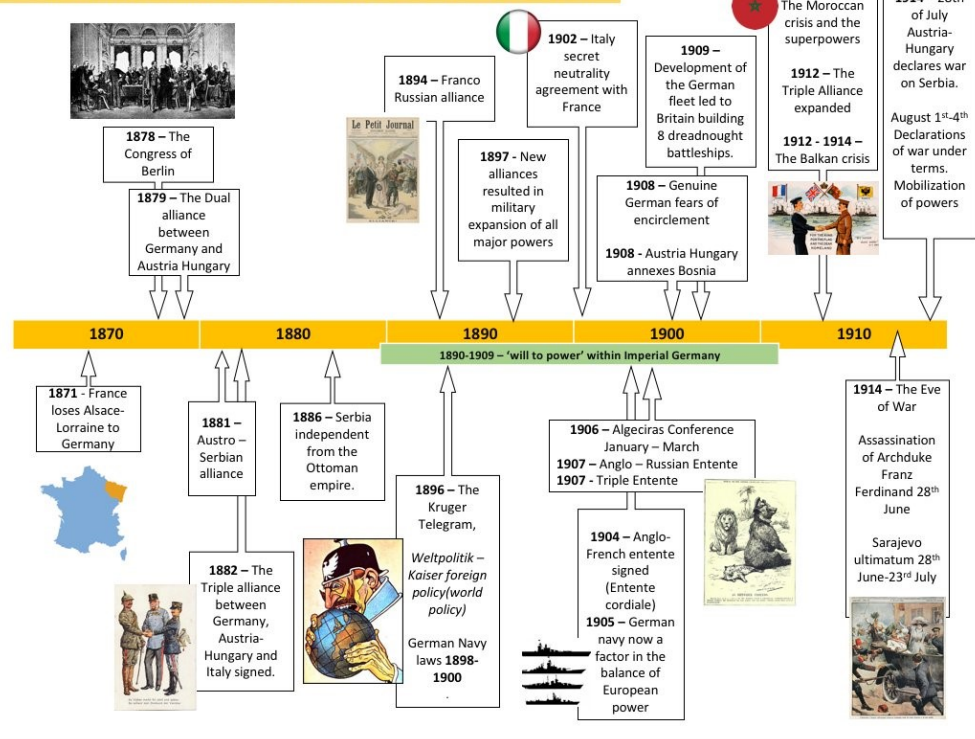


### Timeline

#### Origins of the First World War – Key date and event timeline 1870 - 1914



### Key knowledge 1: What were the underlying causes of WWI? - MAIN

- **Militarism** - Many European countries had begun to build their military in order to help conquer foreign lands as colonies. This created an arms race between countries as they didn't want to be weaker than their neighbours.
- **Alliances** - Two major alliances were formed prior to WWI—The Triple Entente was formed in 1907 between Britain, France and Russia. The Triple Alliance was made in 1882 between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.
- **Imperialism** - European countries wanted foreign colonies as they provided important materials (such as coal, wood and crops) this created conflict between them as they fought for control.
- **Nationalism** - People were proud of their country and believed it to be better than others. These feelings were used to promote support for war.

### Key knowledge 2: What 'spark' helped start the war?

- Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, visited Sarajevo (the capital of Austrian controlled Bosnia) on 28th June 1914.
- A group of Serbian nationalists, called the Black Hand, carried out an assassination—killing Archduke Franz Ferdinand.
- They were angry that the many Serbians who lived in Bosnia were under Austrian rule.

### Secondary interpretation/ debate about period

What really marked out the decade before 1914 was a failure of statesmanship and hope. By 1912, **most European governments had come to believe that a general European war was inevitable** and that the problems which plagued them at home and abroad could no longer be settled by negotiation and diplomacy...In these circumstances, **war seemed to offer an attractive way out**...The balance sheet in 1918 proved how wrong they had been.

R. Henig, *The Origins of the First World War* (1989)

### Key knowledge 3: How did this assassination lead to an European war?

- Austria was furious at the assassination and personally held the Serbian government responsible.
- They created a list of demands which they gave to Serbia—these included handing over anyone involved in the assassination and making criticism of Austria-Hungary illegal. Failure to do so would mean war.
- Austria-Hungary had secured the promise of military support whereas Serbia was backed by Russia. The start of conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia activated the alliances and brought Europe to war.