International Tensions Between 1871 1914 Essay, Research Paper

International Tensions between 1871 – 1914

With some tough footsteps in which to follow, Wilhelm II was led towards a military lifestyle. He surrounded himself with the German military and its militaristic society. As the Kaiser grew older, he wanted ?a place in the sun? for the German people and to do that, Germany needed to have colonies overseas. There wasn?t much room left for new colonisation, never the less, Wilhelm built up the German military and under the Tripitz Plan, built a naval fleet to rival that of Great Britains.

The British completion of the HMS Dreadnought in 1906, brought unexpected results. The HMS Dreadnought represented a true terror weapon of the day whose speed, armament, and firepower obsoleted every other battleship in existence. Kaiser William II of Germany hated and envied Britain for having a stronger navy than his. He increased the German navy and built many warships. Britain responded with building more ships and in creasing its navy too. This started a race for building more and better warships and it created tension and competition between the two countries, it was called the arms race. The British were aware of the fact that the defeat of the their navy would mean the end of their empire while the defeat of the German navy wouldn?t ensure the absolute defeat of Germany. The relations between these two countries dropped dramatically as the result of this race and it assured the joining of Britain to the Franco-Russian side in the event of a conflict.

Germany and France were rivals for centuries, the rivalry had increased since the beginning of the century and the end of the 19th century. This happened because of the war between those two countries in 1870-71, when Germany defeated France. Germany took over the areas of Alsace and Lorraine and the French people wanted to revenge Germany and take back the lands. France could not start a war against Germany, simply because of the reason that Germany had more resources and a stronger army than France. There was another quarrel between France and Germany, about controlling Morocco. In 1905 France thought that it should have more influence in the western Mediterranean Sea area as it already controlled Tunisia and Algeria, it wanted Morocco too. The Kaiser of Germany visited Tangier in Morocco and said that Germany would protect Morocco in case of a French attack.

In 1911 France increased its control over Morocco and Germany sent a warship. The Germans withdrew at last but the French gave them a part of Western Africa in exchange. These two incidents increased the tension between France and Germany. Austria-Hungary was a big empire in southern-eastern Europe, it included eleven main nationalities. In the ninetieth and twentieth centuries, nationalism was becoming a powerful force in Europe. People that had the same culture or language, wanted their own country. This was a problem for the government of Austria-Hungary that did not want to lose their control. The Slavs in the southern part of the empire were their main concern since they wanted to join up to Serbia. They thought this would lead to a break-up of the empire. In 1908 Austria-Hungary had taken over Bosnia. The Serbs wanted it too, and Russia was on their side, but Germany declared that they would attack Russia if it attacked Austria-Hungary. This was because of the agreements Austria-Hungary and Germany had made between each other.

In 1912 and 1913 the Balkan countries had fights among themselves and against the Ottoman Empire. First in 1912, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece attacked the Ottoman Empire and took large parts of land away from it. After the war was over, these countries fought against each other about the way they would share the land. After the fights, Serbia became a stronger country than it was before. This increased the fears in the Austrian-Hungarian government. There were alliances between different countries in Europe, when a country feels a threat it looks for other countries to help it. The alliances between the strong countries were what divided Europe into two main camps where the smaller countries were connected to the alliances. There were two main alliances in Europe, the Triple Alliance or the Central Powers which included Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary and the Entente Powers or the Allies which included Britain, France and Russia. The Triple Alliance were first formed as Germany and Austria-Hungary who became allies in 1879, three years later Italy joined them. The Entente Powers were formed when France and Russia became allies in 1892, in 1904 Britain entered into entente’s with France and Russia.

It was not only Wilhelm II that was responsible for creating the framework of World War 1 but it was also Germany?s imperialism and its involvement in the Morrocan crisis and the Balkin crisis. It was Germany?s and other countries aggression towards eachother which lead to nationalism. Imperialism and war is what prompted the alliances into the competition of an arms race which also increased tensions that contributed to an outbreak of war.