

3

ARMAMENTS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A major contributing factor to the tensions between the great powers which led to the outbreak of the First World War was the intense competition between them in building armaments. This was especially true of Britain and Germany, where competition in the construction of battle fleets soured the relationship between the two countries and hardened the British position towards Germany. However the arms race was not confined to navies. In continental Europe each of the great powers increased expenditure on their armies and steadily expanded and modernized them in preparation for a war which many felt was inevitable.

Britain's 'Two Power Standard'

In 1889 the British government, recognizing the importance of a strong navy to an island nation with a far-flung empire, began to modernize the Royal Navy. Furthermore, it set down the principle that the Royal Navy should possess as many battleships and cruisers as the next two largest navies in the world combined, those of France and Russia. This was the two power standard wherein the Royal Navy was to be at least ten per cent larger than its main rivals.

Germany begins the challenge

However, in the mid-1890s British concerns began to alter as Germany began to pursue its new policy of *Weltpolitik* (world power). What particularly concerned the British was the decision taken by Germany in 1896 to build a high seas fleet. The architect of the new German navy was Grand Admiral von Tirpitz. He aimed to build a fleet which would be about two thirds the size of the Royal Navy and be concentrated in the North Sea. The strategy developed by Tirpitz aimed to establish a German navy which would be large enough to deter the British in wartime because any attempt to destroy it would be too costly for Britain to risk. Thus the might of the Royal Navy would be neutralized in any future European conflict.

In pursuit of this strategy the German government introduced naval laws in 1898 and 1900 to begin construction of the new fleet. The naval law of 1900 provided finance to double the number of battleships and expand the rest of the fleet considerably. This move by Germany, the nation with Europe's strongest army, alarmed the British, who saw no justification for a powerful German navy but rather saw it as a major threat to British security. This challenge to British naval supremacy by Germany was instrumental in driving Britain into alliance with France and Russia.

As tension rose between the two nations, Britain attempted to negotiate an end to the naval arms race. In 1906 the British proposed mutual limitations in naval construction. However Germany insisted on a British pledge of neutrality in any European war. This could not be agreed to as Britain feared German domination of Europe.

Britain responds

To meet the German naval challenge the British First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Fisher, began to reorganize and expand the British fleet. Fisher concentrated the three main British battle fleets in European waters and in October 1905 began the construction of a new class of battleship, *H.M.S. Dreadnought* (launched in February 1906, at sea in October 1906). The Dreadnought was a revolution in ship design. It could outgun and outpace every other type of battleship then in existence.

The 'all big gun' concept

H.M.S. Dreadnought was the world's first 'all big gun' battleship. Pre-Dreadnought ships had possessed a combination of large and intermediate-sized guns. In 1903 in an article in *Jane's Fighting Ships*, the Italian designer Vittorio Cuniberti had argued that the ideal battleship should have only large guns, be capable of high speed and have relatively light armour. He argued that only the big guns were important in a battle and that speed not heavy armour was the thing vital to a battleship's success in a naval engagement.

In the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05, battles between the Russian and Japanese fleets in the Yellow Sea and the Tsushima Strait demonstrated the validity of Cuniberti's theory. In these battles the intermediate guns of the rival battleships had no effect because they lacked sufficient range and destructiveness to damage the enemy. What was also obvious was that the splashes they made when their shells fell into the sea short of their targets obscured those targets for the big gun aimers.

H.M.S. Dreadnought

Admiral Fisher, who had been appointed First Sea Lord in 1904, saw the outcome of the Russo-Japanese naval engagements as vindication for Cuniberti's theory and ordered the construction of *H.M.S. Dreadnought* based on his ideas. She was an all big gun ship, possessing ten 305 mm long-range guns, as well as torpedo tubes and some other very light guns not designed for use in a major battle. She had no intermediate-sized guns. *Dreadnought* had less armour than earlier battleships and her design included watertight compartments to allow her to survive battle damage. Another significant feature of her design was the use of steam turbine engines instead of piston engines, the first time this had ever been done in a large ship. The

steam turbine engines enabled *Dreadnought* to cruise continuously at the very high speed of 21.6 knots (40 kilometres per hour). This was a vast improvement over the old piston-engined ships whose nominal top speed was 19 knots. However, because of the problem of vibration from their piston engines, the older ships were in fact usually limited to a speed of about 12 knots.

The Dreadnought race

Rather than strengthening the British naval position the construction of *H.M.S. Dreadnought* actually weakened it. The new design made all other battleships obsolete, and Britain's large fleet of pre-Dreadnought battleships was now redundant. Furthermore, Germany, by building its own Dreadnought class battleships, could now compete with Britain on even terms since both navies were starting from the same position. Germany's first Dreadnought class ship was the *Nassau*, laid down in 1907. For the British the task now became to keep ahead of Germany in Dreadnought construction.

The naval race was intensified in 1908 by a German naval law which provided for four new Dreadnoughts to be commenced each year between 1908 and 1911. This news caused outrage in Britain and public opinion demanded that the British government step up its own Dreadnought construction programme. A slogan at that time went, 'We want eight and we won't wait.' Britain commenced building eight new Dreadnoughts in 1908. Winston Churchill, who was a member of the British cabinet at the time, explained how the decision was made: 'the Admiralty had demanded six, the economists offered four, and we finally compromised on eight.'

In 1912 Britain again attempted to negotiate a truce on naval armaments and again negotiations broke down on the issue of British neutrality in Europe. In May of that year a new German naval law was introduced to establish a further squadron of Dreadnought class battleships. In response Britain dropped its two power standard which was proving too expensive to maintain and which was now unnecessary in view of the alliance with Russia and France. After 1912, British policy was aimed at establishing a lead of 60 per cent over Germany in Dreadnoughts. In November 1912 Britain negotiated an agreement with France whereby the French navy was to concentrate its forces in the Mediterranean and protect the interests of both nations in that sea, while the British fleet was concentrated in the North Sea in order to protect both Britain and the northern coast of France from the Germans.

In the event Britain won the naval arms race with Germany. In 1914, at the outbreak of war, Britain had 19 Dreadnoughts at sea and a further 13 under construction. Germany had 13 at sea and seven under construction.

The European powers and the development of mass armies

In continental Europe all of the great powers were engaged in arming and preparing for war.

From the late nineteenth century European armies grew enormously, not so much in terms of the standing army, but in terms of reserves of trained men. These reserves were established by the introduction of compulsory military training for all able-bodied men who were conscripted into the army for a period of regular service and then released to serve with a reserve unit. By developing this system of reserves the European powers were able to muster an additional 10 million men for army service in the event of war.

Preparations for war

To carry these mass armies into battle and equip them for combat, huge investments were made in transport and equipment. Railways were built to carry troops to the frontier and when nations could not afford to meet the costs involved, their allies helped. Thus France made massive loans to Russia specifically to finance railway lines to take troops to the German frontier in the event of war.

Furthermore technical developments which had occurred in the pre-war period made both artillery and infantry weapons more potent. New explosives gave field guns more effect at greater range, while after the 1880s the killing power of the infantry was greatly increased by the introduction of repeating rifles and machine guns.

The expenditure on armaments made by the great powers rose steadily after 1900. Between 1900 and 1910 Germany increased its army budget by 20%, Russia by 65%, Italy by 50%, France by 30%, Austria-Hungary by 25% and Britain by 30%.

After 1910 these war preparations became even more feverish. German and Austro-Hungarian expenditure doubled while France in 1913 extended the length of compulsory military service from two to three years and Russia extended military service from three to three and a half years and set about reorganizing and modernizing her army.

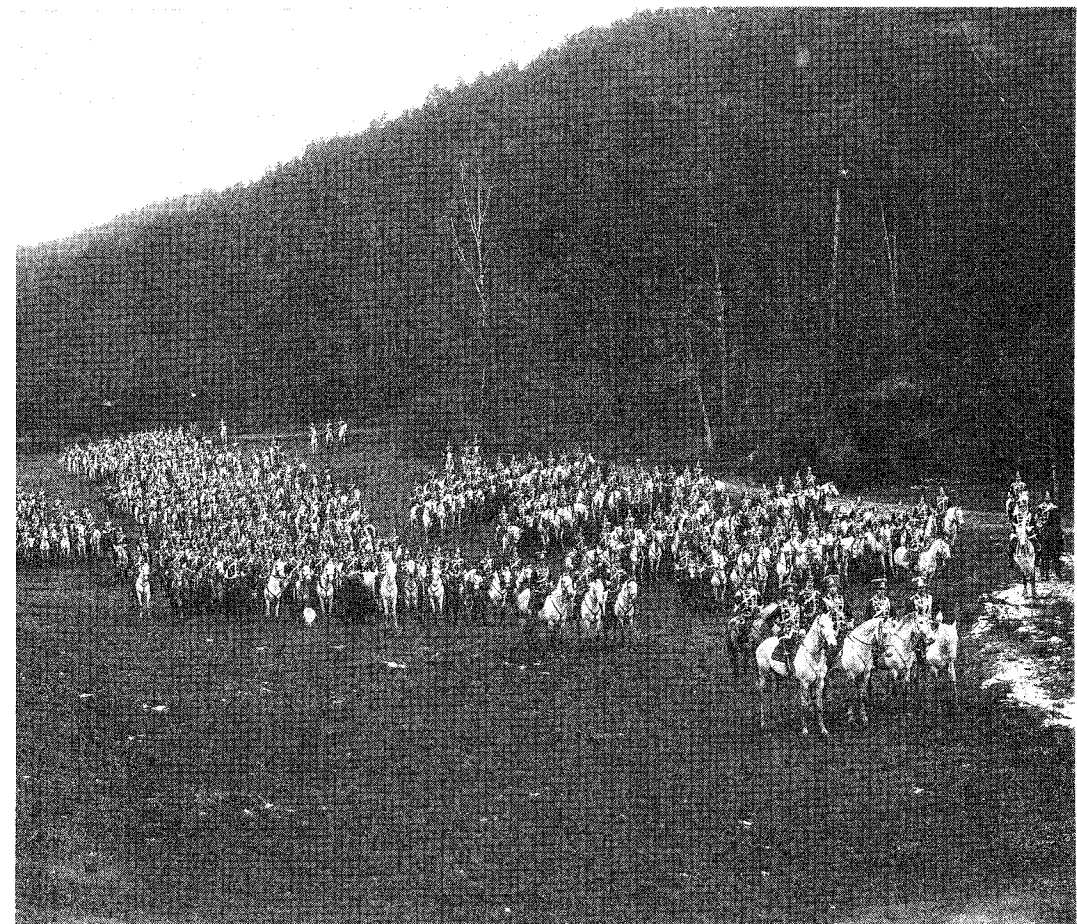
Armies on the eve of war

When the drums began to roll in 1914, the European powers could mobilize large well-trained and well-equipped armies. France had a standing army of 500 000, the German army numbered 700 000, the Russian 1 200 000, and the Austro-Hungarian 500 000. When reservists were included, France and Germany were each able to put about 3.5 million men into the field, and Russia about 4 million.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

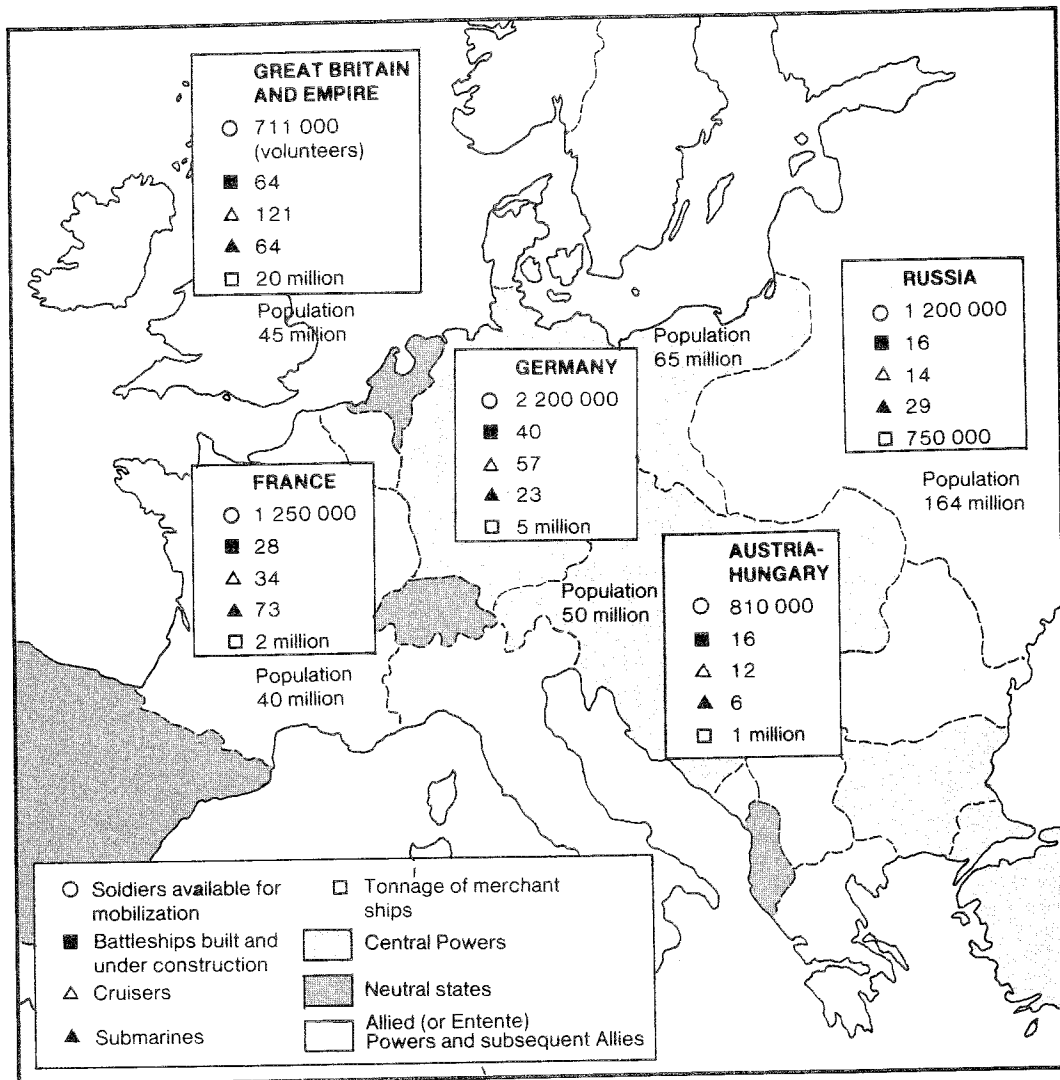
- 1 In which year did the British government begin to modernize the Royal Navy?
- 2 When did Germany take the decision to build a high seas fleet?
- 3 What was Grand Admiral von Tirpitz's strategy in establishing a German navy?
- 4 Why were Britain and Germany unable to reach agreement in 1906 on the mutual limitations of naval construction?
- 5 Why did the British become alarmed at the German plan to build a powerful navy?
- 6 Who was the British First Sea Lord who began to reorganize and expand the British fleet?
- 7 Name the British ship which revolutionized battleship design in 1906.
- 8 Who was the Italian designer who argued that the ideal battleship should have no intermediate guns, only big ones?

- 9 What type of engines did *H.M.S. Dreadnought* use?
- 10 How did the building of *H.M.S. Dreadnought* weaken the British naval position?
- 11 In which year was the naval race intensified by the German decision to build four new Dreadnoughts and the British decision to build eight?
- 12 Why did Britain drop the two power standard in 1912?
- 13 How were European powers able to bolster the strength of their standing armies by an extra 10 million men in the pre-war period?
- 14 How was the killing power of infantry increased after the 1880s?
- 15 When reservists were included with the standing army, how many men was France able to field in 1914? How many were Germany and Russia able to field?



During the last part of the 19th century and early in the 20th century, the monarchies continued to maintain traditional cavalry while building modern navies and armies. The introduction of machine guns and small arms would make the use of these cavalry in charges, suicidal.

MAP QUESTIONS



Map 3 Armaments and the Great Powers — January 1914

Study the map and answer the questions which follow.

- 1 What was the size of the German army in 1914?
- 2 Which power possessed the second largest army in Europe in 1914?
- 3 Which power had the largest population in the pre-war period?
- 4 Look at the numbers of battleships built and under construction in 1914. Which power possessed the largest number of battleships?
- 5 How many cruisers and submarines did Britain and Germany have in 1914?

INVESTIGATING HISTORY

Document One: The German high seas fleet — von Tirpitz explains

The German decision to construct a high seas fleet was the single most important cause of tension between Britain and Germany in the pre-war period. The man who created this fleet was Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. In 1919 Tirpitz explained in his book *My Memoirs* why he had wanted Germany to possess such a fleet. His account offers an insight into the German side of the naval arms race.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

Two lines of thought were emerging at that time: the *tactical* necessity for a *battle* fleet, if we were striving for sea-power and wanted to build ships to some purpose; and the *political* necessity of establishing a protecting navy for Germany's maritime interests which were growing at such an irresistible pace. The navy never seemed to me to be an end in itself but always a function of these maritime interests. Without sea-power Germany's position in the world resembled a mollusc without a shell. The flag had to follow trade, as other older states had realized long before it began to dawn upon us . . .

The Emperor had realized it, and had been enabled to do so by his frequent visits to England . . .

The idea of a navy was received with much suspicion among the people. The Germans were pampered by the good fortune which Bismarck's creation of the empire and the sudden stirring of our long-repressed economic abilities had brought us, and they did not realize that our development on the broad back of British free trade and the British world-empire would continue only *until it was stopped* . . . The question was whether we were not too late for the partition of the world, which was then almost complete; whether indeed that expansion to which we owed our place among the great powers was not artificially and permanently

untenable; whether this swift rise would not be followed by a terrible downfall . . .

Our hemmed-in and dangerous continental position, strengthened me in my conviction that no time was to be lost in beginning the attempt to constitute ourselves a sea-power. For only a fleet which represented alliance-value to other great Powers, in other words a competent battle fleet, could put into the hands of our diplomats the tool which, if used to good purpose, could supplement our power on the continent . . .

. . . It was, and is, an illusion, however, to think that the English would have treated us any better, and have allowed our economic growth to have proceeded unchecked if we had had no fleet. They would have certainly told us to stop much sooner. Anybody who knows the English could have no doubt of this . . .

. . . The German considered it his . . . right to spread himself peaceably over the world and outflank English influence everywhere, and in general he did not sufficiently appreciate the feelings of the man in possession who looked upon him as an intruder. Moreover, people in Germany had a wholly inadequate conception of the peculiar composition of English power and of its ability to encircle Germanism with mental and material forces, until the world-war revealed the truth.

The plan of a German battle fleet was

evolved without any idea of a war with England. It would have seemed perfectly crazy both politically and strategically to have waived the possibility of a later attack upon England ... There was also no reason at that time to draw up defensive measures against England. The plan of operations which I drew up in 1895 has the 'two-front' war in view, and reckons in all its details upon a neutral England. I started on the

assumption that we were to open the war against France not as a cruiser war, but with an engagement at sea. This is the origin of our construction of a battle fleet, but the unexpected demonstrations on the part of the British navy at the beginning of 1896, as well as the trade jealousy which was breaking out more and more undisguisedly, were naturally bound soon to add an English front to the French one ...

- 1 In von Tirpitz's view what was the political necessity of establishing a German navy?
- 2 How was the idea of a navy received among the German people?
- 3 What strengthened von Tirpitz's 'conviction that no time was to be lost in beginning the attempt to constitute ourselves a sea-power'?
- 4 According to von Tirpitz what did the German consider as his right?
- 5 In von Tirpitz's view, was the plan of a German battle fleet evolved with any idea of war with England?

Briefly

Who was responsible for the creation of the German high seas fleet? When was the decision to build the fleet taken, and what subsequent naval laws were introduced to expand it?



Admiral Alfred P. Friedrich von Tirpitz, Secretary of State for the Imperial Navy (1897-1916). He commanded the Navy during the war until his resignation in 1916.



Admiral John Fisher, as First Sea Lord from 1904-10, he oversaw the modernisation of the British navy.

The Cartoonist's View: 'Copyright Expires'

This *Punch* cartoon, published in 1909, features John Bull (representing Britain) dressed as a sailor watching a German tar (sailor). The German is dancing with a flag and singing a famous British music hall song from the 1870s which expressed British determination to stand up for her interests in the world.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



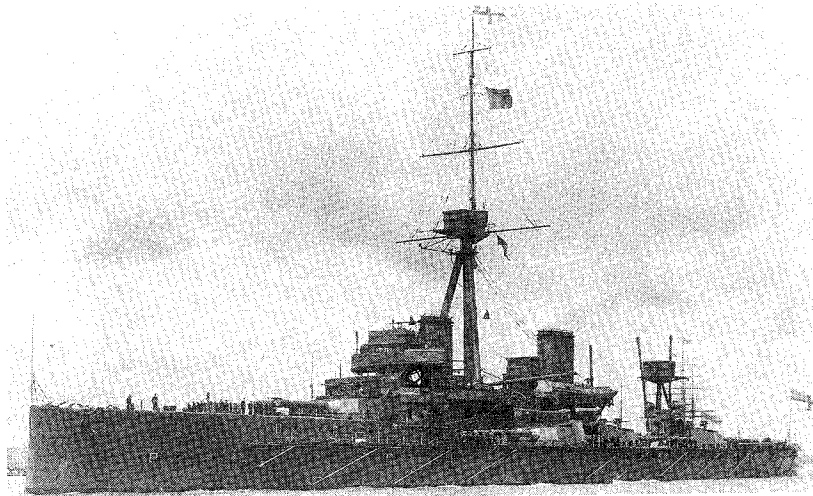
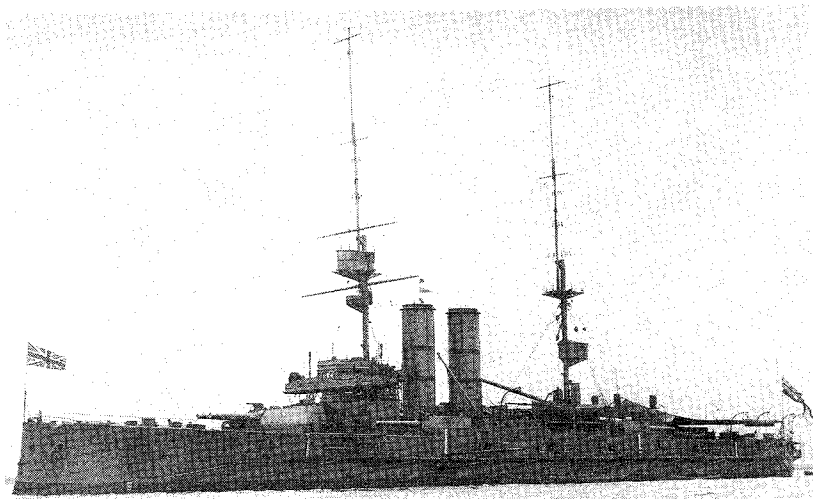
Copyright Expires

German Tar: 'We don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do, We've got the ships, We've got the men, we've got the money too.'
 John Bull: 'I say, that's *my* old song.'
 German Tar: 'Well, it's mine now.'

- 1 What was happening to the German navy during the pre-war period which would make the German sailor so happy?
- 2 Why is John Bull looking so unhappy and worried? How does he represent Britain's concerns at the time?
- 3 Study the words of the song. How does this song, sung by a German, represent a threat to Britain's position in the world?

Briefly

Why did the British fear the prospect of a large and powerful German navy in the pre-war years?



H.M.S. Dominion (top), H.M.S. Dreadnought (bottom)

Pre-Dreadnought and Dreadnought battleships compared

The completion of *H.M.S. Dreadnought* in 1906 was a landmark in the evolution of the battleship. Her design and specifications became the standard by which all subsequent battleships were judged. To gauge just how revolutionary Dreadnought was, a comparison with the pre-Dreadnought class of battleship is instructive.

The table shows the specifications for both *H.M.S. Dreadnought* and the pre-Dreadnought battleship *H.M.S. Dominion*, one of eight ships of the King Edward VII class built just prior to Dreadnought. *H.M.S. Dominion* was completed in 1905, one year before *H.M.S. Dreadnought* made her and her sister ships obsolete as front line battleships.

Compare the specifications of the two ships and answer the questions which follow.

	H.M.S. Dominion (1905)	H.M.S. Dreadnought (1906)
Displacement:	17 281 tonnes (17 009 tons)	22 195 tonnes (21 845 tons)
Length:	138.3 metres (453 ft. 9 in.)	160.4 metres (527 ft.)
Engines:	4 × Vertical Triple Expansion engines	4 × Parsons Turbine engines
Torpedo tubes:	4 × 457 mm (18 in)	4 × 457 mm (18 in)
Main armour:	229–203 mm belt (8 in–9 in)	270–203 mm belt (11 in–8 in)
Power:	18 000 IHP. (IHP = indicated horsepower)	26 350 SHP. (SHP = shaft horsepower)
Speed:	18.5 knots (34.3 km/h)	21.6 knots (40 km/h)
Guns:	4 × 305 mm (12 in) guns	10 × 305 mm (12 in) guns
	4 × 234 mm (9.2 in) guns	
	10 × 152 mm (6 in) guns	
	14 × 12 pounder guns	27 × 12 pounder guns

- 1 How many big 305 mm (12 in) guns did *H.M.S. Dominion* carry? How many did *H.M.S. Dreadnought* carry?
- 2 What was the displacement of each ship?

- 3 List the power of each ship.
- 4 Which ship was faster? What was its speed?
- 5 What type of engine did each ship possess?

Briefly

Explain the advantages Dreadnought class battleships possessed over pre-Dreadnought class battleships.

Document Two: The Kaiser defends Germany's need for a powerful navy

In 1908, the Kaiser, William II, gave an interview to the London *Daily Telegraph* which caused a major incident between Britain and Germany because of its threatening tone. Towards the end of the interview the Kaiser addressed the central cause of tension between the two nations, naval rivalry. In this extract from the *Daily Telegraph* interview, the Kaiser explains why Germany felt the need to possess a powerful navy.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

'But, you will say, what of the German navy? Surely, that is a menace to England! Against whom but England are my squadrons being prepared? If England is not in the minds of those Germans who are bent on creating a powerful fleet, why is Germany asked to consent to such new and heavy burdens of taxation? My answer is clear. Germany is a young and growing empire. She has a worldwide commerce which is rapidly expanding, and to which the legitimate ambition of patriotic Germans refuses to assign any bounds. Germany must have a powerful fleet to protect that commerce and her manifold interests in even the most distant seas. She expects those interests to go on growing, and she must be able to champion them manfully in any quarter of the globe. Her horizons stretch far away. She must be prepared for any eventualities in the Far East. Who can foresee what may take place in the Pacific in the days to come, days not so distant as some believe, but days, at any rate, for which all European powers with Far Eastern interests ought steadily to prepare? Look at the accomplished rise of Japan; think of the possible national awakening of China; and then judge of the vast problems of the Pacific. Only those Powers which have great navies will be listened to with respect when the future of the Pacific comes to be solved; and if for that reason only, Germany must have a powerful fleet. It may even be that England herself will be glad that Germany has a fleet when they speak together on the same side in the great debates of the future.'

- 1 What reasons does the Kaiser give for Germany's desire to possess a powerful fleet?
- 2 In the Kaiser's opinion, in which part of the world must Germany 'be prepared for any eventualities'?

- 3 Which nations in the Far East does the Kaiser name as possible rivals to the European powers?
- 4 Which powers does the Kaiser believe 'will be listened to with respect when the future of the Pacific comes to be solved'?
- 5 When does the Kaiser expect 'it may even be that England herself will be glad that Germany has a fleet'?

Briefly

Germany already possessed Europe's largest army. Why then did Germany's leaders believe a powerful navy was also necessary?

The Cartoonist's View: 'Poker and Tongs'

This British cartoon relates the Anglo-German naval race to the larger global competition between the two powers before the First World War. Seated at the table is John Bull, representing Britain, and the Kaiser, representing Germany. Both are dressed as admirals. They are playing poker and betting with Dreadnoughts.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



Poker and Tongs; or how we've got to play the game

Kaiser: 'I go three Dreadnoughts.'

John Bull: 'Well, just to show there's no ill-feeling, I raise you three.'

- 1 Read the caption to this cartoon. Which of the players is initiating the contest in Dreadnoughts?
- 2 Look at the facial expressions of the Kaiser and John Bull. Who does the cartoonist believe is the most confident in this game?
- 3 In the background of this cartoon there is a map on the wall showing shipping routes and next to the table there is a large globe of the Earth. What does the cartoonist imply is at stake in this contest?

Briefly

What measures did Britain take to stay ahead of Germany in the naval arms race? How successful were they?

Document Three: The dangers of Germany's naval policy

Not all of Germany's leaders were enthusiastic about naval expansion and the resultant tensions this created with the British. Alfred von Kiderlen-Wachter, German Foreign Secretary between 1908–1912, opposed Tirpitz's naval policy and feared that it would result in war with Britain.

In 1910 Kiderlen had a conversation with Take Ionescu, a Romanian diplomat, in which he acknowledged the risks involved in Tirpitz's policy. Ionescu wrote the following account of the conversation in which he firstly asked Kiderlen, 'What are you after with all these armaments...?'

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

'What are you after with all these armaments carried to the extreme? I understand them so long as it was a question of achieving a position of second rank among the naval powers. What more do you want now? To be both the greatest military power and the greatest naval power? But that would be world domination and that can never be realized. Others like France and Spain have attempted the same and have gone down to defeat. You are too wise not to know that England will never allow itself to be surpassed before it is completely broken... You are rushing directly into war with England. You know well that this

is no joke. But granted even that you win, how long can this last? You will arouse a world coalition against you...'

To which Kiderlen replied bitterly: 'I wanted to accomplish this limitation that you speak of but I was unable to do so. All that you tell me, I too said, perhaps with less eloquence. I told it to Tirpitz, who was sitting in my place and I sat where you are sitting.'

'And?'

'I was unable to convince him.'

'But the Kaiser?'

'He placed himself on the side of Tirpitz.'

- 1 What would result from Germany becoming 'both the greatest military power and the greatest naval power', an objective which in Ionescu's opinion could never be realized?

- 2 Which other nations had attempted the same thing as Germany and had gone down in defeat?
- 3 In Ionescu's opinion, what was Germany 'rushing directly into'?
- 4 What was Kiderlen's position on the expansion of the German navy?
- 5 Name the two men Kiderlen was unable to convince of the need to limit Germany's naval expansion.

Briefly

Why did Germany's leaders refuse to abandon the naval arms race with Britain? What did they hope to gain from such a challenge to British naval superiority?

Document Four: Winston Churchill and the supremacy of the British navy

Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty in October 1911 and strongly supported the naval construction program being pursued by the government. Following the second Moroccan crisis Churchill gave a speech in Glasgow on the state of British naval readiness which was directed at both the British public and the Germans.

In the speech Churchill gave the British view of the naval arms race and sought to explain why the British government felt the need to ensure that the Royal Navy remain more powerful than the German fleet. The speech caused considerable outrage in Germany and the Kaiser thought that it warranted an apology.

Read the document and answer the questions which follow.

'The purposes of British naval power are essentially defensive. We have no thoughts, and we have never had any thoughts, of aggression — and we attribute no such thoughts to other great powers. There is, however, this difference between the British naval power and the naval power of the great and friendly empire — and I trust it may long remain the great and friendly empire — of Germany. The British navy is to us a necessity and, from some points of view, the German navy is to them more in the nature of a luxury. Our naval power involves British existence. It is existence to us; it is expansion to them. We cannot menace the peace of a single Continental hamlet, nor do we wish to do so no matter how great and supreme our navy may be-

come. But, on the other hand, the whole fortunes of our race and empire, the whole treasure accumulated during so many centuries of sacrifice and achievement would perish and be swept utterly away if our naval supremacy were to be impaired.

It is the British navy which makes Great Britain a great power. But Germany was a great power, respected and honoured all over the world, before she had a single ship.

Those facts ought clearly to be stated because there is no doubt that there is a disposition in some quarters to suppose that Great Britain and Germany are on terms of equality so far as naval risks are concerned. Such a supposition is utterly untrue. The government is resolved to maintain the naval supremacy which this country enjoys...

We should be the first power to welcome any retardation or slackening of naval rivalry. We should meet any such slackening not by words but by deeds. . . . If there are to be increases upon the Continent of Europe we shall have no difficulty in meeting them to the satisfaction of the country. As naval competition becomes more acute, we shall have not only to increase the number of ships we build, but the ratio which

our naval strength will have to bear to other great naval powers, so that our margin of superiority will become larger and not smaller as the strain grows greater. Thus we shall make it clear that other naval powers, instead of overtaking us by additional efforts, will only be more out-distanced in consequence of the measures which we ourselves will take.'

- 1 What does Churchill describe the purpose of the British Navy as being?
- 2 What does he declare to be the difference between British naval power and the naval power of Germany?
- 3 According to Churchill what 'would perish and be swept utterly away if our naval supremacy were to be impaired'?
- 4 How would Britain meet any slackening of naval rivalry?
- 5 What does Churchill declare will happen 'as naval competition becomes more acute'?

Briefly

Why did the British government believe that Britain needed a powerful navy but that Germany did not?

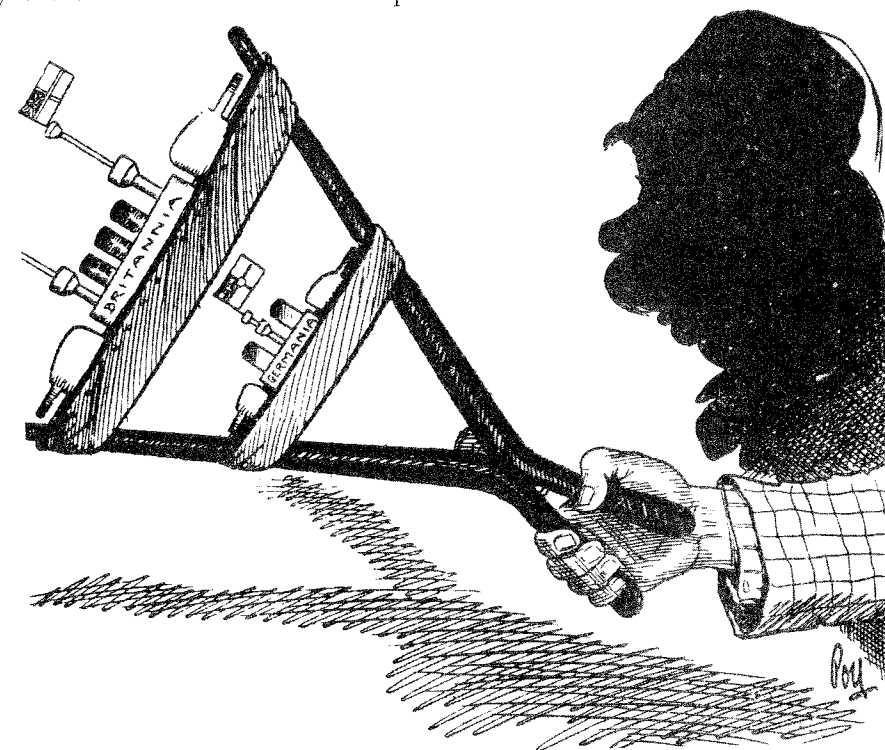


Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty from 1911-15

The Cartoonist's View: 'The Elastic Estimates'

This cartoon, published in 1912, conveys the confidence felt in Britain that the naval race with Germany had been won.

Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



The Elastic Estimates; or beaten in the stretch.

Fritz: 'Himmel! De more I squeeze to stretch mein own boat, de bigger it makes de odder one!'

- 1 Which navies are represented by the elastic ships? Which navy is represented as the largest in 1912?
- 2 Look at the way the shadow of the German is drawn and the way the caption is written. How is the cartoonist making fun of the Germans?
- 3 What is the cartoonist saying about British determination to keep ahead of Germany?

Briefly

How did the naval arms race harden the British attitude towards Germany?

Army and naval estimates of the major powers, 1870–1914

What follows is a table listing the expenditure on armaments of the five great European powers during the period 1870–1914.

Study the table and answer the questions which follow.

Army Estimates of the Major Powers, 1870–1914
(in millions of Pounds Sterling)

	Britain	Germany	France	Russia	Austria-Hungary
1870	13.4	9.6	15.0	18.6	7.4
1880	15.0	18.2	22.8	26.0	12.4
1890	17.6	24.2	28.4	24.6	11.6
1900	21.4	33.6	27.8	32.1	12.0
1910	27.6	40.8	37.6	53.4	14.6
1914	29.4	88.4	39.4	64.8	28.6

Naval Estimates of the Major Powers, 1870–1914
(in millions of Pounds Sterling)

	Britain	Germany	France	Russia	Austria-Hungary
1870	9.8	1.2	7.0	2.4	0.8
1880	10.2	2.4	8.6	3.8	0.8
1890	13.8	4.6	8.8	4.4	1.2
1900	29.2	7.4	14.6	8.4	1.8
1910	40.4	20.6	14.8	9.4	2.8
1914	47.4	22.4	18.0	23.6	7.6

- 1 During which decade did British expenditure on naval armaments more than double? Why would British spending on the navy have increased so much at this time?
- 2 How much did Britain spend on naval armaments in 1914? How much did Germany spend?
- 3 Which European powers were spending more on their armies than their navies in 1914?
- 4 By how much did Germany increase its spending on its army between 1910 and 1914? By how much did France increase its spending during the same period?
- 5 What was the combined spending in 1914 on the army and navy of Germany and of Britain? Which of these powers was spending the most on armaments?

Briefly

Why did the European powers increase their expenditure on armaments in the period 1900–1914?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Revision Essay

In what way did the European powers compete in the building of armaments in the period before the outbreak of the First World War?

Research Essay

What effect did the European arms race have on relations between the great powers between 1896 and 1914? To what degree did the arms race contribute to the outbreak of the First World War?