

World War I

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The Catastrophe of World War I: Origins

- In the summer of 1913 the empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary are skirmishing diplomatically and threatening each other militarily about the latest Balkan crisis
 - Began when in the summer of 1914 the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo
 - By terrorists with very close links to the intelligence service of the Kingdom of Serbia
 - What would Austria's response be?
- And then Germany attacks Belgium



How Did the Germans Lose?

- Outproduced 3-1
- Short of raw materials
 - And, ultimately, of food
- Tactical and operational success
 - Prussia
 - Fehrbellin
 - Friedrich II “the Great”
 - Metternich the moronic
- Strategic, logistical, and grand-strategic catastrophe



The Catastrophe of World War I: Outcome

- Russian, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman Turkish Empires all gone...
- Representative governments destabilized—or weak...
- The Russian Revolution...
 - Hungarian, Bavarian socialist republics (short-lived)
 - Spartakist...
- Allies demand 2 years of German GDP as “reparations” ...
- Combatants had mobilized 65M out of 100M men of military age
 - 10M killed
 - 10M maimed
 - Civilian casualties less than 10% of military
 - Costs of 1.5x a year’s GDP
 - Plus a 15M global flu epidemic



Catch Our Breath...

- Comments?
- Questions?

