1. THE ALLIANCE SYSTEM AND INTERNATIONAL RIVALRY, 1905–14

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the reasons why the Triple Entente was formed
- Understand the significance of imperial and economic rivalry in creating tension between Britain and Germany
- Understand the ways in which an arms race increased tension between the two alliance systems.

In the years after 1905, a mixture of suspicion and fear, ambition and rivalry created enormous tension in Europe. The largest and strongest countries had made alliances with each other so that Europe was divided into two powerful groups. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy were in one group; Britain, France and Russia in the other. Rivalry between Britain and Germany over acquiring colonies, and ambitions to become economically the more powerful, increased this division. Nationalism, too, contributed to each group's desire to control international matters. Britain and Germany began strengthening their armies and developing their navies. By 1914, Europe was a dangerous place.

1.1 THE ALLIANCE SYSTEM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand why there was tension in Europe in 1905
- Understand the reasons why the Triple Entente was formed
- Understand how the alliance system could be seen by some as a system that kept the peace and by others as making war more likely.

At the beginning of the 20th century there were six 'Great Powers' in Europe. These were Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, Russia and Great Britain. Although these countries had different aims and ambitions, they had a number of things in common. For example, they all wanted to make sure they were safe from attack and that they had the best opportunity to increase their prosperity by trading in as many overseas markets as possible.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

In trying to achieve security from attack and increase their opportunities for trade, the Great Powers often found themselves in competition with each other, which had sometimes led to war. By the end of the 19th century they had begun to protect themselves from their rivals by joining together in a system of **alliances**. By 1905, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy had formed the Triple Alliance, Russia and France were **allied** in the Franco-Russian Alliance and Britain and France had a friendly agreement called the Entente Cordiale. These alliances reflected which countries considered themselves to have similar aims and who they considered to be their greatest rivals. The tensions between the rival powers that existed in 1905 gradually deepened, until war broke out in 1914.

WHY WAS THERE TENSION IN EUROPE IN 1905?

This topic begins in 1905 and you won't be expected to answer questions in the exam on events before then. But there are a few things you do need to know about to help you understand the tensions existing in 1905. One of those is the reasons why some countries were rivals with others.

GERMANY

Germany was a new country, formed following **unification** of the German states in 1871, after the Germans had defeated France in the Franco-Prussian war. As part of the **peace treaty** after the war, Germany took Alsace-Lorraine from France. This was an important industrial area. German politicians were afraid that the French might attack Germany to get Alsace-Lorraine back. So Germany and France were rivals.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Austria-Hungary was a large **empire** in central Europe. It contained people of many different nationalities, some of whom wanted independence. Serbia was already an independent country and there were Serbs living in Austria-Hungary who wanted to join with Serbia. The main concern of the Austrian emperor was to keep the empire together, but Russia supported the Serbs and so Austria-Hungary and Russia were rivals.

▶ **Figure 1.1** Europe in 1905

The tsar, Nicholas II, ruled over the largest, and one of the poorest, countries in the world. It was an empire of many different peoples who spoke different languages. Much of the land was not farmed because it was too cold. There was little industry. For a large part of each year, Russian ports could not operate because the sea was frozen.

Unified in 1871, Kaiser Wilhelm II ruled over a country of 68 million people. Since 1871, Germany had industrialised rapidly and was a highly successful industrial and technological country, with most people living in towns. The German Kaiser and the British King George V were cousins.

The head of state was King Edward VII and the prime minister was Arthur Balfour. Britain had been the first country in the world to **industrialise**, and well over half of the population of 46 million people lived in towns. Industry prospered and trade flourished.

The president of France, Emile Loubet, governed a country the size of Germany, containing 40 million people. The birth rate had fallen and the population was ageing. Although there was industry in the north-east, France was largely a rural country.

Triple Alliance countries
Triple Entente countries

NORWAY
SWEDEN
DENMARK
NETHERLANDS
GREAT BRITAIN
BELGIUM
LUX.
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
GERMAN EMPIRE
RUSSIA
AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
ROMANIA
SERBIA
BULGARIA
BALKANS
ITALY
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA
GREECE
TURKEY

N
0   600
km

Italy was unified in 1871, although a large number of Italians remained in Austria-Hungary after unification. Italy was a constitutional monarchy, and the king, Victor Emmanuel III, ruled over 35 million people. Although mainly an agricultural country, there was considerable industry in the northern areas.

The emperor, Franz-Joseph, ruled over 50 million people in a country with little heavy industry. His people were divided into at least 11 different nationalities, including Magyars, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats and Slavs. Each had its own language and way of life.

ITALY

Italy was another new country, which had been formed in 1861. It was not a strong industrial or military power, and so it wanted to ally with other countries to make itself more powerful. When Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance in 1882, it became part of an anti-France, anti-Russia alliance.

FRANCE

France's main concern in 1905 was to make sure that it would never again be attacked by Germany and to get Alsace-Lorraine back. France allied with Russia in 1892 because it wanted support against Germany.
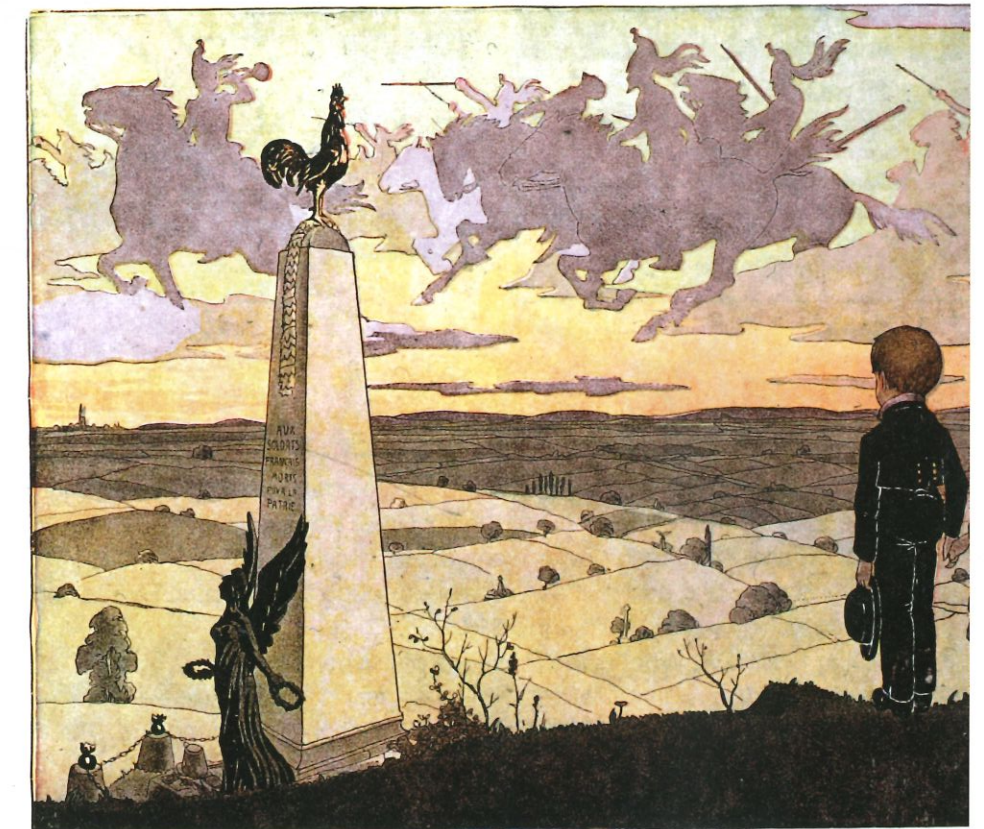
RUSSIA

Russia was the largest of the six powers, but the least developed. Russia's main concerns were that Germany would expand into Russian territory in central Europe and that Austria-Hungary would take measures against **Slavs** in Austria-Hungary (Russians and Serbians were both Slav peoples).

GREAT BRITAIN

During the 19th century, Britain had tried not to get involved in European politics. This policy was known as '**splendid isolation**'. British had a powerful navy and overseas empire and didn't see a need to form alliances with European countries. But by the beginning of the 20th century, the German Kaiser had shown that he wanted Germany to have an empire and a strong navy, which was a direct threat to the British Empire and its naval dominance. So in 1904 Britain joined with France in the Entente Cordiale.

SOURCE A

A French cartoon published in 1913. It shows a French boy looking down on the lost regions of Alsace-Lorraine. Above him in the skies gallop the ghosts of French cavalrymen killed in the Franco-Prussian war, 1870–71.

So, even as early as 1905, Europe was beginning to divide into two separate groups whose rivalry would lead to war in 1914. Why did the tensions that existed in 1905 worsen to the point that the Great Powers had to go to war?

In 1907 Russia joined the **entente**, making it a Triple Entente. There was no formal agreement to go to help each other if one of them was attacked. However, it was agreed that they had a **moral obligation** to support each other.
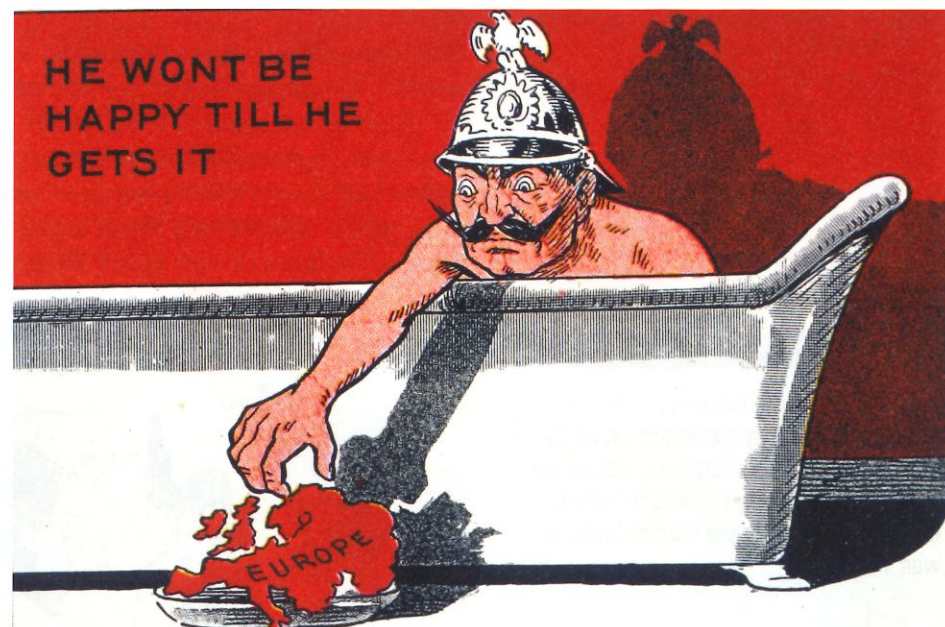
EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

COUSINS BECOME ENEMIES
King George V of Great Britain and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany were cousins. They had the same grandmother, the British Queen Victoria. The King's father, Edward, and the Kaiser's mother, Victoria, were brother and sister.

SOURCE B

From *The Times*, a British newspaper, April 1914.

The division of the Great Powers into two well-balanced groups is a two-fold check upon unreasonable ambitions or a sudden outbreak of race hatred. All monarchs and statesmen – and all nations – know that a war of group against group would be an enormous disaster. They are no longer answerable only to themselves.

SOURCE C

A British cartoon of Kaiser Wilhelm II in his bath. He is reaching for a piece of soap shaped like Europe. The cartoon was printed on a postcard in 1914.

HE WONT BE HAPPY TILL HE GETS IT

EUROPE

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

KAISER WILHELM II
Despite being born with a withered left arm, Wilhelm became an excellent horseman. He could swim, hunt, shoot and fence. He loved the army and enjoyed dressing up in military uniforms.

ACTIVITY

1 Draw a table with three columns. Head the columns, starting from the left, 'Great Powers', 'Fear' and 'Ambition'. In the 'Great Powers' column, list the six Great Powers. In the other two columns, write what each power was afraid of, and what each power wanted.
2 Keep the table and add to it as you work through this chapter. By the end of the chapter, you will have a very good idea why war broke out in 1914.
3 Look at Source A. What is the message of the cartoon?
4 Look at Sources A and C. Work with a partner.
  a One of you should make a list of the points each artist is making. The other should look at the cartoons from the German point of view.
  b List the points that a German person could find threatening.
  c Share your ideas with the rest of your class.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION   Describe **two** features of the alliance system in 1905.   **(6 marks)**

A01

> **HINT**
> You need to identify two features of the alliance system – so don't just say who is on each side!

1.2 EMPIRES AND ECONOMICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

■ Understand why colonial rivalry led to strained relations among the European powers
■ Understand how economic rivalries created international tensions
■ Understand the relative strengths of the Great Powers in 1914.

The desire to acquire **colonies**, mainly shown by Germany, disturbed Britain and France, which already had large overseas colonial empires. People were generally very proud of their empires and expressed this in various **patriotic** ways that added to the growth of tension in Europe. Colonies provided **raw materials** and were markets for goods produced by the European powers that governed them. In this way the colonies were linked to the strength of different European countries. The people of Britain and France put pressure on their governments if they felt these empires were under threat.

Balkans

Manchuria

N

0   2000
km

■ British

■ French

■ German
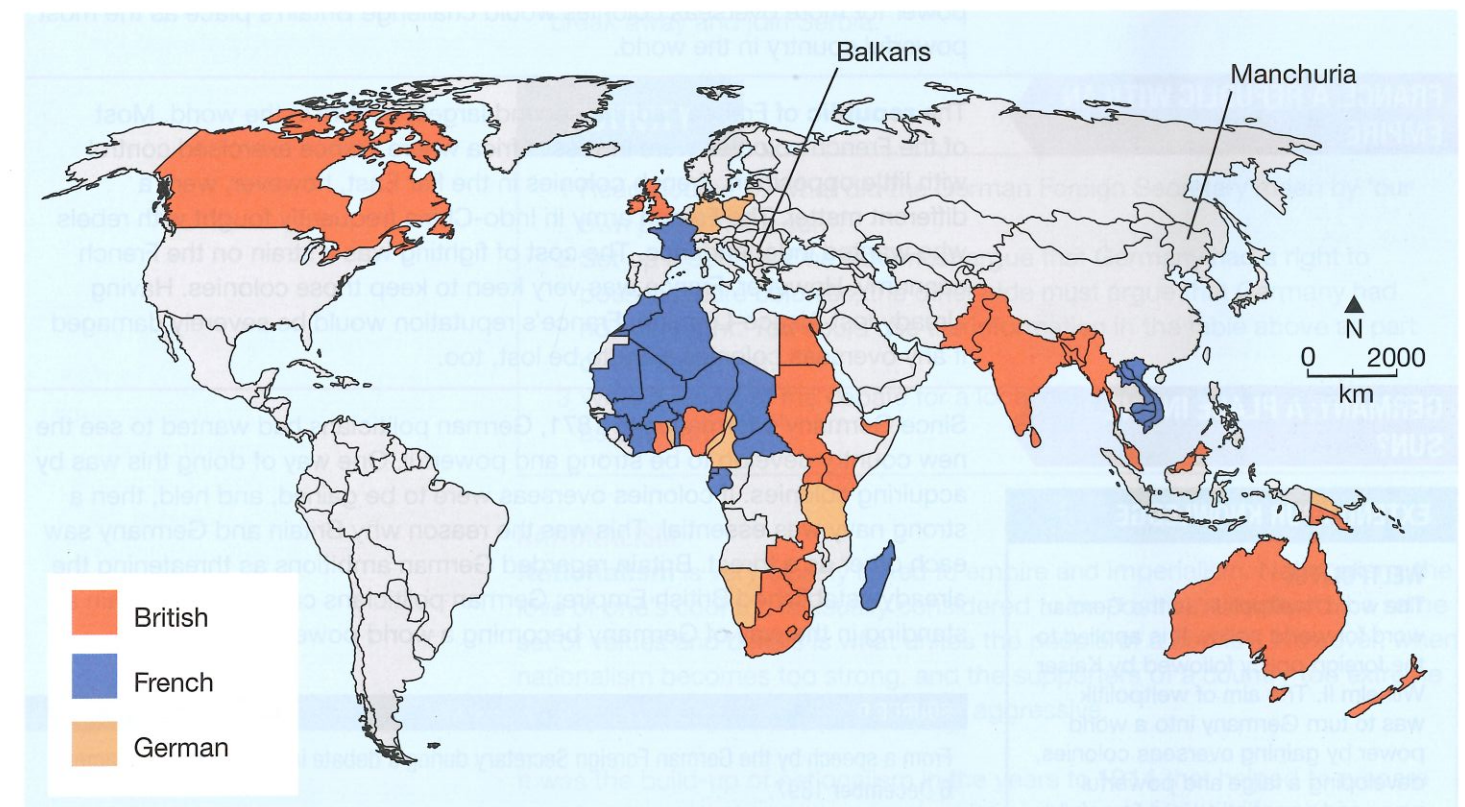
▲ Figure 1.2 The European powers and their overseas colonies in 1914

IMPERIAL RIVALRY

KEY TERM

imperial relating to an empire

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA
The Scramble for Africa refers to the rush by European powers to gain colonies in Africa. In 1870, 10 per cent of Africa was under European control. By 1914, this had risen to 90 per cent.

The European powers were all involved in trying to win, or supporting, colonies. This led to **imperial** rivalry between the Great Powers to see who could get the largest empire. Some of the Great Powers, like Russia and Austria-Hungary, were hoping to expand on **mainland Europe**. Others, like Great Britain, France and Germany, **focused** on countries outside Europe. The European powers believed that they had the right to run other countries. They did this usually by invading and simply taking over, or by being given a country as part of a treaty arrangement.

GREAT BRITAIN: AN OVERSEAS EMPIRE

Great Britain is a small island country off the coast of Europe. In 1905, it was the most powerful country in the world. This was partly because of its vast overseas empire (see Figure 1.2). The British Empire took up nearly a quarter of the world's land surface area and a quarter of the world's population lived in the British Empire under its control. It was important that Britain kept in close contact with its colonies. This was partly because of the need to control and to manage them, and partly because of the need to trade with them. India, for example, supplied raw cotton to Britain, and Britain exported cotton cloth to India. In the days before air travel, this contact was maintained by sea. **Merchant ships** sailed the sea routes to the British colonies and the Royal Navy kept the sea routes open and clear of enemy shipping. Any challenge to the navy would endanger the security of the empire. Any push by a European power for more overseas colonies would challenge Britain's place as the most powerful country in the world.

FRANCE: A REPUBLIC WITH AN EMPIRE

The **republic** of France had the second largest empire in the world. Most of the French colonies were in West Africa where France exercised control with little opposition. French colonies in the Far East, however, were a different matter. The French army in Indo-China frequently fought with rebels who wanted independence. The cost of fighting was a strain on the French economy. However, France was very keen to keep those colonies. Having already lost Alsace-Lorraine, France's reputation would be severely damaged if any overseas colonies were to be lost, too.

GERMANY: A PLACE IN THE SUN?

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

WELTPOLITIK
The word 'weltpolitik' is the German word for world policy. It is applied to the foreign policy followed by Kaiser Wilhelm II. The aim of weltpolitik was to turn Germany into a world power by gaining overseas colonies, developing a large and powerful navy, and negotiating in a forceful way in international affairs.

Since Germany's formation in 1871, German politicians had wanted to see the new country develop to be strong and powerful. One way of doing this was by acquiring colonies. If colonies overseas were to be gained, and held, then a strong navy was essential. This was the reason why Britain and Germany saw each other as a threat. Britain regarded German ambitions as threatening the already established British Empire; German politicians came to see Britain as standing in the way of Germany becoming a world power.

SOURCE D

From a speech by the German Foreign Secretary during a debate in the German parliament, 6 December 1897.

We wish to throw no one into the shade, but we demand our own place in the sun.

THE EUROPEAN POWERS AND THEIR OVERSEAS COLONIES IN 1914

	▼ GREAT BRITAIN	▼ FRANCE	▼ RUSSIA	▼ GERMANY	▼ AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Population	40.8 million	39.6 million	159 million	65 million	50 million
Population of colonies	390 million	58 million	0	15 million	0
Number of colonies	56	29	0	10	0
Size of colonies	27 million sq km	11 million sq km	0	2.5 million sq km	0

RUSSIA AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: LAND-BASED EMPIRES?

KEY TERM

Balkans a large area in south-east Europe that includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosova, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey

Neither Russia nor Austria-Hungary had overseas empires, nor did they want them. Russia wanted to expand within Europe, and Austria-Hungary wanted to control the different nationalities within its borders and so become strong.

■ Russia (see Figure 1.1) stretched from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Bering Strait in the east. Russia wanted to expand south-east into Manchuria in order to have ice-free ports. Russia also wanted to expand into the **Balkans** so that Russian ships would have access to the Mediterranean Sea and, by sailing through the Strait of Gibraltar, to the Atlantic Ocean.

■ Austria-Hungary (see Figure 1.1) was a union of two separate countries: Austria and Hungary. Franz-Joseph ruled an empire containing 11 different nationalities. The government was struggling to hold them together in one empire. For example, a move to force all Czechs to use German – the language of Austria – in schools and workplaces led to **riots**. Austria-Hungary was afraid, too, that the Serbs within its borders might want to break away and join Serbia.

ACTIVITY

1 Read Source D. What did the German Foreign Secretary mean by 'our own place in the sun'?
2 Set up a debate. One side must argue that Germany had a right to possess more colonies; the other side must argue that Germany had no such right. You could use the information in the table above as part of the argument.
3 Write a report of the debate for a local newspaper. Make it as exciting as you can.

NATIONALISM

Nationalism is very closely linked to empire and imperialism. Nationalism, the love of one's country, is usually considered to be positive. Loyalty to the same set of values and beliefs is what unites the people of a country. However, when nationalism becomes too strong, and the supporters of a country too extreme in their support, nationalism becomes aggressive.

It was the build-up of nationalism in the years to 1914 that helped to prepare people for war and inspired young men to join up and fight.

SOURCE E

This is the chorus from a British patriotic song, written in 1902.

Land of hope and glory, mother of the free,
How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?
Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set.
God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.
God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.

SOURCE F

This is a traditional German patriotic song, first used at official ceremonies after 1890. It later became the German national anthem.

Germany, Germany above all else,
Above all else in the world,
When, for protection and defence,
It always stands brotherly together.
From the Meuse to the Memel,
From the Adige to the Belt,
Germany, Germany above all else,
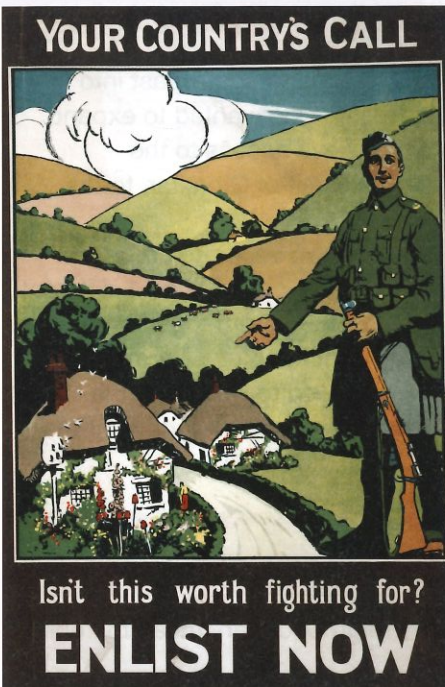Above all else in the world!

SOURCE G

A British First World War recruitment poster.

YOUR COUNTRY'S CALL

Isn't this worth fighting for?
ENLIST NOW

ACTIVITY

Read Sources E and F.
1 Use a dictionary to look up words you don't know. How can you tell that these are patriotic songs?
2 Pick out the line in each song that is the most patriotic.
 a Discuss with a partner the similarities and differences between the songs.
 b Which song appeals more strongly to nationalist feelings?
3 Look at Source G. Not many people lived in villages like the one in the poster. Why would the British government use this image?

ECONOMIC RIVALRY

The wealth of a country is very important when there are international disagreements. If a country is wealthy, it has money to build an army or navy to protect itself. A country becomes wealthy through economic activity, such as buying and selling goods. If a country is rich in raw materials and has efficient industry and markets to sell its goods to, it will become wealthy. At the beginning of the 20th century there was increasing rivalry between the European powers to have the major share of economic activity in Europe. This increased tension between the Great Powers.

GREAT BRITAIN V GERMANY

Britain was the first country in the world to industrialise. British-manufactured goods flooded the markets in Europe and the British Empire. Britain took many different raw materials from its empire. The British economy became strong, and in the 19th century Britain was the richest country in Europe. However, after unification, Germany began to industrialise very quickly. German manufacturers modernised **machinery** that had been invented in Britain and

SOURCE H

An advertisement for electric light, published by a British company in about 1900.
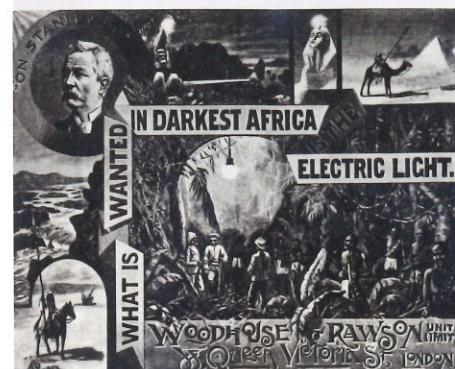
made manufacturing processes more efficient. By 1890, German manufactured goods were competing with British ones in all the markets that had previously been dominated by Britain. German merchant ships competed with British merchant ships to carry goods around the world. By 1914, Germany was producing more iron, steel, coal – and even cars – than Britain. Britain's economic lead had gone. Germany had taken over from Great Britain as the strongest power, economically.

FRANCE V GERMANY

When France lost Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, it had to import coal from other countries. This seriously weakened the French economy because of the cost involved. France began to explore the possibilities of mining minerals in Morocco. These could be used in agriculture and industry but would also bring France into competition with Germany. This was because Germany was afraid that France was trying to turn Morocco into a French colony.

RUSSIA V GERMANY AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Germany and Austria-Hungary had well-established commercial markets in the Balkans. In 1888, Russia had begun to build a railway in the area. Germany and Austria-Hungary regarded this as a threat because a railway would allow Russian-produced goods to be transported to the area more easily. Even though Russia had not yet fully industrialised and had little by way of manufactured goods to export, Germany and Austria-Hungary were worried about what might happen in the future.

THE EUROPEAN POWERS AND THEIR ECONOMIES IN 1914

	▼ GREAT BRITAIN	▼ FRANCE	▼ RUSSIA	▼ GERMANY	▼ AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Coal produced	292 million tonnes	40 million tonnes	36.2 million tonnes	277 million tonnes	47 million tonnes
Steel produced	11 million tonnes	4.6 million tonnes	3.6 million tonnes	14 million tonnes	5 million tonnes

ACTIVITY

1 Look at Source H. How is the British company using the British colonies in Africa to advertise electric light, the product they are selling?
2 Using the information in the tables on page 9 and on this page, create a histogram (bar chart) that summarises the information for each country.
 a Which European power, using just the information on your histogram, is the strongest? Why?
 b Which European power, using just the information on your histogram, is the weakest? Why?
3 Draw two circles. Label one 'Colonies' and the other 'European powers'.
 a Draw links between them that show how, economically, they are useful to each other.
 b In your own words, explain how economic strength and colonies are linked.
4 You have now finished this section. Go back to the grid you started in answer to question 1 at the end of Section 1.1. Now add to it, using the information in this section.

1.3 MILITARY RIVALRY: PLANNING FOR WAR?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the impact of Anglo-German naval rivalry on increasing tension in Europe
- Understand the significance of planning for a war on land
- Understand the reasons why military rivalry took Europe to the edge of war.

1905 Schlieffen Plan made by Germany aims to avoid land war on two **fronts**

1906 British HMS *Dreadnought* battleship launched
The British Expeditionary Force is set up

1907 Hague Conference concentrates on rules for naval **warfare**

1912 Haldane mission to Berlin

1913 Plan 17 sets out France's war plans on land

KEY TERM

front the area where fighting happens in a war

Tensions increased in Europe over military matters. Germany grew ever more afraid of being surrounded by hostile countries. British politicians came to believe that Germany was aiming at European, and possibly world, domination. There was fear and suspicion on both sides, especially between Germany and Britain. Britain wanted to remain the most powerful country, but Germany was pressing for change.

THE NAVAL RACE

Britain relied on its massive navy to keep the sea routes open to the furthest parts of its empire, and to protect its economic interests and the people there. The navy was essential, too, to protect Britain, an island nation, against any European **aggression**. However, there were people in Germany, including the Kaiser, who believed that if Germany were to become a world power with a large empire, it had to challenge the might of the British navy.

- In 1898 and 1900, Germany passed the Navy Laws. The first one gave permission for the building of 16 battleships; the second increased this number to 46. There were to be 60 **cruisers**, too. So by 1905 Germany had begun to build more battleships and cruisers. The German naval chief, Admiral Tirpitz, set up the Naval League. This was intended to encourage the German people to take an interest in their navy. Tours of German ports were organised, and lectures about the naval **fleet** were given all over Germany.
- The British response was to build the best ever battleship – HMS *Dreadnought*. Launched in 1906, it was so advanced that its revolutionary design made all other battleships instantly out-of-date. The ship gave its name, Dreadnought, to a whole class of battleships.

SOURCE I

From a paper written for the British cabinet by the First Lord of the Admiralty in October 1902.

The more the composition of the new German High Seas Fleet is examined, the clearer it becomes that it is designed for a possible conflict with the British Grand Fleet. It cannot be designed for the purpose of playing a leading part in a future war between Germany and France and Russia. A war between France and Russia can only be decided by armies on land.

- Germany responded by building *Rheinland*, their own version of HMS *Dreadnought*. Britain's naval chief, Admiral Fisher, immediately ordered the building of a 'super-Dreadnought', HMS *Neptune*.
- Hundreds of men were recruited by both Germany and Britain and trained as sailors on the new battleships.

The race was on. Between 1906 and 1914, Britain built 29 Dreadnoughts; Germany built 17.

HMS *DREADNOUGHT*

What was so different about HMS *Dreadnought*? The battleship was faster and more heavily armoured than any other warship, and was designed to fight at a distance. The ship could carry 800 sailors and could travel at 22 knots. The **armour** was about 28 cm thick on the sides and 35 cm thick on the decks. The huge guns could turn and fire shells further than any earlier ship, and could blow up an enemy ship that was 32 km away. This made ships with smaller guns ineffective because they would never be able to get close enough to fire their guns before they were blown up in the water.

SOURCE J

A Dreadnought class battleship, HMS *Iron Duke*, leading a long line of British warships in 1914.
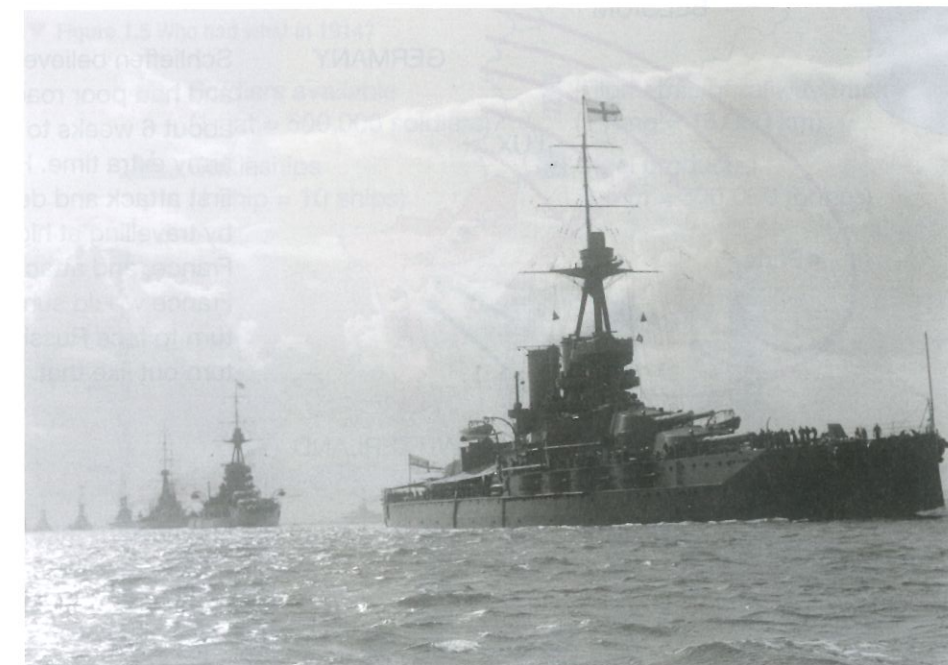
EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

FEAR OF HMS *DREADNOUGHT*
German sailors began to call their ships 'Five Minute Ships' because they thought that five minutes was all that it would take HMS *Dreadnought* to sink them.

THE ARMS RACE ON LAND

The arms race was not just confined to ships and navies. All the European powers were building their armies and armaments.
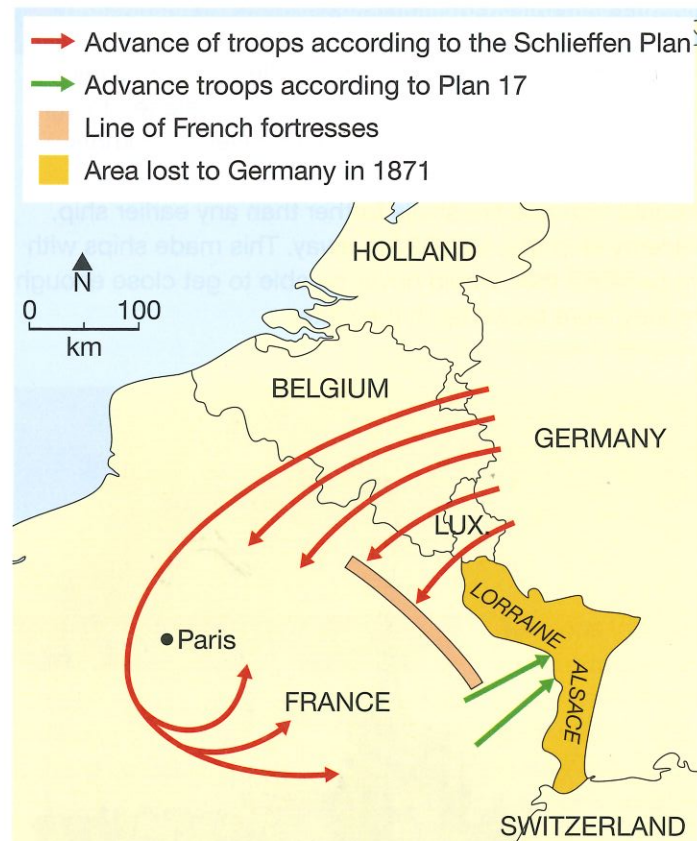
- Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 led the Russian government to change the way the army was organised. A State Defence Council was formed. This dealt with such things as war plans and the intelligence service. The new Main Directorate of General Staff dealt with **recruitment** and training the soldiers. However, the Russian army was badly equipped even though it was huge.
- Austria-Hungary began secretly making enormous **cannons** in their Skoda works.

> **KEY TERM**
>
> **mobilise** when a country prepares its army to fight a war

- In 1906, the British War Minister, Richard Haldane, formed a British Expeditionary Force of 144,000 soldiers who could travel immediately to France in support of French troops if a war was declared. He created a **Territorial Army** of **volunteers** to back up the regular forces. He set up an Officer Training Corps in schools so that older boys could train to be officers.
- Germany and France made war plans. They needed to work out in advance how they would fight their enemies if ever it became necessary.

▼ **Figure 1.3** The Schlieffen Plan

→ Advance of troops according to the Schlieffen Plan
→ Advance troops according to Plan 17
▨ Line of French fortresses
▨ Area lost to Germany in 1871

THE SCHLIEFFEN PLAN

The Schlieffen Plan was created in December 1905 by Count Alfred von Schlieffen. He was the most senior general in the German army. He knew that on land, Germany's two main enemies were France and Russia. In working out a war plan, he had to face the possibility that Germany would have to fight a war on two fronts – against Russia in the east and France in the west – at the same time. No general likes to do this because he can only use half his army against each enemy. It was essential that Schlieffen found a way round this.

Schlieffen believed that Russia, because it was so large and had poor road and rail systems, would probably take about 6 weeks to **mobilise**. This would give the German army extra time. He planned that the German army would first attack and defeat France. They would invade France by travelling at high speed through Belgium and northern France, and attack Paris. Once Paris was captured, France would surrender. The German army could then turn to face Russia. It was a simple plan, but it didn't quite turn out like that. (See Chapter 3.)

PLAN 17

The need to take Alsace-Lorraine back under French control dominated French military thinking. In 1913, the French army chief, General Joffre, came up with Plan 17, which was even simpler than the Schlieffen Plan. In the event of a war breaking out, French troops would immediately make an all-out attack on Alsace-Lorraine. They would successfully capture these two provinces, making them part of France again. Then French troops would cross the River Rhine and advance on Berlin. After years of planning, this was the only strategy the French had developed.

→ French armies

◀ **Figure 1.4** Plan 17
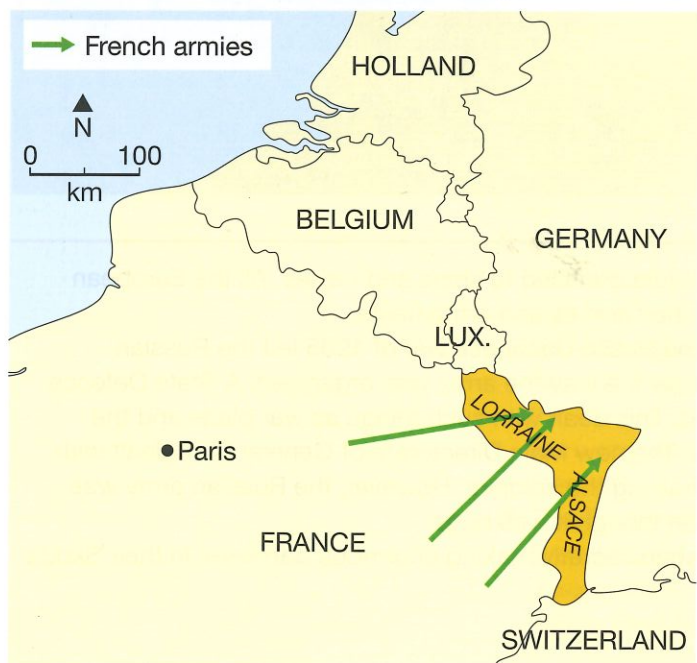
Describe **two** features of the naval race.   **(6 marks)**

> **HINT**
>
> You need to identify two different features of the naval race. Don't just say what they were; add a sentence or two of supporting information.
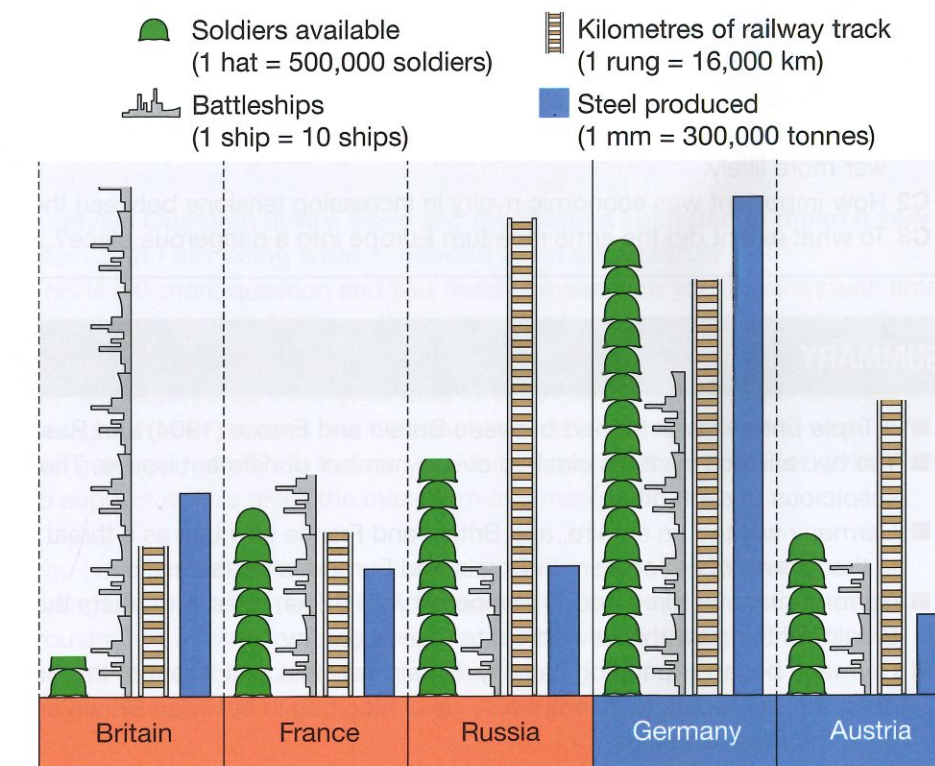
TRYING TO REACH AGREEMENTS

The arms race made Europe a dangerous place, but it did not automatically lead to war.

- At the end of the previous century, to try to prevent war, a Permanent Court of Arbitration had been set up, but taking disputes to the court was voluntary.
- In February 1912, Richard Haldane, the British War Minister, made a secret visit to Berlin. Haldane hoped to persuade the Germans to accept voluntary limitation on the arms race. He failed.

So tension between the Great Powers remained high. All it would take was a serious crisis for the tension to tip over into war.

ACTIVITY

1 Work with a partner. Look carefully at the Schlieffen Plan (see Figure 1.3) and list the problems with this plan. Now look at Plan 17. How likely is it that Plan 17 would stop the Schlieffen Plan from working?

2 Did the arms race make war more, or less, likely?
  a Working with a partner, draw up two lists – one with all the reasons why the alliance system made war more likely, and the other with all the reasons why the alliance system made war less likely.
  b Compare your lists with others in your class. Can you reach a conclusion with which you all agree?

3 Use the information in this section to complete the grid on which you have been working. Keep it in your file because you will need it to answer a more wide-ranging question at the end of the next chapter.

▼ **Figure 1.5** Who had what in 1914?

🌲 Soldiers available (1 hat = 500,000 soldiers)
🏭 Battleships (1 ship = 10 ships)
🪜 Kilometres of railway track (1 rung = 16,000 km)
▮ Steel produced (1 mm = 300,000 tonnes)

Britain   France   Russia   Germany   Austria

RECAP

RECALL QUIZ

1 In what year was the Triple Entente formed?
2 Who were the members of the Triple Entente?
3 Which two provinces did France want to regain from Germany?
4 What was the name of the German Kaiser?
5 Why did Germany want colonies?
6 How big was the British Empire?
7 Why was the navy important to Great Britain?
8 When was HMS *Dreadnought* launched?
9 What was the name of the German war plan?
10 What was Plan 17?

CHECKPOINT

STRENGTHEN

S1 Why were the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente formed?
S2 Give two examples of the reasons why colonies were important to the Great Powers.
S3 What was the arms race?

CHALLENGE

C1 Explain how the alliance system could be seen as (a) maintaining peace in Europe and (b) making a European war more likely.
C2 How important was economic rivalry in increasing tensions between the Great Powers?
C3 To what extent did the arms race turn Europe into a dangerous place?

SUMMARY

- A Triple Entente was formed between Britain and France (1904) and Russia (1907).
- The two alliance systems clashed over a number of different issues. The countries in both systems were suspicious of each other.
- Germany wanted an empire, and Britain and France saw this as a threat to their own overseas empires. This led to the growth of nationalism in Britain and European countries.
- German-manufactured goods competed with British ones in markets that had previously been dominated by Britain. Britain saw this as a threat to their economy.
- Germany began expanding its navy. Britain saw this as a threat to the British navy, which was needed to keep open the sea routes to its empire. A naval race began between Britain and Germany to see which country could build the most warships.
- All European powers, including Britain, began building up their arms and armaments.
- The Schlieffen Plan was developed as the German war plan. It aimed to avoid Germany having to fight a war against France and Russia at the same time. The plan was to defeat France quickly by a rapid invasion through Belgium before turning to fight Russia, a country Germany believed would take a long time to mobilise.
- Plan 17 was the French war plan. French armies would first re-take Alsace-Lorraine, provinces France had lost to Germany in a war in 1870, and would then invade Germany.
- By 1914, Europe was a dangerous place.