**WWI Checkpoint Task – Model Answers**

1. ***Describe TWO features of the Triple Entente. [6]***

One feature of the Triple Entente was the reasons for its formation. The Triple Entente was formed through a series of three separate agreements; the 1894 Franco-Russian Entente, the 1904 Entente Cordiale and the 1907 Anglo-Russian Entente. These agreements were formed in response to the 1882 Triple Alliance. Notably, the initial agreement, the 1894 Franco-Russian Entente, was driven by France’s fear of diplomatic isolation after the 1871 Franco-Prussian War.

A second feature of the Triple Entente was the friendly terms of the agreement. Unlike the Triple Alliance, the Triple Entente did not commit Britain, France or Russia to acting together in the event of a war. It was not a military agreement, but instead facilitated increasing cooperation between the three countries. One of the key agreements was over colonial rivalries in Egypt and Morocco, easing tensions between Britain and France.

1. ***How far does Source A support the evidence of Source B about the threat posed by Germany to Britain in the years 1905-14? Explain your answer. [8]***

Source A supports the evidence of Source B about the threat posed by Germany to Britain to only a very minor extent; the sources mostly disagree about how threatening Germany was.

The sources agree about the threat of Germany in describing the increasing size of Germany’s empire and trade. Source A mentions how the Kaiser planned to ‘expand Germany’s empire’ and similarly Source B mentions Germany’s ‘young and growing empire’, which threatened the British Empire. The sources also agree that Britain viewed Germany as aggressive; Source A describes the Kaiser as aiming to ‘dominate Europe’, while similarly Source B states that Britain had ‘suspicions of Germany’.

However, the sources disagree about how far Germany was genuinely threatening Britain. Source A describes the Kaiser’s actions as ‘aggressive’, whereas contrastingly Source B states that he was ‘set upon peace’. The sources thus contrast over how significant the German aggression was. The sources also disagree about what type of threat Germany posed; Source A focuses on ‘growth in trade and industry’, whereas contrastingly Source B instead mentions Germany’s development of a ‘powerful fleet’. Therefore, the sources disagree about whether the threat involved military development.

In conclusion, the sources mostly do not support each other about the threat posed by Germany to Britain, 1905-14. Although they agree on German imperial expansion and the suspicious reaction from Britain, the sources disagree on how far Germany was really threatening to Britain and the type of threat. The fundamental disagreement on the German intentions is more significant than the agreements about German expansion.

1. ***Extract C suggests that Germany was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First World War. How far do you agree with this interpretation? [16]***

I agree with Extract C’s interpretation to a great extent; while other countries played important roles in causing WWI, Germany was indeed mainly responsible for causing the most tension and acting repeatedly in an aggressive way.

Extract C’s interpretation is convincing; Germany was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First World War. This can be shown in Source A, when it highlights how Kaiser Wilhelm II demonstrated ‘aggressive plans to expand Germany’s empire’, thus creating tension. This was evident in the two Moroccan Crises of 1905 and 1911; most notably when the Kaiser sent the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir in 1911. This destabilised international relations in Europe, creating ‘suspicions’ from Britain and France, as shown in Source B. Moreover, Extract C highlights the vital role of Germany’s rulers urging ‘Austria-Hungary to invade Serbia’, which made the spark of war in the July Crisis more likely. This is referring to the ‘blank cheque’ given to Austria by the Germans, promising unlimited support in the event of an aggressive approach. Although Austria chose to send a harsh ultimatum, this was made more likely by German support. Finally, Germany, as Extract C mentions, ‘invaded Belgium’, bringing Britain into the war. This was due to Germany’s decision to begin the Schlieffen Plan, relying on a quick conquest of France before turning to face Russia. Therefore, overall, Extract C’s interpretation is convincing; Germany consistently acted in an aggressive and suspicious way, making conflict and war much more likely.

However, although Extract C’s interpretation is convincing, there were other countries contributing to the outbreak of war. For example, Sources A and B highlight the role of long-term economic and imperial tension between both Britain and Germany, with Britain viewing the Kaiser as aiming ‘to dominate Europe’ (Source A). Indeed, British encouragement of the naval arms race after the construction of the 1906 *Dreadnought* made war significantly more likely. In addition, Austria-Hungary chose to ‘invade Serbia’, as mentioned in Extract C; the choice to blame the Serbian government for the actions of the Black Hand Gang in the assassination of Franz Ferdinand was the trigger for the outbreak of the war. Moreover, Russian mobilisation on 30 July 1914 put pressure on Germany and demonstrated they were ‘willing to risk a European war’, as Extract C explains, therefore forcing the Germans to respond by putting their war plan into action. Finally, the Serbian government failed to prevent the actions of the Black Hand in assassinating the Archduke; arguably this made them responsible for the trigger cause. However, while Britain, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Serbia all contributed to the war, none of them was mainly responsible. British conflict was a response to German imperial expansion, Austro-Hungarian aggression was in part due to German support (and thus led to the Russian response of mobilisation), and the assassination was more a short-term trigger (not a long-term foundational cause). Therefore, Extract C is still convincing in primarily focusing on Germany in the outbreak of WWI.

To conclude, I agree with Extract C’s interpretation to a great extent. Other countries did contribute to the outbreak of war by increasing imperial tensions and contributing to the chaos of the 1914 July Crisis. However, no single country was mainly responsible in the way Germany was; Germany contributed to long-term imperial conflict, short-term crises in Morocco and the Austrian response to the assassination. German involvement in so many different factors, unlike most other countries, means it is fair to describe Germany as mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First World War.