Introduction

At this period in time, the nations of Europe are in a state of constant fear against foreign aggression among themselves. This has prompted these nations to create various alliances with one another on the basis of military support should conflict and aggression be at hand. They also moved on to pursue strategies of accelerated militarization as seen most clearly in the sheer power created on both sides of Anglo-Germanic Naval Arms Race. Due to this, the majority of Europe has been forced to chose sides and rely on treaties just to have assurance against the fear of sudden attack. This has created a continent fueled by military and political tension that
has only gotten worse with every event that has transpired for the past few decades. With the growing hold Europe has on the world through imperialism and military superiority, competition and doubt continues to brew as well. As the major nations solidify their footholds in their colonies and expand their influence, they are prompting each other to fear rapid expansion and the potential invasions that come with it. This would be the premise and reasoning behind the creations of both the heavily militarized and powerful Triple Alliance (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy) and the Triple Entente (United Kingdom, France, Russia), thus effectively polarizing the continent further.

Conflicts between Austria-Hungary and Serbia have come to light as well. Starting off years earlier with the 1903 military coup d'etat that ended the rule of the Austria-Hungary-favoring Serbian house of kings, a new house came to power that instead chose to ally itself with France and Russia, much to the distrust of Austria-Hungary. This feud then became one of voiced outrage as Austria-Hungary violated the previously established Treaty of Berlin and annexed Serbia's neighboring region of Bosnia-Herzegovina regardless of what Serbia or the other major powers had to say. What came out of this would be the rise of the Young Bosnia movement led by Bosnian Serbs to unite Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of Serbia instead of Austria-Hungary. After dissent grew, certain extremist parties began to appear; the most prominent of which, was one that fought for the creation of a Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina & Serbia) through integration: the Black Hand.

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife were shot and killed by members of the same Black Hand on the way back from a tour of military proceedings in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo. This assassination was the one that proved successful after a myriad of other attempts that the Black Hand took in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina against Austro-Hungarian officials. This assassination was met with backlash by the international community in regards to yet another potential violation of the Treaty of Berlin that Serbia would be committing if it did indeed integrate Bosnia-Herzegovina into itself. In response to the assassination, the Austro-Hungarian government has issued an ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, 1914, one that they will have to reply within 48 hours. The response from Serbia could either cease the rising tensions among the European nations, or act as the catalyst that leads to a war between several of the world's most powerful nations of the time.

With most of Europe on the edge of a major war, the only way to alleviate this situation, the July Crisis, would be for every nation involved to come together and discuss matters diplomatically.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Annexation**

The act of adding (territory) to one's own territory by appropriation.

**Amalgamation**

The action, process, or result of combining or uniting.

**Imperialism**

The extension of a nation's influence and power through colonization.
Quelling
The act of putting an end to (a rebellion or other disorder).

Militarization
When a government prioritizes the army and the development of the army, usually in preparation to go to war.

Nationalism
An intense form of patriotism, in which citizens would consider their country to be above any other.

Sovereignty
The authority of a state to govern itself or another state.

Ultimatum
A final demand or statement of terms, the rejection of which will result in retaliation or a breakdown in relations.

History

Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and The Black Hand
In 1867, Serbia, Romania and Montenegro were recognized as independent states by the Treaty of Berlin. Young Serbs aspired to create a Greater Serbia (Yugoslavia), which would include all states with a majority Serbian ethnic population, such as other non-kingdom related principalities. However, their plans were put to a halt when the Austro-Hungarian empire announced the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Fueled by the obstacle in their hands, nationalistic groups and organizations of different forms worked hard to revolt against Austro-Hungarian forces in the region. However, none were more extreme as the Bosnian Serb terrorist organization, The Black Hand, whose largest act was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

The Balkan Wars and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire
The first Balkan war was fought between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro (which would later be known as the Balkan League) during 1912 and 1913. The Balkan League’s large army won against the Ottoman Empire’s slightly smaller army, and as a result, areas of the Ottoman Empire that were previously under the empirical rule were divided among the allies. The second Balkan war broke out when Bulgaria, dissatisfied with their portions from the previous conflict, attacked Serbia and Greece. The Bulgarians lost the second Balkan war and had to give up some of their land to Serbia, Greece and Romania. Meanwhile, the loss of land by the Ottoman Empire was slowly leading to the decline of the once magnificent state.

The Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand
Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, were traveling through the Town Hall in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first attempt at assassination occurred on the way to the Town Hall when an assassin of the Black Hand, Nedeljko Cabrinovic, threw a bomb into the car. However, it hit another car of the motorcade and the Archduke and his wife were safely transported to the Town Hall in Sarajevo. Another attempt was made a few hours late when another member of the Black Hand, Gavrilo Princip, fired shots at the Archduke and his wife. The surrounding crowd immediately caught Princip and he was arrested. Unfortunately, both the Archduke and his wife were dead by the time they could seek medical aid. In response, Austria-Hungary has issued an ultimatum to Serbia, one which they expect a reply for in 48 hours.
Arms Races And Militarization

At this time, the British Empire was the largest empire in the world, one nicknamed “the empire on which the sun never sets”. However, they were a mere island nation, and depended solely on their naval army to aid their conquests, creating a more advanced and developed naval army than any other at this time. Threatened by their success, Germany also sought out to develop their naval army. In response, Britain developed their naval army even more. This lead to the Anglo-Germanic Naval Arms Race in the early 1900's and created conflict and rivalry among the two nations.

While the Anglo-Germanic Naval Arms Race was going on in the water, Germany’s geographic location in which the Austro-Hungarian empire and they were surrounded by Allied Powers created paranoia for nation’s safety. During 1910 to 1913, nations in the region spend staggering amounts of money to militarize their land and borders. Both sides of the conflict grew stronger and stronger which lead to questions of whether it’d be better to fight later or now before the enemy grew even bigger.

Key Issues

Polarization of Europe and the rest of the world

The previous decades leading up to the July Crisis have left the entirety of Europe divided, with animosity and past territorial wars/disputes lingering over each country’s head. During this age of unprecedented militarization among the major powers of the time, founded upon the mutual fear of foreign aggression and invasion against one another, these significant actors within Europe have chosen to form alliances. These alliances would come to be recognized as the Triple Alliance of 1882 (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy) and the Triple Entente of 1907 (France, Russia, and the United Kingdom); both alliances based on the assurance of military and political support on the chance that one of the other major powers take hostile action. Furthermore, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance that was renewed in 1911 means close ties between the United Kingdom and Japan. With nations binding themselves closely with some and promptly dismissing others, diplomacy and communication has resorted to hesitance, suspicion, and obligatory support; making cross-alliance relations even more faulty and strained than ever before.

Potential Serbian government involvement in the assassination

Interrogations on the culprits responsible for the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo have come up with non-corroborative results. Rumors and speculation of Serbian government involvement in the plot continues to circulate. Serbia has admitted to sending a “warning” of the assassination to Austria-Hungary prior to the event, but this message was sent poorly and vaguely by Serbia and was dismissed without much thought. There is speculation regarding whether the claim of Serbian involvement has any legitimacy, but without the proper information or confessions from the interrogations and trials of the culprits, connections to Serbian government and military remain flimsy at best authorities and government as having any affiliation with such plans. Nevertheless, Serbia has continued to refuse requests for investigation from Austria-Hungary and Germany.

The struggle over the South Slavic states/The Balkans

Motives for expansion into Slavic territories are still predominantly Austro-Hungarian. Following the 1908 annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire by Austria-Hungary, revolt and disputes remain rampant, especially from the Bosnians and Serbians residing in the region. The ultimatum means that Serbia either submit or go to war with Austria-Hungary, potentially giving the latter the opportunity to further reach and solidify its rule in the Balkans. Following the assassination, Austria-Hungary has encouraged and fueled Anti-Serb riots to take place in Sarajevo; quite possibly weakening the Bosnian- Serb nationalist presence and support there. France and Russia have also voiced their allied mutual support for one another in combat if any other force were to have a presence in the South
Slavic states; they have assured each other their support if one of them were to take action in the region.

**Slavic Nationalism**

Primarily made up of Bosnians and Serbians, powerful calls of change and revolt continue to speak against Austria-Hungary and its annexed control over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Seeing common nationality and ethnicity as the main determinants of a nation, these citizens believe in the creation of a unified Yugoslavia that incorporates into itself all the South Slavic provinces, or at the very least the dismissal of the Austro-Hungarians and subsequent integration of Bosnia-Herzegovina into the Kingdom of Serbia. As time passes, more radical organizations including the Black Hand have risen and have taken more drastic actions concerning this nationalistic belief, such as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Although based on nationalistic intentions, the extreme nature of these actions has only hindered Europe’s ability to communicate diplomatically.

**The Assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the Ultimatum**

Austria-Hungary perceived the assassination of Franz Ferdinand as a direct threat to their country, one that they believed the Serbs were highly involved in, and issued an ultimatum demanding an Austro-Hungarian led inquiry and investigation into the assassination of the Archduke and his wife. It also urged Serbia to remove all anti-Austrian propaganda and to abolish existing terrorist groups that are harbored within their borders, namely the Black Hand.

The ultimatum issued to Serbia by Austria-Hungary with the urging of Germany reads as follows:

"The Royal Serbian Government shall further undertake:

• To suppress any publication which incites to hatred and contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the general tendency of which is directed against its territorial integrity;

• To dissolve immediately the society styled "Narodna Odbrana," to confiscate all its means of propaganda, and to proceed in the same manner against other societies and their branches in Serbia which engage in propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Royal Government shall take the necessary measures to prevent the societies dissolved from continuing their activity under another name and form;

• To eliminate without delay from public instruction in Serbia, both as regards the teaching body and also as regards the methods of instruction, everything that serves, or might serve, to foment the propaganda against Austria-Hungary;

• To remove from the military service, and from the administration in general, all officers and functionaries guilty of propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose names and deeds the Austro-Hungarian Government reserve to themselves the right of communicating to the Royal Government;

• To accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy;

• To take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot of the 28th of June who are on Serbian territory; delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government will take part in the investigation relating thereto;

• To proceed without delay to the arrest of Major Vojia Tankositch and of the individual named Milan Ciganovitch, a Serbian State employee, who have been compromised by the
• To prevent by effective measures the cooperation of the Serbian authorities in the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier, to dismiss and punish severely the officials of the frontier service at Shabatz Loznica guilty of having assisted the perpetrators of the Sarajevo crime by facilitating their passage across the frontier;

• To furnish the Imperial and Royal Government with explanations regarding the unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian officials, both in Serbia and abroad, who, notwithstanding their official position, have not hesitated since the crime of the 28th of June to express themselves in interviews in terms of hostility to the Austro-Hungarian Government; and, finally,

• To notify the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised under the preceding heads."

The Austro-Hungarian Government expects the reply of the Royal Government at the latest by 5 o'clock on Saturday evening the 25th of July, in 48 hours. Disagreements concerning how the ultimatum attempts to violate the sovereign rights of Serbia and allow invasive foreign intervention from a potentially threatening Austria-Hungary has left the nation indecisive on the coming decision to make.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Serbia

The Kingdom of Serbia has made several statements about its non-affiliations with the Serbian Black Hand and the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. The nation believes that the incident was orchestrated by Serbian insurgents that did not in any way represent the political stance of itself. That being said, Serbia remains hesitant to allow investigations into the crime. Concerning the ultimatum, Serbia now looks to its more powerful ally, Russia, for advice on how to respond to Austria-Hungary.
The Triple Alliance

Austria-Hungary

Under the current rule of Franz Joseph I, to the public eye, Austria-Hungary remains expecting for a reply from Serbia concerning the issued ultimatum on 23 July, 1914. After much discussion and deliberation, the nation has decided that its “policy of patience” towards Serbia has come to an end. Believing that the assassination was orchestrated with the help of the Serbian government, Austria-Hungary has come to believe that allowing further South Slavic insurgencies and rebellions will only work to tear its control and reach in the region apart. With Germany’s full support in potential war and subsequent actions, Austria-Hungary is determined to move forward with the necessary actions in order to secure its hold in the South Slav territories. Seeing the opportunity to remove Serbia as an obstacle in the former’s goals for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Austria-Hungary is determined to resolve Serbian influence in the region one way or another.

Germany

Upholding the alliance with Austria-Hungary, Kaiser Wilhelm II has pledged to support the allied nation in its endeavors; especially those regarding responses towards the recent assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. Germany has proven itself as an incredibly formidable power in Europe due to its rapid militarization; claiming that it is “more prepared for war than either Russia or France”. Despite acknowledging that Russia will indeed side quickly with Serbia, Germany continues to assure Austria-Hungary that the former will do everything in its power in support of its ally. Voicing its full assistance for Austria-Hungary and its ultimatum, Germany remains vigilant and alert with military support should new revelations and updates arrive from Serbia in 48 hours.

Italy

Although being a member of the Triple Alliance, as war becomes a significant possibility, Italy has become less vocal and more passive in the politics surrounding the assassination and ultimatum. Internal political shifts and issues have made Italy focus more on domestic conflicts rather than the international community. Nevertheless, the faltering alliance between Italy and Germany/Austria-Hungary lingers on with Italy having to decide soon where its allegiance will lie or whether it will take sides at all.

The Triple Entente

Russia

Being a close ally and advocate of Serbia and its independence, Russia has established itself as more than just a potential supporter of Serbia should conflict or even war break out. With the power of the Triple Entente behind it, Russia stands powerful against the opposition of Austria-Hungary and even Germany. The nation’s response towards Serbia’s request for advice remains to be heard.

France

France has come to an agreement with Russia to provide support to one another if one of them were to be involved in the politics of the South Slav Balkan provinces, as per the Balkan Inception
Scenario of 1911-1913. If Russia’s actions do include coming to the military aid of Serbia against Austria-Hungary, France has agreed that this is entailed in their agreed upon terms and will provided assistance accordingly.

**United Kingdom**

Being the most dominant imperialist force at this time, Britain sees German attempts at imperialism and development of a strong navy as a threat to its own overseas empire. The United Kingdom is determined to keep its strong political ties and alliances with France and Russia in order to suppress and prevent the rise in power of the Triple Alliance, especially German expansion. Coming into this brink of war, the UK has decided to stay neutral in terms of violent matters so long as the opposition does not provoke or violate the neutrality of neighboring nations.

**Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 19, 1839</td>
<td>Treaty of London</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Under article 7 in the Treaty of London, Belgium was recognized by the European powers as an independent, neutral nation. As part of the treaty, Belgium was required by the signatories to remain actively neutral. Its neutrality was to be protected in invasions by the signatories as well. Any breaches/compromises of Belgium’s neutrality are to be seen as violations to the European treaty and dealt with as such.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30, 1856</td>
<td>End of Crimean War/Signing of the Treaty of Paris</td>
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<td>Based on opposing Christian ideals (Russian Orthodox &amp; French Catholicism), the Crimean War is fought between Russia against primarily France, the United Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire. One of Russia’s main motives was to expand into the Balkan territories after the weakening of the Ottoman hold on the region. Russia eventually loses the war and the Treaty of Paris is signed. Russian influence is set back in the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10, 1871</td>
<td>End of the Franco-Prussian War</td>
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<td>As a result of the Franco-Prussian War, the Germans and the Prussians announced their union as the German Empire.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 13, 1878</td>
<td>The Treaty of Berlin</td>
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<td>October 7, 1879</td>
<td>The Dual Alliance Treaty</td>
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<td>May 20, 1882</td>
<td>The Triple Alliance</td>
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<td>January 4, 1894</td>
<td>Franco-Russian Military Convention</td>
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<td>May 28-29, 1903</td>
<td>May Coup (Serbia)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>April 8, 1904</td>
<td><strong>Entente Cordiale</strong></td>
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<td>March 31, 1906</td>
<td><strong>The Algeciras Conference</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 31, 1907</td>
<td><strong>Anglo-Russian Entente</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6, 1908</td>
<td><strong>The First Balkan Crisis/Bosnian Crisis</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30, 1912</td>
<td>The Treaty of Fez</td>
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<td>Following the Second Moroccan Crisis, in which both France and Germany took advantage of the rising protests in Morocco, the Treaty of Fez was signed. Germany was to respect France's presence in Morocco in exchange over territory in the Middle Congo. This lead to France establishing a protectorate in Morocco, ending their independence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18, 1912</td>
<td>The Italo-Turkish War Ends</td>
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<td>Italy's victory against the Ottoman Empire lead to the annexation of Libya.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30, 1913</td>
<td>End of The First Balkan War</td>
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<td>The Balkan League, comprised of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, attacked and pushed Ottoman influence out of Europe. This resulted in the formation of an independent Albania.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 10, 1913</td>
<td>End of the Second Balkan War</td>
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<td>Displeased with the results from the First Balkan War, especially its share of the land in Macedonia after the Ottoman withdrawal from Europe, Bulgaria attacked Germany and Serbia, its former allies. However, they lost and had to give up the gains from the First Balkan War back to Germany, Serbia and the Ottoman Empire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 28, 1914</td>
<td>The Assassination of Franz Ferdinand</td>
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<td>Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip during a visit to Sarajevo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 23, 1914</td>
<td>Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum Issued</td>
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<td>A month or so after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, an ultimatum was issued from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Serbia, listing a certain set of demands that the latter must comply with. A response is expected by Austria-Hungary in 48 hours.</td>
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**Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

Due to the unprecedented nature and scope of this crisis and the following ultimatum, no previous attempts have been made to resolve such an issue. Nationalism and militarization has been paired with growing mutual fears of foreign aggression to create a “powderkeg” in Europe that has more or less been set off by the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.
Possible Solutions

Acceptance of the Ultimatum and its Demands

Given that Austria-Hungary has issued this ultimatum to Serbia, conflict and tensions could potentially be resolved if Serbia were to agree to all the demands and cooperate with Austria-Hungary and thus, maintain diplomacy regarding the actions of an independent terrorist entity. If the ultimatum were to be accepted fully, Austria-Hungary would be granted access in Serbia concerning the assassination and detrimental propaganda. Serbia could maintain its autonomy and remain operating as a cooperative sovereign state.

Foreign Intervention in Creating a Compromise

Given the isolated and confrontational nature of the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, perhaps foreign opinions and input could possibly make Austria-Hungary take a less aggressive stance and find a more peaceful compromise regarding its ultimatum.

Limitations and Transparency in the Naval Arms Race

One of the key factors creating paranoia and tension between the European nations is the growing threat that constant militarization brings. If nations were to be more moderated and transparent in their production of weaponry, ensuring that numbers do not exceed amounts that would cause neighboring nations alarm, it would be one step towards slowly cooling down the rising tensions between these nations.

Establishment of Official Territorial Lines

The struggle of the Balkan states mostly stem from the desire of nation-states to expand further outwards. If negotiations including the consent and participation of all affected parties were to take place, official and inalienable territorial boundaries could be set that all nation-states in the region would have to respect.
Bibliography


