

## Militarism

Militarism denoted a rise in military expenditure, an increase in military and naval forces, more influence of the military men upon the policies of the civilian government, and a preference for force as a solution to problems. Militarism was one of the main causes of the First World War.

### Increase in military control of the civilian government

After 1907, there was an increase in military influence on policy making. This could be reflected particularly in Germany and Russia. The German Army at this period was called a "State within the State". The parliament and the politicians had to follow the General Staff. They had no say in the army's design to preserve the Fatherland. Even though the Schlieffen Plan would incur the anger of Great Britain and bring the latter into a war, it was accepted by the German civilian government as the war plan. In 1914, the Russian generals were also able to force the Czar to accept full mobilization. They threatened him with the danger of defeat if he acted contrarily.

### Arms race

After 1871, the war atmosphere engendered by the secret alliances led to an armaments race among the powers. The race was particularly serious between 1900 and 1914, as the international situation became much worse than before. There was a significant rise in the army and naval estimates of the European powers in these years.

### Rise in Military Expenditure

The Total Defence Expenditure of the Powers (in million £ )  
(Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Britain, France and Russia)

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1914
94	130	154	268	289	398

It is also important to take notice of the fact that from 1910 to 1914, while France increased her defence expenditure by 10%, Britain by 13%, Russia by 39%, and Germany was the most militaristic as she increased by 73%. Increased war expenditure enabled all the powers to raise more armies and improve their battleships.

### Military Rivalry

#### Army conscription

All the Continental European powers had adopted the conscription system since 1870. France had conscription since the Revolutionary Wars, Austria-Hungary since 1868, Germany since 1870, Italy since 1873 and Russia since 1874. Only Britain did not have conscription. After 1890, the

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deteriorating diplomatic relations among the powers accelerated their military expansion programme.

From 1913 to July 1914, Germany increased her standing forces by 170,000 men. France lengthened her period of military service from two to three years. Russia lengthened her term of service from three to three and a half years. Britain did not introduce conscription but had prepared her armed forces for both European expedition and for home defence. In general, all the powers increased their stocks of arms, produced more modern weapons of war and built more strategic railways.

### **Naval Race Between Germany and Britain**

Britain and Germany were the chief rivals at sea. Under Admiral Tirpitz, State Secretary of the Imperial Naval Office from 1897, a long-term shipbuilding programme began. The German Navy Law of 1898 increased the German battleships from nine cruisers to twelve. In 1900 Germany passed a Navy Law which doubled the German battle fleet.

In the meantime, Britain produced her first Dreadnought (literally, the word means fear nothing). Dreadnoughts were large, fast and heavily armed battleships with 12inch guns. They set a new standard in naval armaments and rendered all previous battleships obsolete. The naval race became intense. Between 1909 and 1911 Germany built nine Dreadnoughts while Britain completed 18 Dreadnoughts. In 1913, Germany widened the Kiel Canal to allow the easy passage of her Dreadnoughts from the Baltic to the North Sea while Britain built new naval bases for the Dreadnoughts in northern Scotland.

### ***Effects***

Increased military and naval rivalry led not only to the belief that war was coming (The German ruling group felt that only through a war could Germany become a world power. Military preparations strengthened this belief.) and increase in military control of the civilian government (particularly in Germany and Russia) also increased cooperation among the military staff of the countries of the same camp. For example, all the three Entente powers held secret military talks. The British and the French naval authorities agreed that the French navy should be concentrated in the Mediterranean and the British in the North Sea. Germany and Austria also had military agreements. When the First World War was fought, it was to be fought by all powers because they had made the military plan cooperatively.

As a result of the armaments race, all the European powers were prepared for a war by 1914.

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