

they had belatedly formulated. It was safer to keep quiet about them, however, since they were often muddled and incompatible with the aspirations of allies. This chapter explores the declared and secret aims of the major combatant countries between 1914 and 1917. It also examines the means with which they hoped to achieve them, comparing the two sides and considering the extent to which the result of the war was determined by their initial resources.

	Germany	Austria/ Hungary	Turkey	Britain	France	Russia	Japan	Italy	USA
Population (mill)	65	52	21	45	39	171	55	37	98
Naval/military personnel (peace time strength) (thous)	891	444	240	532	910	1352	306	345	164
Army after mobilisation (mill)	4.5	3	2	1 (inc. Empire)	4	5.9		1.25 (1915)	
Warship tonnage (thous)	1305	372		2714	900	679	700	498	985
Aircraft	200	84		95	200	360		115	
Defence Expenditure (£ mill)	117.8	42.4		75.7	65.9	101.8		39.6	
Iron/steel production (mill tons)	17.6	2.6		7.7	4.6	4.8	0.25	0.93	31.8
Wheat production (thous tons)	4343	4240		1772	7690	68864		4493	
% of world's manufacturing output	14.8	4.4		13.6	6.1	8.2		2.4	32

Table: The Resources of the Major Powers at the Start of War¹

2 The Central Powers

KEY ISSUE How adequate were the resources of the Central Powers for the achievement of their ambitions?

a) Germany

With its substantial, well-trained army, large body of trained reservists,

powerful battle fleet, plentiful artillery and developing air power, Germany embarked on the war with confidence and did not think it necessary to plan for the use of colonial troops. Its striking military assets were backed up by a productive agriculture, manufacturing industries second only to those of the USA, a good communications system and a fast-growing population. All this made Germany a formidable enemy. Even in this efficient state, however, 'there were no plans whatsoever' for a protracted war.² It was not clear how Germany's undemocratic and bureaucratic government would be able to supply its troops, feed the population and pay the bills over a long period. Nor was it certain that the euphoric patriotism of 1914 would continue to mask the political, religious and regional divisions which 43 years of Imperial Germany's existence had failed to remove. German hopes were therefore placed on the quick victory which the Schlieffen Plan seemed to promise (see page 10).

There was evidently much support in 1914 for the ambitious war aims first formulated during the autumn in Bethmann Hollweg's controversial 'September Programme' and in subsequent memoranda from other political and military leaders. These demanded the formation of a central European customs and economic union led by Germany and Austria-Hungary, to be known as *Mitteluropa*. This would involve the annexation of Luxembourg and possibly some of France, the control of Belgium and the acquisition of its Channel ports, and the release from Russian rule of the Baltic states and Poland, which would then come under German 'influence'. An equivalent scheme would create hegemony in Africa - *Mittelafrika*. Military leaders tended to make larger claims than the Chancellor but all apparently agreed that Germany should expand its overseas empire and dominate Europe. Since public discussion of war aims was soon forbidden, it is difficult to judge how far the German people supported these grandiose ambitions. There was a right-wing War Aims Movement which wanted still more, while many socialists favoured more restraint. Anyway, the aims remained in place, stiffening Allied resistance to 'German militarism' and thus helping to prolong the war.

b) The Austro-Hungarian Empire

In spite of its long history and impressive size, the Empire was the weaker partner in its alliance with Germany. It was not therefore in a position to object to German war aims, even though some of them conflicted with imperial interests; the proposed 'liberation' of Russian Poland, for instance, might cause unrest among Austria's eight million Polish subjects. The Empire's other ethnic groups also gave cause for concern: with Slavs (who made up 46 per cent of the population), Czechs, Romanians and Italians asserting their national rights it was not even certain that the Imperial army (where orders

shield. Within three years, the addition of Italy turned the Dual Alliance into the Triple Alliance, with each state pledging military support in the event that either of the other two became embroiled in a war against two or more opponents. To this Bismarck added the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887. The cumulative effect of these agreements was, as Bismarck had intended, to isolate France from the rest of Europe, something French diplomats were going to have to work hard to undo.

This work was made easier when Bismarck refused to approve German loans to Russia in 1887 and the post-Bismarckian foreign office elected not to renew the Reinsurance Treaty in 1890. Now

Activity:

Industry, war and power

Chart 3: Per capita levels of industrialization, 1880–1938 (Relative to GB in 1900)

	1880	1900	1913	1928	1938	
1 Great Britain	87	[100]	115	122	157	2
2 United States	38	69	126	182	167	1
3 France	28	39	59	82	73	4
4 Germany	25	52	85	128	144	3
5 Italy	12	17	26	44	61	5
6 Austria	15	23	32	-	-	
7 Russia	10	15	20	20	38	7
8 Japan	9	12	20	30	51	6

Chart 4: Iron and steel production of the powers, 1890–1938 (millions of tons; pig-iron production for 1890, steel thereafter)

	1890	1900	1910	1913	1920	1930	1938
United States	9.3	10.3	26.5	31.8	42.3	41.3	28.8
Great Britain	8.0	5.0	6.5	7.7	9.2	7.4	10.5
Germany	4.1	6.3	13.6	17.6	7.6	11.3	23.2
France	1.9	1.5	3.4	4.6	2.7	9.4	6.1
Austria-Hungary	0.97	1.1	2.1	2.6	-	-	-
Russia	0.95	2.2	3.5	4.8	0.06	5.7	18.0
Japan	0.02	-	0.16	0.25	0.84	2.3	7.0
Italy	0.01	0.00	0.73	0.93	0.73	1.7	2.3

Chart 5: Total industrial potential of the powers, 1880–1938 (Relative to GB in 1900)

	1880	1900	1913	1928	1938
Great Britain	73.3	[100]	127.2	135	181
United States	46.9	127.8	298.1	533	528
Germany	27.4	71.2	137.7	158	214
France	25.1	36.8	57.3	82	74
Russia	24.5	47.5	76.6	72	152
Austria-Hungary	14	25.6	40.7	-	-
Italy	8.1	13.6	22.5	37	46
Japan	7.6	13	25.1	45	88

Chart 6: Energy consumption of the powers, 1890–1938 (in millions of metric tons of coal equivalent)

	1890	1900	1910	1913	1920	1930	1938
United States	147	248	483	541	694	762	697
Great Britain	145	171	185	195	212	184	196
Germany	71	112	158	187	159	177	228
France	36	47.9	55	62.5	65	97.5	84
Austria-Hungary	19.7	29	40	49.4	-	-	-
Russia	10.9	30	41	54	14.3	65	177
Japan	4.6	4.6	15.4	23	34	55.8	96.5
Italy	4.5	5	9.6	11	14.3	24	27.8

Power ranking

- Using the information in the above charts, rank the countries according to how powerful they were in 1914. What criteria are you using? What is your definition of power in this context? What happens to your ranking if you take into consideration the information in charts 1 and 2 on pp. 206–7?
- What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between the information and a country's ability to conduct a war?
- Compare and contrast each country's pre-war and post-war figures. What conclusions can we draw from the comparison? How did this affect your "power ranking?"

Source: Kennedy, Paul. 1988. *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London, UK: Fontana Press.

Under what circumstances could a war be considered total war by one of the combatants, but not other combatants in the same war? Can you give an example?



Neo-mercantilism An economic doctrine that emphasizes the need to decrease imports by moving towards self-sufficiency. This move to self-sufficiency often requires an increase in colonial holdings to supply raw materials and provide markets for finished goods.

in making a general European war more likely. Among these consequences is the fact that the increase was not uniform among the powers. For example, while iron and steel production had increased in the United States by approximately 242 per cent between 1890 and 1913, it had actually decreased in the United Kingdom. More to the point for the British, Germany's steel production had increased by approximately 329 per cent in the same period. In absolute terms, in 1913, France was woefully behind all the powers except Austria-Hungary. These disparities helped create competitive economic tension between the powers, which in turn increased diplomatic and political tension.

In order to feed these massive industrial machines, the powers needed access to resources, which in turn created a **neo-mercantilist** mindset complemented by the drive for colonies in the second half of the 19th century. This thirst had been momentarily slaked by the "scramble for Africa" (see page 210), but by 1900 that well had gone dry. The European powers had claimed all of Africa, with a few small exceptions. Sources of raw materials, not to mention markets, had either to be wrung from existing holdings or wrestled, forcibly or diplomatically, from another power.

Not only had industrial output increased, so had trade. By 1913 the total of German exports was equal to that of the United Kingdom and in the lucrative American market the Germans significantly outsold the British. To protect and to increase this trade, the Germans needed a modern, powerful navy. It did not take long for the powers to harness their huge industrial potential once the war began. By 1914 France was producing 200 000 artillery shells a day. Even the backward Russian factory system was manufacturing 4.5 million artillery shells in 1916, a tenfold increase on the previous year. The connection between economic rivalry and military rivalry was evident.

The alliance system

If these great, interlocking alliances caused large-scale wars, the NATO and Warsaw Pact would have brought the Cold War to a disastrous end long before the communists states of Eastern Europe were dissolved at the end of the 1980s. Similar to the Cold War, Europe in 1914 was split into two rival, albeit smaller, alliances. These two alliances were

connected by a secondary set of treaties, agreements and alliances to countries around the globe. After Bismarck had finished forging the German Empire by means of "blood and iron" in 1871, he sought to preserve it by carefully shielding her from war. His method was to create an intricate set of alliances as part of Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, established in 1879, was a major part of that

Chart 2. Warship tonnage of the powers, 1880-1914

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1914
Britain	650 000	679	1 065 000	2 174 000	2 714 000
France	271 000	319 000	499 000	725 000	900 000
Russia	200 000	180 000	383 000	401 000	679 000
United States	169 000	240 000	333 000	824 000	985 000
Italy	100 000	242 000	245 000	327 000	498 000
Germany	88 000	190 000	285 000	964 000	1 305 000
Austria-Hungary	60 000	66 000	87 000	210 000	372 000
Japan	15 000	41 000	187 000	496 000	700 000

Source: Kennedy, Paul. 1988. *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London, UK: Fontana Press, p. 261.

Krupp and Skoda were producing artillery that could hurl a one-ton explosive projectile up to 10 miles (16 km). Machine guns could theoretically fire 400 to 600 rounds per minute. In practice, each machine gun was the equivalent of 80 rifles.

The Anglo-German naval race was perhaps one of the starkest illustrations of militarism. When the British Royal Navy launched the revolutionary HMS *Dreadnought* in December 1906, it instantly made every battleship then afloat, including British ships, obsolete. If a country was to have a modern navy after 1906, it had to spend money on Dreadnoughts. When this was coupled with Germany's desire for a navy to rival the Royal Navy, as expressed in the Second Naval Law of 1900, it created an arms race that would see the size of these navies increase by a combined 197 per cent between 1900 and 1914.

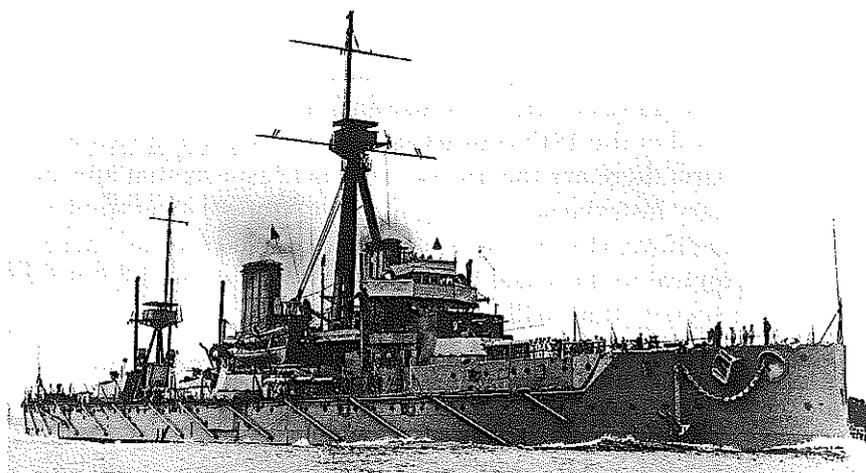
Large or even growing militaries do not cause wars. They do, however engender suspicion and fear in rival states. When this suspicion is coupled with economic rivalry, imperialism and nationalism, it makes war more likely. Further, it makes a large, massively destructive war more likely.

Industrialization

Some historians have contended that by 1900 economic power equated to military power. Others contend that, while there is a strong relationship between these two concepts, the matter of what constituted a Great Power was more complex. What is not generally disputed is the massive increase in industrial output in the second half of the 19th century. The revolution in production that had taken root in England a century before had, by 1870, spread to the rest of Europe and across the Atlantic.

By all measures, Europe was far more industrialized in 1914 than it had been in 1880; this industrialization would help determine the nature of the war to come as the first total war of the 20th century.

Of course, increasing industrial output does not cause war any more than large armies do. There are, however, certain consequences of this increase in manufacturing that played a role



The HMS *Dreadnought* was revolutionary in all aspects: design, speed, armament, materials and production methods. How could one ship change the nature of naval warfare so completely? How might the production of HMS *Dreadnought* have affected the other background causes of the First World War?

Chart 1: Military and naval personnel, 1880–1914

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1914
Russia	791 000	677 000	1 162 000	1 285 000	1 352 000
France	543 000	542 000	715 000	769 000	910 000
Germany	426 000	504 000	524 000	694 000	891 000
Britain	367 000	420 000	624 000	571 000	532 000
Austria-Hungary	246 000	346 000	385 000	425 000	444 000
Italy	216 000	284 000	255 000	322 000	345 000
Japan	71 000	84 000	234 000	271 000	306 000
United States	34 000	39 000	96 000	127 000	164 000

Source: Kennedy, Paul. 1988. *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London, UK. Fontana Press. p. 261