



# POWER AND PREPARATION FOR WAR

The “Great War” was the first milestone of confrontation of systems during which, in the setting of the conflict, all factors that have been present throughout history coexisted: the prevailing philosophical conception, the exercise of power, technology, research and technological- scientific development, the impact of military capacity as the exercise of power and international relations

KEY WORDS: BALANCE OF POWER / MILITARY CAPACITY / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / ALLIANCES / EVOLUTION OF WAR

By Jorge Osvaldo Sillone

## INTRODUCTION

One of the intellectual efforts that must be made to understand any war under analysis consists in understanding the dynamics of the power of the nations involved in war. In this way, we can interpret the logic of the period and appreciate actions avoiding the risk of taking concepts of the present to this historical fact.

In 1815, with the defeat of Napoleon, a political power cycle during which monarchies exercised this power started in Europe. This situation remained like that for almost 100 years, up to the end of World War I when republican power systems appeared in Europe.

In this article, we will make a brief description of each of the main countries involved in World War I, explaining their power relations and their attitude in light of the intricate evolution of alliances and conflicts before the great conflagration.

We will make an analysis of the characteristics of the formal political power and their support to the military power of their country, which was typically expressed in the approval of military plans and allocation of resources.

Simultaneously, we will describe the dependence and compliance by military authorities (command and planning bodies) with relation to political power in order to understand the feeling of threat that each nation had, how they got ready to face it and whether there were restrictions imposed to conduction.

From the beginning of history, there are threats and risks that all societies have to face. Those who could reduce and/or eliminate them had the key to success.

The evolution of the art of war teaches that the defense of society can be carried out by having a correct strategic vision and, therefore, the preparation of all systems, including its military instrument with a proper budget and time for training as well as proper equipment to be properly used within the framework of operations planned.

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This premise is normally complemented by a simultaneous and correct activity of diplomacy which carries out its action during a crisis according to the vision of the country within the world power of its times.

Within this framework, the system of international commitments and alliances has a vital role as foreseeability is an essential factor when time and arguments vanish.

It is necessary to explain that the concept of joint operations did not exist at that time but, of course, experience provided the basis for them to be carried out during the 20th century.

Moreover, the existence of combined operations was clearly seen in the exercise of diplomatic obligations, but this was not due to a proper use forecast. These criteria can be clearly seen in operations carried out by the British Expeditionary Force (BEF)<sup>1</sup> and, then, in 1917, with the arrival of US soldiers in Europe (France).

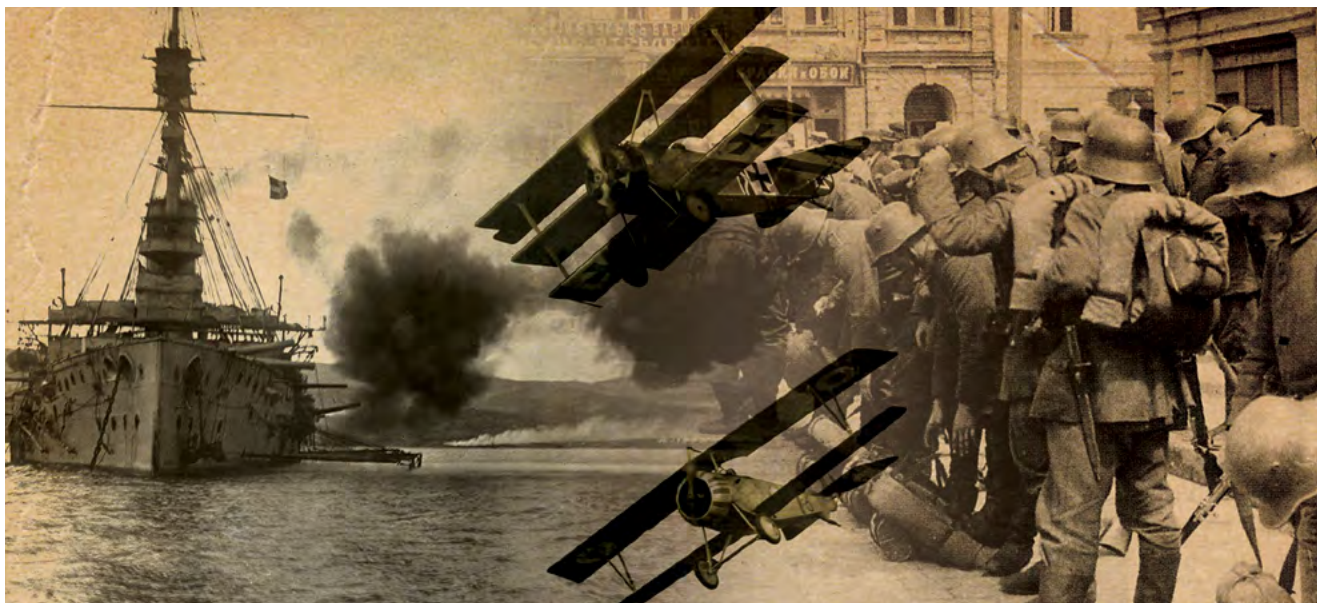
## CONTEXT PRIOR TO CONFLICT

We can see, throughout the European history prior to the beginning of the Great War, some events, contexts, actions and alliances that had an impact on it:

- › The Prussian successful victory in the 1870 War<sup>2</sup>.
- › The intricate diplomatic relationships among European nations during the pre-war period and their secret pacts
- › The economic and political trends that prevailed in Europe since 1871 when the Second German Empire appeared as a great power.
- › The strong nationalist spirit that was extended throughout Europe in the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, the economic and political rivalry among the different nations and the militarization process as well as the vertiginous arms record that was a characteristic of international society during the last 30 years of the 19th century<sup>3</sup>, as from the creation of two systems of alliances that were confronted.
- › Colonialism, materialized by the European presence in Africa, coexisted with military expansion<sup>4</sup>.

1. BEF: British Expeditionary Force

2. Luvaas Jay states that: "The Prussian- French war was a dividing line or an important aspect for both military history and diplomacy. The main military thoughts came from Berlin..." Then, he gives organizational details that justify his thought: "The size of the infantry company in neighbouring armies increased in order to be similar to the German organization of 250 men that had served as basic tactic unit in 1866 and 1870. It was adopted by Austria- Hungary, Russia, France and Italy. The United States adopted it in 1901 and England in 1913." Published in: *Teoría y práctica de la guerra, Pensamiento y Doctrina militar europea, 1870-1914.*, Volume 596; Book I; Círculo Militar, Buenos Aires; 1968.



In light of these risks and threats that European nations faced, they adopted foreign and domestic policies between 1871 and 1914 that increased the possibility to have a conflict:

- › They had permanent armies with a significant number of troops and optimized enlistment conditions, training, equipment and mobilization in times of peace.
- › They increased navy tonnage in significant proportions with respect to resources available in prior decades.
- › Great Britain, influenced by the development of the German Navy which began in 1900 and which improved its fleet during the Russian- Japanese War (1905).
- › The long- range navy weaponry was strengthened based on the war experience which took place between Russia and Japan (1905).
- › The work of staffs was optimized so that they could be able to make mobilization plans and to use combat power in a precise way so that they can be in line with technological- scientific advances and their influence on military operations.
- › The number of troops to be used on the battlefield was something new and represented a new challenge for concepts of military application. Maneuver and

fire, together with the concept of logistic support were complexities that only had the reference of the French- Prussian War in 1870, during which mobility, promptness and support of troops due to the territory preparation and the use of trains, were more than the ideas that were current at that time.

- › The work of diplomats was more important during this period as the different European states made alliances with other powers so that they did not become isolated in case of war. This attitude led to an increase in the possibilities of a generalized conflict. Therefore, two hostile military alliances arose: the Triple Alliance, formed by Germany, Austria- Hungary and Italy and the Triple Entente, formed by Great Britain, France and Russia.
- › As from the creation of these military political blocks, this moment was known as the period of “Armed Peace”. In this context, as Europe was divided into two systems of hostile alliances, any change in the political or military situation in the continent, Africa or any other place may cause an international incident.

These measures had an immediate reaction in the intricate map of European relations. The consequences of this may be summarized as follows:

- › Risk existed between 1905 and 1914 as there were several international crisis and two domestic wars which could cause an extended war in Europe.
- › The first conflict took place in Morocco, where Germany fought in 1905 and 1906 to support the country in its fight for independence and to avoid French and Spanish domain over the area. France warned Germany that it would start war against it but the problem was solved

3. Belgium got independent from the Netherlands in 1830; the unification of Italy finished in 1861 and the unification of German, in 1871. However, nationalist conflicts were still not solved in other areas in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. This caused stress in the regions involved and among different European nations. One of the most important nationalist lines, the Pan- Slavism, had an important role in the events before the war.

4. Author's note: The increase of manufactured products in European nations which grew as the Industrial Revolution evolved made it necessary to have raw materials outside the European continent; therefore, the commercial and military expansion was the combination that was used.

at the international conference which took place in Algeiras (Spain) in 1906.

- › The Balkans Peninsula was the setting for a new battle in 1908 boosted by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria- Hungary. Among the different types of Pan- Slavism, there was the Panserbianism, which was a movement for the creation of a Greater Serbia, the purpose of which was, among others, that the region could take the southern area of Bosnia and this is why the Serbians would declare a war against Austria. No campaign was started as the Serbians would not start a fight without the support from Russia which was not in capacity to take part.
- › In 1911, a new crisis started in Morocco when the German administration sent a warship to Agadir to protest against the French attempt to get domain over this area.
- › Italy, as great powers were worried about the conflict in Morocco, declared war against the Ottoman Empire in 1911, with the purpose of annexing the region of Tripolitania, in the north of Africa. Given that Germany was forced due to its national interests to build relationships with the Ottoman Empire, the attack by Italy weakened the Triple Alliance and encouraged their enemies.
- › The 1912- 1913 Balkans Wars increased the interest of Serbia to get control of the areas of the Austria- Hungary Empire which was inhabited by Slavs. This increased mistrust from the Empire to the Serbians and caused in Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire some desire for revenge after their defeat in those conflicts.

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- › Germany, as a consequence of the Balkan conflict, formed an army with more men.
- › France rearranged its defense situation by extending compulsory military service from two to three years in times of peace.
- › Other European nations followed the example of these powers and decided to increase budget to military expenses.

These international events caused tension among great powers and there could have been confrontation. This did not happen as it was possible to prevent an escalation of proportions.

Because of this, in light of the event that took place in Sarajevo (1914) and the subsequent claims, there was no reason to suspect there would be a war of proportions. Time would show that this was not so.

#### POWERS AND THEIR PREPARATION FOR WAR

In 1914, none of the nations which were later involved, wanted a widespread war. The one that was in the least



George V, King of England



Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia



William II, Emperor of Germany



Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg and General Helmuth Johan von Moltke

*As from the creation of the Triple Alliance, formed by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy and of the Triple Entente formed by Great Britain, France and Russia, this period is known as Armed Peace.*

In order to carry out actions as regards foreign policy, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg (1856- 1921) was the Chancellor. General Helmuth Johan von Moltke (1848-1916) was initially Chief of Staff.

The motivation to enter war was to support an ally, Austria. With this, it was possible to unbalance French power and, therefore, reduce its potential. Also, it would be possible to make it difficult for Russia to expand to the straits of the Black Sea and extend their own borders at the expense of the existing Russian borders over the Polish territory and other regions where German peoples lived (this motivation still existed during World War II). Finally, it would dispute supremacy over the industrial, commercial and colonial power with Great Britain.

Within this framework, the formal political power and the German Staff authorities agreed on purposes and achievements for the country. There was a need to expand international trade and to extend borders. The difficulty was that they had little maritime capacity while their enemy, England, was superior.

In order to achieve those goals, in the European context, Germany had to be an unconditional ally of the Austria- Hungary Empire and be ready in military terms for future events.

The following were the ideas for the military- political action:

- › To be aware of the concept of nation in arms, in which the national potential is subordinated by the purpose of war, if necessary. Plans were developed and carried out by Earl von Schlieffen with the premise to combat in two

interested was Russia which was under Tsar rule and recovering from its defeat against Japan in 1905. There was a thought, desired rather than affirmed, that this Balkan conflict in Sarajevo would only be the third Balkan war.

We will now describe the context of the political and military reality and the view that each country had as regards a future confrontation. We will include the names of the authorities in charge of that and the reasons that led each country to war in a context in which, based on the grounds previously mentioned, any event could have been the cause of confrontation<sup>5,6</sup>.

An important detail to understand this period in Europe is to know that the main actors of this battle, the ruling monarchies, were relatives of each other. George V, king of England, William II, emperor of Germany and Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia were brothers.

However, this family relation could not save this delicate situation as the interests at stake of each power were more important than it.

This aspect of power is essential as the murder in Sarajevo gave place to informal communication among the kings which took place simultaneously with diplomacy work, but war machinery was ready to explode.

## GERMANY

William II (1859- 1941) was a descendant of Frederick William of Prussia and of Princess Victoria of England and cousin of the Tsar of Russia. In 1888, he became emperor. He defended sovereign monarchy and would receive the support of conservatives against the opposition from radicals and socialists.

5. Hobsbawn, Eric; *La era del imperio*, 1875-1914; Editorial Planeta, Buenos Aires; 1998. "The international atmosphere seemed to be quiet. No chancery expected a conflict in June, 1914 and, for many decades, murders of public figures had been frequent. First, nobody was even interested in the fact that a great power could launch an attack against a bothering and unimportant neighbor as the Austria- Hungary attack against Serbia by the end of July of that year seemed to be. "Until the end of his life, Gavrilo Princip, the murderer of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, he could not believe that his insignificant action would have caused the world to be on fire".

6. Author's note: Princip was a member of the Serbian group Young Bosnia (Mlada Bosna) that supported the unification of Bosnia and Serbia.



fronts and, thus, to cause power to be capable of winning in said conditions.

- › To be confident in their military power after having evaluated their potential enemies, France and Russia which, although they were powerful in terms of number and force, they were thought to have different strategic weaknesses.
- › To have modern weapons and a doctrine adapted for strategic needs. Germany had taken the experience of recent wars:
  - › Anglo Boer (South Africa; the first of these wars took place from December 16, 1880 to March 23, 1881) and the second one took place from October 11, 1899 to May 31, 1902).
  - › Russia- Japan (from 1904 to 1905). The conflict of interests was presented to design their area of influence in Manchuria, Chinese province, and to get power over the Korean Peninsula. The victory of Japan turned it into a power in the East and the defeat of Russia meant the beginning of the political and social crisis that led to the Revolution in 1917.

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to finish it by the end of the year 1914. The risk was that they had to combat simultaneously in two fronts: In the East, against Russia and in the West, against France. This reduced their logical possibilities and expectations to succeed based on the capacity to support war operations.

With these essential conditions, the Plan<sup>7</sup> updated in 1897 by Earl Schlieffen<sup>8</sup> and readapted in 1905 was taken into consideration using the well-known military resource from Prussia regarding manoeuvres by inner lines.

The strategic manoeuvre consisted in an attack materialized in a quick movement through Belgium and making encirclement of the defensive settlements of the French army to leave them caught in Lorraine (in the east of France), before the Russian could move all their troops. This part was key to succeed.

As it can be observed, the assumption of movement times for Russian troops is the condition for the whole German manoeuvre as its efficiency and speed depended

7. German troops had to conquer Belgium, to make encirclement through the West, circling Paris, conquer it and change front to defeat enemy forces.

8. General Alfred von Schlieffen, Earl of Schlieffen was Staff Officer in Prussia during the France-Prussia war in 1870. After the German unification which was completed by the victory during that war, he was Chief of Staff of Germany between 1891 and 1905.

upon the possibility to make the feared Russian capacity materialize in the West.

This assumption became the true Achille's heel of all the war for Germany as its Plan was not flexible.

The strategic key for Germans in its planning was the proper use of time and the Belgium neutrality to take advantage of their superiority that would give them the strategic surprise of the manoeuvre which was not foreseen by the allies in the European north. The purpose was to defeat French troops in the West and then take all this effort to the East in order to defeat the Russians. As it may be seen, prediction caused to have a forced view of the future.

All of this planning was supported with adequate preparation of the German territory which was crossed by railways that transported troops and logistic support of great volume with a speed that had never been seen before.

Political support came when the Plan was approved and resources were assigned to the fulfillment of forecasts with the purpose to make Germany greater.

### Austro- Hungarian Empire

At this moment, the emperor of Austria and king of Hungary was Franz Joseph I (1830- 1916) who was, in 1914, 84 years old and was Commander- in- Chief. The nominal command of the land and sea forces was exercised by his brother, General Archduke Friedrich of Austria as the one who commanded operations was the Chief of Staff.

His nephew, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand (1863- 1914) became, in 1896, the heir after a series of death events in the Habsburg family and had a great influence on the Empire.



Emperor Franz Joseph I and General Franz Conrad von Hotzendorf

*Russia, apart from having a commitment with France and England, had interest in the Balkans over which it sought supremacy as well as in the East. The greatest motivation to enter war was eliminating Austrian influence over the Balkans and to make Germany weaker so that these nations could not oppose to its expansion in the area and straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) that would assure its outlet to the Mediterranean Sea.*

The Empire had General Franz Conrad von Hotzendorf (1852- 1925) as Chief of Army Staff who had incorporated and transmitted a military doctrine similar to the one of his allies training his officers almost in the same way Germans did. During war, he commanded operations.

This was an empire that fought for its difficult existence. Its motivation to enter war was to maintain their domain over the Balkans.

In 1908, it had annexed Bosnia- Herzegovina. Its outlet to the Adriatic Sea also had difficulties.

Its inner front had serious nationality problems due to its heterogeneity which made it difficult to integrate and consolidate political power.

The alliance among Serbia, France and Russia, in the European context, was a risk for its supremacy in the region.

War, in this setting, was considered a certain possibility to solve these problems.

The Army had three separate and autonomous forces which, in operation, acted under a unique command: The Imperial and Royal Force, the Hungary Royal Army and the Austria Imperial Army.

There were eleven nationalities and a greater number of languages in these forces. Also, they had soldiers of different religions: Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. These heterogeneous elements made it difficult to conduct operations. In spite of this, it was considered an efficient military instrument which was subordinate to the emperor.

In order to mobilize and gather these officers, Austro-Hungarians had seven railways that allowed transport



with certain restrictions. Two of them were double railways and, among the simple railways, some crossed Carpathian Mountains connecting with the Russian border.

Strategic targets of the Austro- Hungarian Empire referred to the absolute domain of the Balkans and the restriction of Italy regarding territorial ambitions for which they would have to conquer the kingdom of Serbia and, therefore, neutralize Pan- Slavism movement that was becoming greater, giving rise to the annexation of that country to the Empire and to the opening of other ways to have access to the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea.

### Great Britain

During the kingdom of Victoria (1819- 1901), there was an industrial, cultural, political, scientific and military change that gave identity to Great Britain as an empire. She was the last queen of the House of Hanover.

King George V (1865- 1936), grandson of the Great Queen, who during the Great War changed the name of the royal house which changed from Saxe- Coburg to Windsor, was important during War as he visited English troops in France.

The Foreign Affairs Secretary was Sir Edward Grey (1862- 1933). He was mediator during the Balkans crisis before World War I and tried to prevent Germany from becoming part of the conflict. He was responsible for the secret treaty by which Italy became part of the ally. Once war started, Grey discouraged allies from

signing negotiation or peace agreements with the enemy separately. On December 5, 1916, he resigned.

The motivation to enter war was to try to keep a political balance in continental Europe. An eventual victory of central powers put it at risk.

Its insular position reduced military risks that central powers implied.

In 1914, its military potential was of 160,000 men of the British Expeditionary Force.

The British military force was at sea. Its fleet was the most important one in the world and it prepared for a traditional action in its history: a continental siege.

A distinctive aspect in its group of officers was that they had origin and education in common and they were encouraged by the same intransigent loyalty and

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patriotism. In general, they had war experience in colonies.

The Anglo- Boer War changed doctrine and equipment.

Its land officers based their capacity in organizations of colonial experience, distributed in Africa and the Middle East.

It prepared its participation with land officers by sending the British Expeditionary Force to the continent.

The military instrument had the total support from the British monarchy. The main context of these times was marked by the industrial revolution during which military supremacy meant territorial power over distant places with exploitable natural resources.

## France

At that time, the president of this nation was Raymond Poincaré (1860- 1934) and the first Chief of Staff was General Joseph Joffree (1852- 1931). General Ferdinand Foch (1851- 1929) shaped the doctrine of extreme offensive.

The reason to enter war was to recover from the defeat in 1870 and to recover Alsace and Lorraine as well as to reduce the capacities of Germany as a nation so that it does not become a threat.

Taking the guarantee offered by England to Belgium<sup>9</sup>, the French government and the Staff did not think that it was possible to apply the Schlieffen Plan. Therefore, predictions by the French defense based their strategic ideas on a defensive attitude reinforcing buildings between the Swiss and the Belgian borders.

The defeat during the French- Prussian War had important consequences on the French military spirit. Doctrines were revised and concepts were modified.



President of France Raymond Poincaré and Chief of Staff General Joseph Joffre

***The United States declared to be neutral at the beginning of the war for many reasons. American foreign policy had the characteristic of isolation and the grounds of Monroe Doctrine, based on taking care of American sovereignty in its continent and to have it under its influence.***

There was a belief that defeat was the result of the lack of efficiency and competence that led them to create the Ecole Militaire Supérieure in 1878, to make a reform of Staff in 1880 and to increase the interest in military education. In this reform, the main issue was the study of the principles on how to conduct operations.

Its military preparation was aimed at recovering lost territories.

President Raymond Poincaré stated in 1914: *I do not see any other reason for the existence of my generation that is not the hope to recover our lost provinces.*

After a series of plans, France put Plan XVII in practice in August 1914. This plan stated the following:

- › Improvement of railways in order to finish them in 1916
- › Law to accelerate mobilization
- › Extension of military service to 3 years
- › Preparation of plans that can operate in two different theaters of operations: one in the north- east region and the other one in the region of the Alps.
- › The ideas in 1870 were seen in the cases the enemy movement was slow and in the fact of having enough time to make movement, concentration and to transport contingents to places of combat by using the existing railway which was built in a transverse way to make the execution of different variations possible.

German speed and movement were not foreseen at any moment.

## Serbia

The king of this country was Peter I Karadjordjevic (1844- 1921). He had little participation during the conflict. A

9. The Treaty of London of 1839, also known as the Convention of 1839, was signed on April 19, 1839. Under this treaty, European powers (United Kingdom, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia and the Netherlands) officially acknowledged independence and neutrality of Belgium. Upon the insistence of the United Kingdom, article VII set forth that Belgium would be neutral and, therefore, signatory parties would have to keep that neutrality in case of invasion.



Great Duke Nicholas Nikoláyevich and Vittorio Emanuele III

visit to the troops in 1915 when he was already 71 years old was recorded. His last public appearance was on December 1, 1918 when he was proclaimed King of the Serbians, Croats and Slovenians. He died in Belgrade in 1921 when he was 77 years old.

As Prime Minister, Nicolás Pasic (1845-1926) led the government during the whole war period. His main achievement was to keep the interests of Serbia in light of the world context and to appear as a leader, in 1918, of the new state: Yugoslavia.

The motivation to enter war was the expansion of their

territory over the basis of the annexation of Slovenian peoples that were part of the Austro- Hungarian Empire and, therefore, create the “Greater Serbia”.

For the fulfillment of this goal, it was necessary to be “out” of the Austro- Hungarian Empire. This scenario was possible with the support from Russia to carry out this separation.

Serbia had a strategic position and a nationalist orientation aimed at its Slovenian origin which resisted any type of dominance by Austria- Hungary. It wanted its own outlet to the sea and also the domain over the region that had been changing at the expense of nationals and foreigners who were interested in the continuing elimination of the Ottoman domain over it in a diverse and troubled group of nations.

### Russian Empire

Tsar Nicholas II (1868- 1918), cousin of the German emperor, was the last tsar of Russia. He was in charge of the Empire since 1849 until his abdication in 1917.

The Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich (1856- 1929), General and relative of the tsar and also, until he became Commander of the Military Region of Saint Petersburg, gave great political support to the tsar when neutralizing conspiracy against him.

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in the area and straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) that would assure its outlet to the Mediterranean Sea.

The power of the Tsar was questioned as the origin of the revolution<sup>10</sup> was present in the Russian social minds.

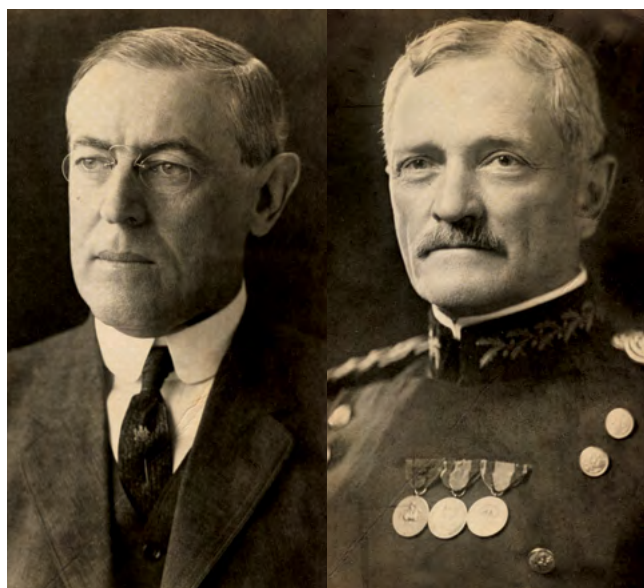
Anyway, the Army, which was the greatest in Europe had 1,200,000 men, and was, therefore, the most powerful Army at those times. It had an endless number of human resources which turned this conglomerate into a fearsome organizational giant in Europe.

The weakness of this military organization was that it was obsolete and that it had limited pace both because of means available and the little infrastructure of the country.

In the international context, it is worth mentioning that it protected Serbia since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It tried to keep the flag of Pan- Slavism high.

The Russian- Japanese war, in which Russia was defeated, led to a better interpretation of modern war, therefore, the Army evolved and had modern and mobile weapons. The problem was the preparation of the groups of officers and petty officers as well as of them with the soldiers. Moreover, the most important weakness was the chain of command as power was exercised by favourite men close to the Tsar, a situation that was privileged on top of technical skills.

On November 6, 1917, the Bolshevik revolution broke out and Lenin came to power in Russia. In December, the new government asked for an armistice to Germany and hostilities ended. On March 3, 1918, Leon Trotsky, on the side of Russia and general Max Hoffman, on the side of Germany, signed the Brest- Litovsk Treaty to put an end to war on the Eastern Front.



Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States and General John P. Pershing

*At the end of this war, the world was different. Great Britain was dominant and the United States entered the world of great powers with its weapons and with the aid of Great Britain. Colonialism started to disappear and the first world attempt to reach mutual understanding with the creation of the League of Nations, an international organization aimed at regulating relations among States and keeping peace.*

### Belgium

This country remained neutral relying on the support that England had committed to under the 1839 Treaty. The German government had informed on August 1, 1914 to the Belgian government about their intention to cross France through its territory<sup>11</sup> in order to prevent the French from using this route to attack Germany. Belgian authorities refused to allow German troops to enter and resorted to the countries that signed the 1839 Treaty -under which neutrality from Belgium was guaranteed in case of conflict in which Great Britain, France and Germany were involved- so that the provisions stated in said Treaty would be fulfilled.

### Italy

Vittorio Emanuele III (1869- 1947). His full name was Vittorio Emanuele Ferdinando Gennaro Maria di Savoia-Carignano and he ruled this nation between the years 1900 and 1946. He came after his father, Humberto I, in 1900 when he was killed in Monza. During the Great War, he annexed Trentino and Alto Adige, regions with Italian population and ruled by Austria.

General Luigi Cadorna (1850- 1928) was the Chief of Staff during the Great War. He led the war during the

10. In February 1917, the Romanov dynasty fell and the Bolshevik Revolution succeeded. Tsar Nicholas II abdicated and a new ruling class from all types of political groups came to power. In Russia, there was double power: one temporary government and a popular and revolutionary force, the "soviets" which took power at factories and workshops and that had the support of the Russian public opinion.

11. Castro B. Santiago; Revista Militar No 290; Chile, Strengths; p. 215. (From the memorial of the Chilean Army, January 1917), Argentina, Buenos Aires, March 1917, it states that this determination was not temporary, urgent, hasty, but it was stated in documents and books of those times".

first thirty months of the battle although, in theory, the commander in chief was King Vittorio Emanuele III. He solved a difficult military problem that was to combat in a front with mountains of more than 700 kilometres long.

He neutralized Austrian attacks in Trentino during the spring of the year 1916. He conquered Gorizia (in August, 1916) and got victories in Asiago and Baensezza (1917). All of these Italian successful events were neutralized by the movements of Austrian and German troops at the beginning of the autumn of 1917. However, he was known for his defeat in the Battle of Caporetto (October 24, 1917), which had a negative impact for Italy.

Italy remained neutral until May 23, 1915 when it breached its pact with the Triple Alliance to satisfy its territorial ambitions and declared war to Austria-Hungary. It entered the conflict based on the promises in the Treaty signed on April 26, 1915 in London.

These territorial promises were about:

- › Recovery of Italian- speaking territories which were under Austria- Hungary ruling
- › Great part of Dalmatia
- › The region of Adalia in Turkey in the case the Ottoman Empire would be distributed
- › Distribution of German colonies in Libia and Eritrea

### United States

Woodrow Wilson. President (1856- 1924). In the election campaign of 1916, he used neutrality as argument. However, in 1917, he was forced to breach his promises of neutrality in light of the submarine attacks against navigation in the Atlantic Sea and fear of an alliance between Germany and Mexico to snatch territories from the United States.

General John J. Pershing was responsible for training in the territory of this country and for the conduction of American Expeditionary Forces in Europe.

President Wilson and War Secretary Newton D. Baker, gave Pershing almost unlimited authority. In fact, Baker said he would only receive two orders: one to leave and one to come back. *The decision about when his command or any of its parts was ready for action lied in you*<sup>12</sup>.

For the analysis of the US case, it is necessary to extend it until 1917 when the US entered war.

The United States declared to be neutral at the beginning of the war for many reasons. American foreign policy had the characteristic of isolation and the grounds of Monroe Doctrine, based on taking care of American sovereignty in its continent and to have it under its influence.

War affected this country as regards commerce through the Atlantic Sea due to the maritime block that the British had imposed in order to cause trouble to the Germans.

COUNTRIES OF THE ENTENTE	MILITARY SERVICE	PERMANENCE IN RESERVE	ARMY AND RESERVE TROOPS (1914)
France	3 years	22 years	4.017.000
Great Britain	7 years(*)	5 years	975.000
Russia	3 1/2 years	22 years	5.971.000
Romania	-	-	290.000
Serbia	-	-	200.000
Belgium	-	-	117.000

(\*) Professional troops

COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL EMPIRES	MILITARY SERVICE	PERMANENCE IN RESERVE	ARMY AND RESERVE TROOPS (1914)
Germany	2 years	28 years	4.500.000
Austria- Hungary	2 a 5 years	23 years	3.000.000
Italy	-	-	1.251.000
Turkey	-	-	210.000
Bulgary	-	-	280.000

In this country, the fact that the British withheld vessels was seen as an outrage, thus breaching international law provisions. However, the worst situation was that, apart from that, they seized goods and, above all, documents such as the log book or itinerary and could, therefore, find out with whom, when and under what conditions they negotiated vessels all around the world.

Also, German submarine war affected trade with the British Islands as several American load vessels were sunk or captured. With the sinking of Lusitania, Americans threatened to break diplomatic relations with Germany and to take revenge.

As regards economy and finance, they were clearly in favour of the ally as, with war, trade with Germany was reduced and almost disappearing while trade with the British increased.

With respect to financial aspects, allies were dependent on Americans as Washington gave war credits between 1916 and 1917, thus forecasting a worldwide future leadership at the end of the conflict.

12. Odom, William; *Training of American Expeditionary Forces, 1917/18*; Military Review; January/ February 2001; p. 21

13. Author's note: intervention experience

Security issues were the reason why they entered war as security was affected by submarine war. Also, they expected to prevent German supremacy in Europe.

It declared war on January 31, 1917. At the beginning of February, it had already broken diplomatic relations with Germany and in April, it requested Congress to vote in favour of the declaration of war which was approved by a great majority.

In 1917, war had not suffered great changes. Battle was stuck in a breakeven. But, since Russia withdrew and the United States entered the battle in the Western front (May 3), the static and known trench war became imbalanced.

Since May 3, 1918 when Germany put an end to operations in the Eastern front because Russia surrendered, it put efforts in the Western front but it could not get the desired success as the US forces in the region caused a military power imbalance.

Events took place more rapidly and on September 29, Hindenburg and Ludendorff carried out negotiations with allied powers so that Germany could request armistice.

On October 3, the new German administration requested armistice and, based on pre-arrangements, October 29 was the last day of military operations of World War I.

## WAR DECLARATIONS

1914

**JUNE 29.** Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by a Bosnian student who was member of the secret society "Unification or Death"

**JULY 6.** Germany guaranteed support to Austria

**JULY 23.** Austria-Hungary sent a 48 hour ultimatum to Serbia demanding its intervention in the murder investigation and punishment

**JULY 25.** Serbia responded stating that its national sovereignty was breached and ordered partial mobilization. This event led to the breaking of diplomatic relations and partial mobilization of Austria-Hungary. Russia decided to support Serbia

**JULY 29.** Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia

**JULY 31.** Austria-Hungary ordered total mobilization. Germany sent an ultimatum to Russia to stop total mobilization and another ultimatum to France requiring neutrality

**AUGUST 1.** Germany mobilized its army and declared war against Russia

**AUGUST 3.** Germany declared war against France

**AUGUST 3/4.** Turkey signed an agreement with Germany and declared armed neutrality

### Germany invaded Belgium

**AUGUST 4.** England sent an ultimatum to Germany requiring it to respect Belgian neutrality. This declaration is equivalent to a war declaration

**AUGUST 6.** Serbia declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary against Russia

**AUGUST 23.** Japan declared war against Germany

**NOVEMBER 2/5.** Russia, England and France declared war against Turkey

As from that date changes took place faster. On November 9, William II of Germany abdicated and was exiled in the Netherlands; on the following day, the new German administration was formed, it became a republic and on November 11 armistice was signed.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

In the evolution of the art of war, the "Great War" meant the start of an acceleration process that took place during the 20th century regarding substantial aspects of classical ideas about war, the formation of groups of officers and petty officers and the equipment of individual combatants and of officers, petty officers and soldiers.

The "Great War" was the first confrontation of systems in which in the conflict scenario, all factors that have always been present in history coexisted: technology, research and technological scientific development, military capacity projection as exercise of power and international relations.

The heroic combatant of the last twenty years gave place to the anonymous one, the one from the trench and mobilized masses. The appearance of the machine gun, planes, tanks, the great destruction capacity and other war instruments gave more depth to confrontation and involved civil peoples in a massive way.

The horror of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear war (CBRN) had, in this period, origin due to the use of gas as an element of combat and psychological pressure over the enemy without making any difference between civilians and military men.

Weapons and arms systems evolved as to lethal nature with the purpose of separating combatants and producing more destruction effects.

At the end of this war, the world was different. Great Britain was dominant and the United States entered the world of great powers with its weapons and with the aid of Great Britain. Colonialism started to disappear and the first world attempt to reach mutual understanding with the creation of the League of Nations, an international organization aimed at regulating relations among States and keeping peace.

As it did not have authority to enforce its decisions, this organization failed and could not prevent a new world war (1939- 1945).

Last, it is worth mentioning that war is almost always a political responsibility in which the military instrument is only a sector of society that is technically organized based on previsions and orientations which, throughout time, has been adopted by politicians to face threats and opposite interests that affect the society to which they belong.

> REFEREEED ARTICLE