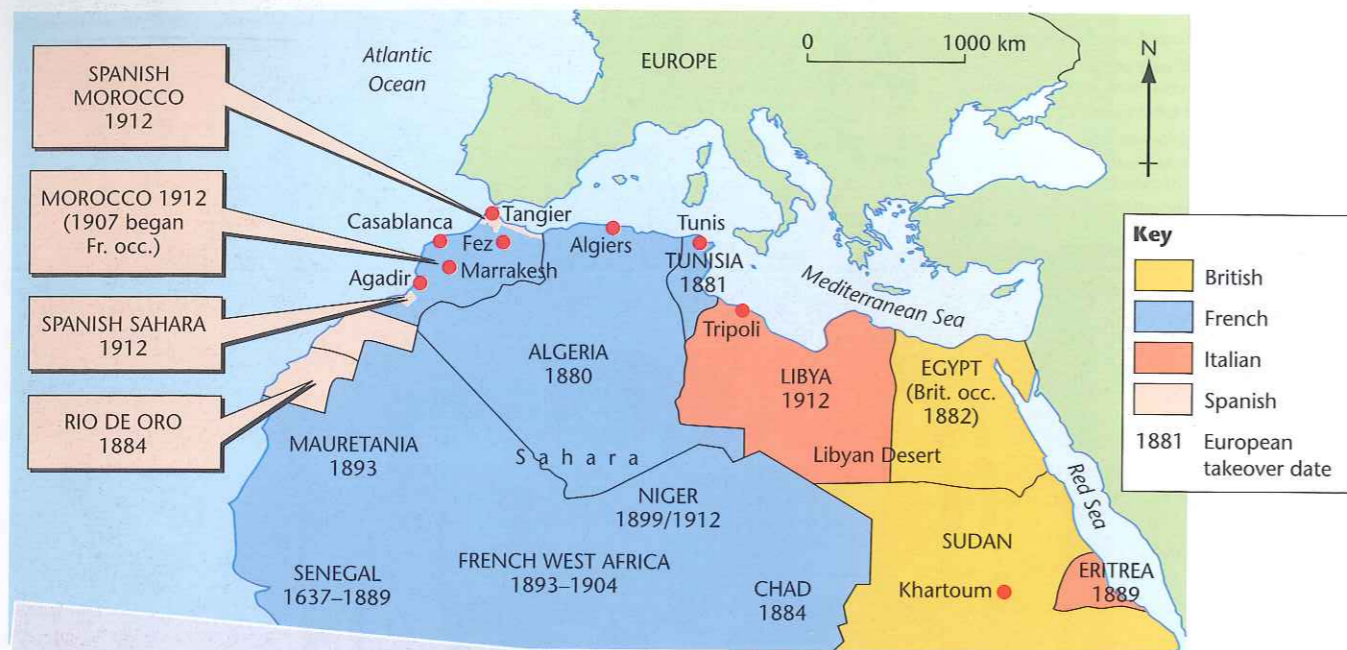


THE CRISES OF 1905-13

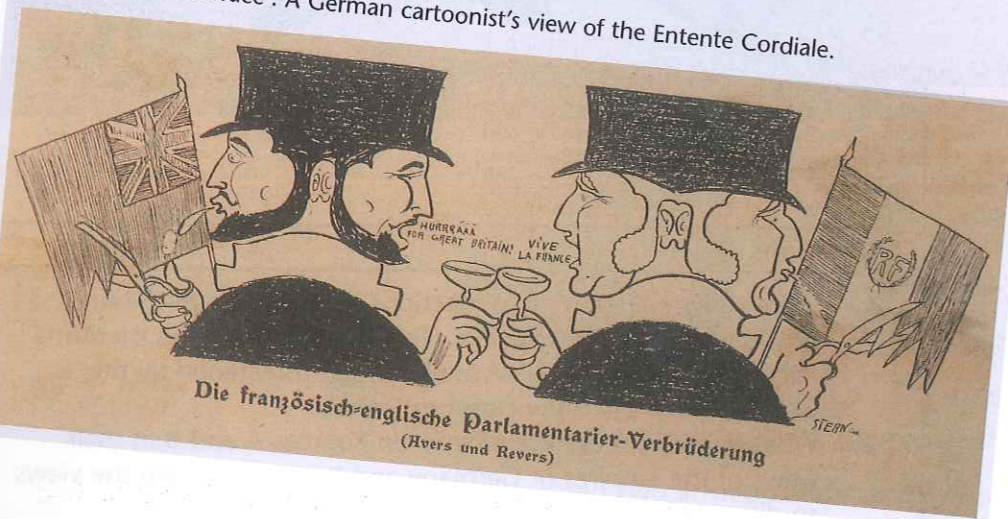
There were crises in Morocco and the Balkans. These increased the rivalry between the Great Powers and brought war closer.

The First Moroccan Crisis 1905-6



SOURCE A

'An uncertain embrace'. A German cartoonist's view of the Entente Cordiale.



France wanted Morocco to complete her empire in North Africa. In 1904 Britain and France agreed the Entente Cordiale (Anglo-French Entente). This Entente gave France a free hand in Morocco. The Kaiser, however, decided to interfere in Morocco:

- He wanted to test the strength of the Entente and believed he could split the agreement. He did not believe Britain would stand by France over Morocco.
- He did not want to see France extend her North African Empire.

In 1905 the Kaiser paid a visit to the Moroccan port of Tangiers. There he made a speech in which he declared that Morocco should remain independent of France. This sparked off a crisis. France, backed by Britain, refused to back down but did agree to the Kaiser's demand for an international meeting or conference to discuss the future of Morocco.

SOURCE B

Kaiser Wilhelm II riding through Tangiers in 1905



The conference took place at Algeiras at Spain. It was a disaster for the Kaiser. Only Austria-Hungary backed his demands for Moroccan independence. Britain supported the French. This crisis increased tension because:

- France was more or less given a free hand in Morocco. The Kaiser had suffered an embarrassing defeat.
- He blamed this defeat on the British and their support for France.
- Wilhelm II's actions had achieved the opposite of what he had hoped. They had strengthened the Entente Cordiale.

The Bosnian crisis 1908-9



In 1908 Austria-Hungary added Bosnia-Herzegovina to its empire. This created a second international crisis. The Serbians were furious because they had hoped to make Bosnia part of a 'greater Serbian' state. They appealed to Russia for help. Russia's answer was to call for an international conference to discuss Austria's action. Austria refused to attend and was backed by Germany.

Germany demanded that Russia accept the Austrian seizure of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia had little choice but to back down. Russia's armies were no match for the German forces. This crisis again increased tension:

- Serbia was furious with Austria and wanted revenge and the return of Bosnia.
- Russia was humiliated but was unlikely to back down in another crisis.
- Germany was now fully committed to supporting Austrian policy in the Balkans, even if it led to war.
- Russia drew even closer to France and Britain.

The second Moroccan or Agadir crisis, 1911

In 1911 there was a second crisis in Morocco. Early in 1911 the Sultan, the ruler of Morocco, asked the French for help in crushing a revolt led by rebel tribesmen. Germany was certain that this would be followed by a French takeover. As soon as the French occupied Fez, in Morocco, the Kaiser sent a gunboat, *Panther*, to the Moroccan port of Agadir.

SOURCE D

L. Seaman, a British historian, writing in 1955

The dispatch of the Panther showed German policy. They did not really want trading rights in Morocco or compensation from the French in Central Africa. They simply wanted everyone to go on being frightened of them.

As in 1905, the Kaiser was trying to break the Entente Cordiale. He was also seeking compensation from France in the form of the whole of the French Congo in Central Africa.

Once again Germany's action misfired. Britain was even more determined to support France and oppose Germany:

- The British believed that Germany was trying to set up a naval base in Morocco.
- It seemed to be another attempt by the Kaiser to break up the Entente.

The British Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, someone who was known to be against war, warned Germany that Britain would fight rather than see France pushed around in this way. Britain's fleet was even prepared for war. In the end, Germany backed down rather than risk war.

Another crisis had brought the powers to the brink of war and increased tension:

• The Agadir crisis:

- Drew Britain and France closer together. France was again very pleased to have Britain's support against Germany.
- Again humiliated the Kaiser who blamed the British. He was unlikely to back down again.

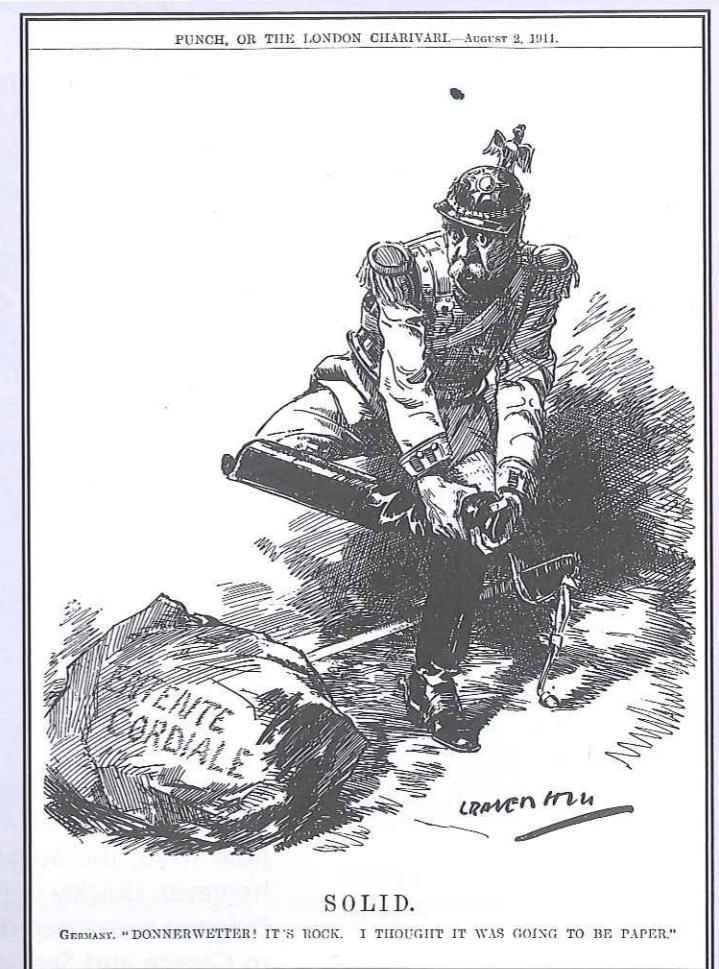
SOURCE C

The German Chancellor, Bulow, in 1908

Our position would, indeed, be dangerous if Austria lost confidence in us and turned away. In the present situation we must be careful to keep Austria as a 'true partner'.

SOURCE E

A British cartoon on the Agadir Crisis from *Punch*, 2 August 1911



SOURCE F

Von Moltke, the German Chief of Army Staff, speaking in 1911

I am thoroughly fed up with this wretched Morocco affair. If once again we crawl out of this affair with our tail between our legs I despair of the future of the German Empire. In that case I shall quit.

The Balkan Wars, 1912-13



Ever since the Bosnian disaster of 1908-9 (see p. 16) Russia had tried to get the Balkan states to form an alliance. In this way Russia hoped to block an Austrian takeover of the Balkans. In 1912 Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro formed a group called the Balkan League. In October the armies of this League attacked the Turks to drive them out of the small area they still controlled. They were very successful and drove Turkey out of Europe.

This alarmed Austria, particularly because Serbia had emerged as the strongest Balkan state. The Austrian generals now wanted a quick war to crush Serbia once and for all. Fearing this could well trigger off a major European war, the Great Powers stepped in and forced a peace settlement on the victorious Balkan states. At the peace conference of 1913:

- Serbia gained much territory because the Turkish lands were shared out among the Balkan League.
- The Austrians, however, managed to defeat Serbia's plans to gain a coastline by having a new country, Albania, placed between Serbia and the Adriatic Sea.

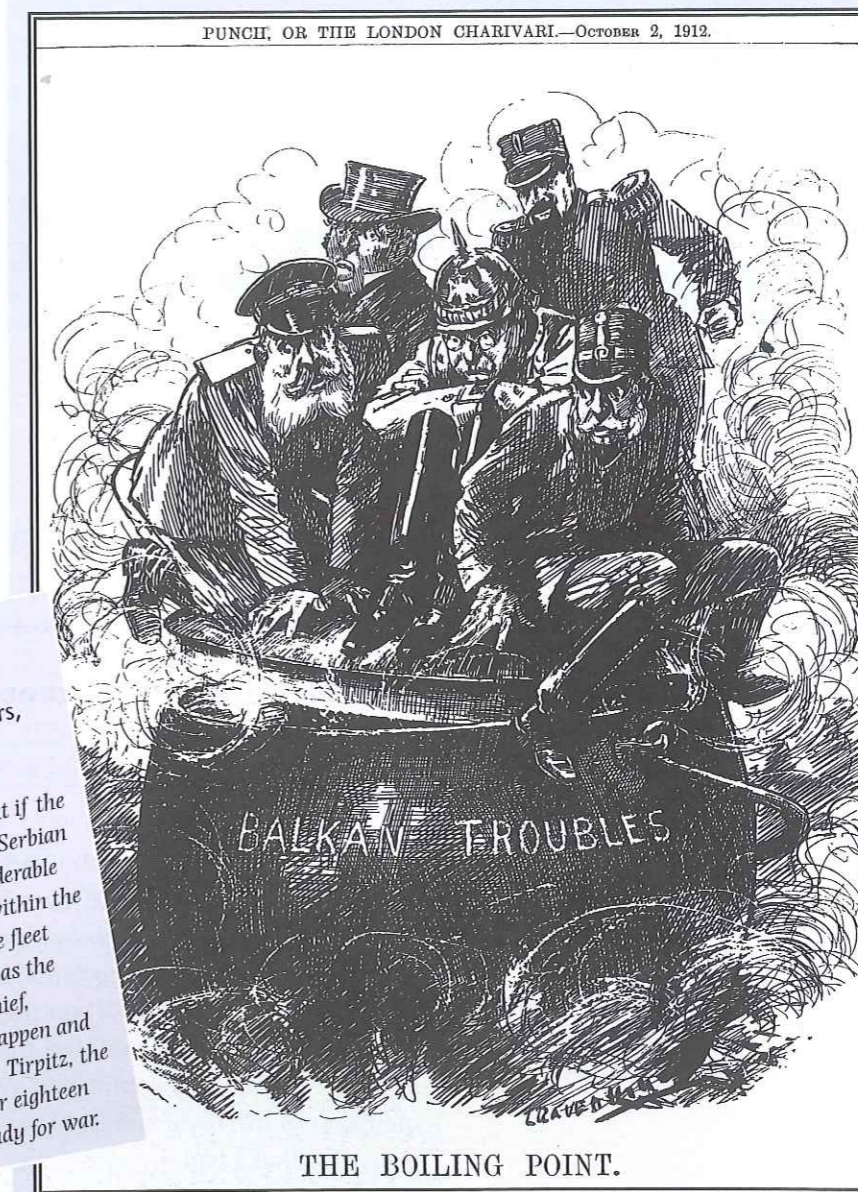
Within a month the Balkan League had fallen out and there was a second Balkan war. Bulgaria quarrelled with Serbia and Greece. In June 1913, the Bulgarians attacked their former allies. They were, however, quickly defeated. In the peace settlement that followed, Bulgaria surrendered nearly all the lands it had won in the first war to Greece and Serbia. Serbia gained even more land.

The Balkan Wars brought war one step nearer because:

- Serbia became almost twice as large. It was now even more determined to unite with the Serbs in the Austrian Empire.
- Serbia was now a much greater threat to Austria. Austria, in turn, was more determined than ever to crush the Serbs. On the other hand, Russia was more determined than ever to support this bigger Slav state.
- The Germans had restrained Austria during this period but knew, in another crisis, they would have to support Austrian action.
- Bulgaria was determined to gain revenge on Serbia and Greece.

SOURCE G

A British cartoon published in *Punch* magazine during the Balkan crisis, October 1912. The figures in the pot represent the five Great Powers.



SOURCE H

Secret meeting between the Kaiser and his top commanders, December 1912

The German Kaiser predicted that if the Austrians did not face up to the Serbian menace, they would have considerable trouble from the Slav peoples within the Austro-Hungarian empire. The fleet must now look upon England as the enemy. Moltke, the Army Chief, believed war was bound to happen and said 'The sooner, the better'. Tirpitz, the Navy Chief, wanted another eighteen months to get the navy ready for war.

THE BOILING POINT.