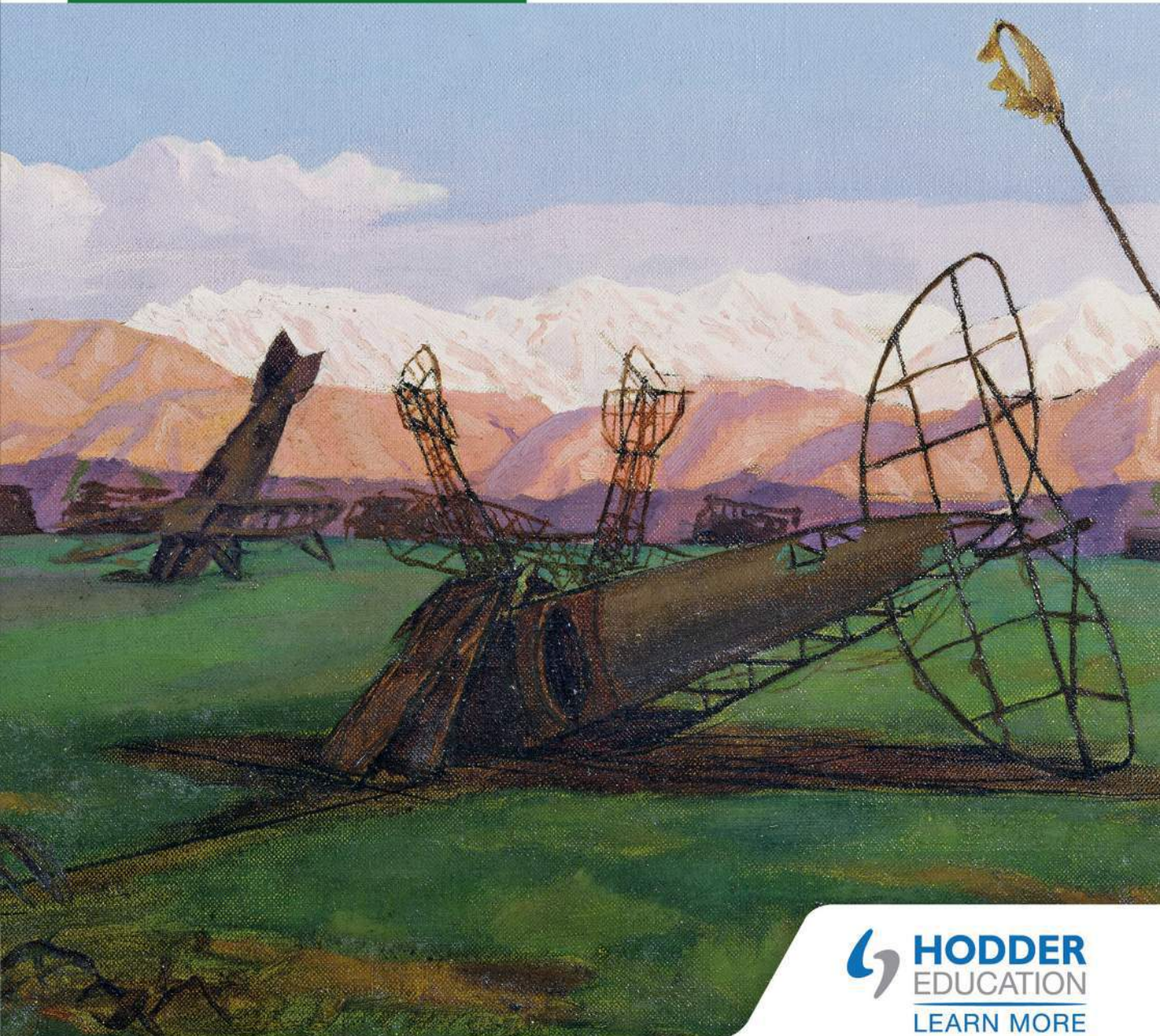


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# War and Peace: International Relations 1890–1945

DAVID G. WILLIAMSON

**FOURTH EDITION**



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# War and Peace: International Relations

1890–1941

DAVID G. WILLIAMSON

FOURTH EDITION



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## Dedication

### Keith Randell (1943–2002)

The *Access to History* series was conceived and developed by Keith, who created a series to 'cater for students as they are, not as we might wish them to be'. He leaves a living legacy of a series that for over 20 years has provided a trusted, stimulating and well-loved accompaniment to post-16 study. Our aim with these new editions is to continue to offer students the best possible support for their studies.

# Growing international tension 1878–90

The defeat of France by Prussia led to the creation of the German Empire and a major shift in the balance of power in Europe. At the same time, the decline of the Turkish Empire caused increasing tension between the Austrian and Russian Empires in the Balkans. This chapter analyses the consequences of these events under the following headings:

- ★ The unification of Germany and its consequences
- ★ The Balkans and the League of the Three Emperors
- ★ Bismarck's web of alliances 1879–83
- ★ The Anglo-French quarrel over Egypt and its consequences
- ★ The Bulgarian crisis 1885–7

## Key dates

<b>1871</b>	Treaty of Frankfurt: war ended between France and Germany	<b>1882</b>	Triple Alliance
<b>1873</b>	League of the Three Emperors created	<b>1884–5</b>	British forces landed in Egypt
<b>1878</b>	Congress of Berlin		Foundations of the German colonial empire laid
<b>1879</b>	Austro-German Alliance	<b>1887</b>	Reinsurance Treaty
<b>1881</b>	Three Emperors' Alliance	<b>1890</b>	Bismarck dismissed

## 1 The unification of Germany and its consequences

► *Why did German unification mark a major shift in power in Europe?*

The defeat of first Austria in 1866 and then France in 1871 by Prussia was to have a profound effect on international relations. Before 1867 Germany as a unified state had not existed. Instead, there was a loose **confederation** of 39 German states, which was dominated by Prussia and Austria. Rivalry between these two states erupted into war in 1866 and led to the creation of the North German Confederation. Unlike the former German Confederation this was essentially a powerful new German state dominated by Prussia with the potential to change the balance of power in Europe. France was therefore

### KEY TERM

**Confederation** A grouping of states in which each state retains its sovereignty.

determined to veto any move to complete German unification by Prussia and in 1870 declared war. French defeat in 1871 led to the creation of the German Empire, whose birth, to the utter humiliation of France, was proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles on 30 January. In May the war was ended with the Treaty of Frankfurt by which France ceded the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany and an indemnity was to be paid after which the Prussian army of occupation would be withdrawn from northern France.

? To what extent does this map show how the newly united Germany changed the balance of power in central and eastern Europe?



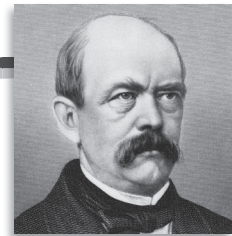
Central and eastern Europe in 1871.

## Otto von Bismarck

1815	Born in Schönhausen
1848	Supported the Prussian Crown during the revolts of 1848–9
1851–8	Prussian ambassador in Frankfurt
1859–61	Prussian ambassador in St Petersburg and Paris
1862	Appointed chief minister of Prussia
1866	Established North German Confederation after the defeat of Austria
1871–90	Chancellor of the German Empire
1890	Dismissed by Kaiser Wilhelm II
1898	Died

Bismarck was born into an old, established, landed family in Prussia. He entered politics in 1847 and made a reputation for himself as an extreme

**counter-revolutionary** when he supported the Prussian king during the revolutionary turmoil of the years 1848–9. As a reward he was appointed Prussian ambassador to the German Confederation in 1851. He rapidly became critical of Austria's attempt to dominate the Confederation and at every opportunity urged Prussia to seize the leadership of Germany. He became the prime minister of Prussia in 1862 and, after the defeat of both Austria and France, created the German Empire in 1871. Up to 1871 he was intent on challenging the existing order, but once Germany was unified he was anxious to avoid any further changes which might destroy what he had created.



The creation of the German Empire marked a real shift in the balance of power in Europe. **Disraeli**, the leader of the Conservative Party in Britain, went so far as to argue in the House of Commons that it was a revolution (see Source A).

### SOURCE A

**From a speech to the House of Commons in 1871 by Benjamin Disraeli, quoted in L. Gall, *Bismarck: The White Revolutionary*, Allen & Unwin, 1986, pp. 40–1.**

*This war represents the German revolution, a greater political event than the French revolution of the last century ... You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope ... The balance of power has been entirely destroyed ...*

The new Germany possessed the most formidable and experienced military force in Europe, based on a growing economic strength. It had abundant supplies of coal and iron ore in the Ruhr and Upper Silesia and, thanks to the growth of the railways, an integrated economy. Already by the early 1870s many of the great firms, such as Krupp and Thyssen, which were to become world leaders some 30 years later, were established.

Of course, economically the Germany of the 1870s was not yet as strong as the Germany of 1913, but even so its unique combination of military and economic strength had its own dangers. Sooner or later France would recover and would seek to reverse its defeat of 1871. If Germany used power unwisely and inspired fear, it would be all the easier for France to gain allies and encircle Germany with a hostile alliance, as indeed was to happen by 1914. Bismarck was all too aware of this danger. He sought therefore to isolate France and reassure Britain, Austria and Russia that Germany was a 'satiated' state.

### KEY TERM

#### Counter-revolutionary

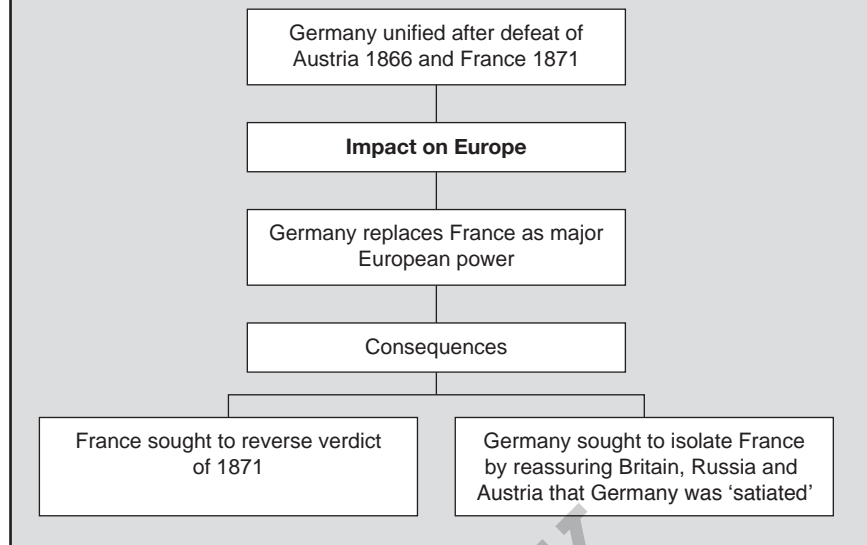
Person who opposes a revolution and wants to reverse its results.

Study Source A. Why does Disraeli refer to the result of the Franco-Prussian war as 'the German revolution'?

### KEY FIGURE

#### Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81)

Tory leader in the House of Commons for twenty years, British prime minister 1868 and 1874–80. He was an ardent imperialist who believed that patriotism and nationalism could overcome class divisions.

**Summary diagram: Unification of Germany and its consequences****2**

## The Balkans and the League of the Three Emperors

► *Why were the Balkans an area of potential international conflict?*

For Bismarck there was also the danger that Germany might become involved in an Austro-Russian war over the future of the Balkans. The accelerating decline of Turkish power (see the map on page 45) opened up the prospect that Turkish rule in the Balkans might collapse. For both Russia and Austria, the Balkans were of great strategic importance. Russia could not allow a hostile power to control the western shores of the Black Sea and the straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which were the main access to the Mediterranean. Similarly, Austria did not want the emergence of an independent group of Balkan states which would block any future extension of its influence into the Balkans, and also attract the support of the Slavs within its own empire, particularly within Hungary. Britain too was concerned about the Russian threat to its position in both the Mediterranean and India, and did not want to see Russia fill the **vacuum of power** left by the decline of Turkey.

**KEY TERM****Vacuum of power**

Territories left undominated by another state after the withdrawal or collapse of the original ruling power.

Both Russia and Austria attempted to enlist Germany as a future ally, but initially Bismarck was able to avoid any unilateral commitment by proposing that the three powers form the League of the Three Emperors, in 1873. In the event of a crisis they would consult only with each other before deciding what action to take.

## The Eastern crisis of 1875–8

The advantage for Germany of the League of the Three Emperors was that it isolated France and enabled Germany to avoid making a choice between Russia and Austria. It was in many ways the model for German foreign policy until Bismarck's dismissal in 1890. However, the eruption of the great Eastern crisis ultimately forced Bismarck to make a choice between Russia and Austria, even though he spent the next decade attempting to bring these powers together again.

The crisis began in July 1875 with a revolt against Turkish rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within a year it had spread to Bulgaria, and Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey. Briefly, it looked as if the whole Turkish Empire in Europe would collapse, but contrary to expectation the Turks defeated the Serbs and stabilised the situation.

The Eastern crisis now entered a new and dangerous phase as the Russian government was not ready to sit back and tolerate Turkey re-establishing itself in the Balkans. Initially, Russia did obtain Austrian consent to drive the Turks out of the Balkans, provided it did not set up a large pro-Russian Bulgaria and allowed Austria to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russian troops advanced on Constantinople. Turkey held out until January 1878, but was then forced to agree to a peace that, contrary to all assurances, set up a large and apparently pro-Russian Bulgaria. Inevitably, this triggered a major international crisis which could have resulted in war between Russia and Austria which would be backed by Britain. It opened up the scenario that Bismarck dreaded: France would be able to offer assistance to one or other of the belligerents in return for a promise to revise the Treaty of Frankfurt.

## The Berlin Congress

Faced with the Eastern crisis it is not surprising that Bismarck agreed to hosting, at Austria's suggestion, a congress at Berlin. Bismarck in his role as **honest broker** dominated the negotiations. Yet however hard he tried to be neutral, the very fact that he presided over a congress that stripped Russia of many of its gains from the Turkish war made the Russians bitterly resentful of Germany's 'false friendship'.

Under Bismarck's skilful chairmanship the congress managed to find at least temporary solutions to some of the intractable problems of the Balkans:

- Bulgaria was broken up into three parts. The largest of these sections was the core state of Bulgaria, which officially became a **self-governing principality** ultimately under Turkish control. The Russians were to control its administration for nine months until a new government could be formed.
- The three Balkan states of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania gained complete independence.
- Austria was given the right to occupy, but not annex, Bosnia and Herzegovina (see the map on page 14).



### KEY TERMS

**Honest broker** Impartial mediator.

**Self-governing principality** A semi-independent state ruled by a prince.

**Summary diagram: The Balkans and the League of the Three Emperors**

To avoid emergence of hostile alliances Bismarck sought good relations with Austria-Hungary and Russia

Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany form the League of the Three Emperors 1873–9

Disrupted by the Eastern Crisis, 1875–8

Bismarck acted as 'honest broker' to host Berlin Congress, but alienates Russia, which did not renew League of the Three Emperors

**3**

## Bismarck's web of alliances 1879–83

► *What pressures forced Bismarck to negotiate the web of alliances 1879–83?*

### The Austro-German Dual Alliance 1879

A major consequence of the Berlin Congress was the deterioration in relations between Germany and Russia and the collapse of the Three Emperors' league. The crisis had convinced Bismarck that Germany could not tolerate the defeat of Austria by Russia as this would immeasurably strengthen Russia and directly threaten Germany's future security. Consequently, on 7 October 1879, the Austro-German Dual Alliance was signed. Its terms were as follows:

- Should one power be attacked by Russia, the other would come to its rescue with 'the whole war strength' of its empire.
- If one of the two empires were attacked by any other power, its ally would adopt a neutral but friendly attitude.
- The treaty was in the first instance to last five years but could be renewed.
- It was secret, but in the event of Russian threats its gist would be leaked to the tsar to deter him from taking any further action.

The Dual Alliance gave Germany considerable influence over Austrian foreign policy, and Bismarck was to exploit this to ensure that Vienna did not provoke an unnecessary war with Russia. He also hoped that the mere existence of the treaty, even if its details were secret, would force Russia back into negotiations with Austria and Germany.

## The Alliance of the Three Emperors

Bismarck's calculations proved correct. Although the **Pan Slav** nationalists urged Tsar Alexander II to ally with France and attack Austria, the Russian foreign office doubted whether France would be able to offer much assistance in the Balkans and managed to persuade the tsar to agree to open negotiations with Germany.

Talks began with Bismarck in January 1880. The Russians wanted an agreement that would recognise their gains in the Balkans and close the straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to the British navy. Bismarck was not ready to sign a treaty with Russia unless Austria was also involved. At first Austria still pinned hopes on co-operation with Britain against Russia, but with the defeat of Disraeli in the general election of 1880, British foreign policy became markedly less hostile to Russia. Under German pressure, Vienna therefore agreed somewhat reluctantly to accept a new version of the Three Emperors' League. The Three Emperors' Alliance was signed with Russia on 18 June 1881. Its main terms were:

- Austria-Hungary and Germany agreed that the Straits should be closed to the warships of all nations. This stopped the threat of Britain sending its navy into the Black Sea and greatly strengthened Russia's position.
- Austria conceded the eventual reunification of Bulgaria, while Russia agreed that at some time in the future Austria would be able to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- If a member of the League found itself at war with a fourth power, unless it was Turkey, the other two powers would remain neutral.
- There were to be no further territorial changes in the Turkish Empire without the consent of the three empires.
- The treaty was in the first instance to last three years.

The treaty did not provide any long-term solution to Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, but it did temporarily reduce the friction between Austria and Russia.

## The Triple Alliance 1882

Despite the Three Emperors' Alliance, Russian policy in the Balkans remained unpredictable. The new tsar, Alexander III, continued to consult the Pan Slav leaders who had established contacts with Russian sympathisers in the French army and media. Bismarck's response was to strengthen the Austro-German Dual Alliance. First he expanded it in 1882 into a Triple Alliance with Italy. Since Austria had controlled much of northern Italy, and in 1859 and again in 1866 had fought to prevent its unification, the Italian government had understandably seen Austria as a hostile power. It also had claims to the Italian-speaking Tyrol and Trieste, which were still controlled by Austria. However, the French occupation of Tunis in 1881, which the Italians regarded as their own sphere of



### KEY TERM

**Pan Slavs** Russian nationalists who believed that the Slavs in central and south-eastern Europe should be liberated by their fellow Slavs in Russia.

interest, caused Italy to propose an alliance with Austria. Bismarck immediately suggested extending it into a Triple Alliance. The key clauses of the treaty were as follows:

- Both the Central Powers were now committed to support Italy in the unlikely chance of an attack from France.
- Italy, in turn, would help them only if they were attacked by two other powers (say, France and Russia).

The real gain for Germany was that if war broke out with Russia, Austria would now no longer have to keep troops on its Italian frontier just in case Italy might be tempted to make a surprise attack to the rear.

Austria's position was then further strengthened by an alliance with Serbia in June 1882 and with Romania in 1883, which Germany joined and turned into a **defensive alliance** against Russia. Simultaneously, Bismarck also successfully strengthened the influence of the pro-German ministers in the Russian government by both refusing demands at home for further rises in **tariffs**,

### KEY TERMS

**Defensive alliance** An agreement between two states whereby each will come to the defence of the other if attacked.

**Tariffs** Taxes placed on imported goods to protect the home economy.

### SOURCE B

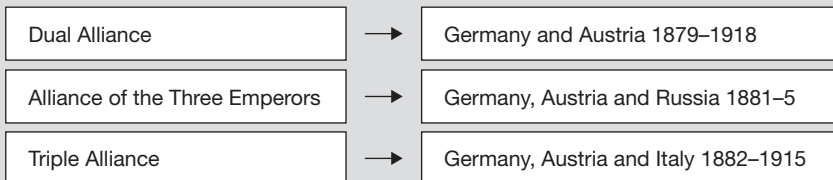
? Study Source B. To what extent was Bismarck really the 'ringmaster' controlling the Triple Alliance in the interest of Germany?



A French cartoonist's view of the Triple Alliance. This 1889 cartoon shows Bismarck as the ringmaster conducting the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy.

which would damage Russian trade, and encouraging German banks to finance Russian loans. As a result, in 1884 the tsar agreed to renew the Three Emperors' Treaty.

**Summary diagram: Bismarck's web of alliances 1879–83**



## 4 The Anglo-French quarrel over Egypt and its consequences

► *Why was Franco-German co-operation so short lived?*

### Anglo-French involvement in Egypt

Egypt was a self-governing territory within the Turkish Empire which was ruled by the **Khedive**. The Suez Canal, which was opened in 1869, was built by a French company and rapidly became a key link in Britain's communications with India. In April 1876, Egypt went bankrupt and could no longer pay the interest on the money lent by European investors. Britain, which was the majority shareholder in the Suez Canal Company, and France consequently took over joint control of Egypt's finances. In 1881 both powers were challenged by a nationalist uprising led by officers in the Egyptian army. As the French parliament vetoed the dispatch of French troops, it was left to the British to defeat the uprising. The British now became the masters of Egypt, and despite repeated assurances that they would leave as soon as order had been restored, they did not do so. Inevitably, this infuriated the French and made any co-operation with Britain virtually impossible for more than twenty years.

#### KEY TERM

**Khedive** The title used by the governor and ruler of Egypt and the Sudan.

### Germany's exploitation of the Anglo-French quarrel

Bismarck had made no secret of the fact that he wished to encourage France to seek compensation for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine by building up a colonial empire in Africa. In 1880 he told the French ambassador: 'I want you to take your eyes from Metz and Strasbourg by helping you find satisfaction elsewhere.' This would both distract France from seeking revenge against Germany and create tension with the other colonial powers, particularly Britain, thereby giving Germany an opportunity to co-operate with France outside Europe.

**KEY FIGURES****Jules Ferry (1832–93)**

Prime minister of France  
1880–1 and 1883–5.

**Georges Boulanger (1837–91)**

Entered French politics in 1884 and was an effective and charismatic war minister. He appealed to those who wanted revenge against Germany. In 1889 it seemed as if he might stage a coup, but he lost his nerve and fled to Brussels.

**KEY TERMS**

**Charismatic** Commanding magnetic charm which inspires enthusiasm and loyalty in others.

**League of Patriots** The French far-right league, founded by the nationalist poet Paul Déroulède in 1882.

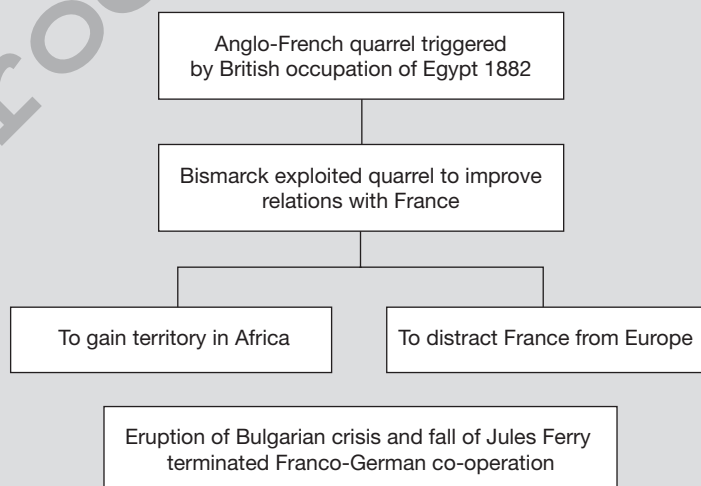
## The creation of the German colonial empire

In 1884 the German government, in order to protect German trading interests and forestall British claims, annexed territory in South West Africa, the Cameroons, Togoland and New Guinea. In the following year, Germany and France were able to co-operate and override British objections to calling an international conference in Berlin to decide on the future of a huge belt of central African territory stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Franco-German relations improved dramatically, and the French prime minister, **Jules Ferry**, commented that France was no longer ‘the Cinderella of European politics’.

## The end of Franco-German co-operation

Franco-German co-operation was short lived. In 1885 a new French government led by Louis Freycinet (1828–1923) was forced to adopt a more anti-German policy when the **charismatic** and fiercely nationalistic General **Boulanger**, who believed that his mission was to prepare for war against Germany, joined the cabinet as minister for war. He rapidly became a cult figure for the extreme nationalist **League of Patriots**, and for a time it seemed, much to the alarm of Bismarck, that he might even seize power and become a dictator. The German army was confident that it could again defeat the French, but it was doubtful whether France could now be dealt with in isolation. French attempts to establish closer relations with Russia were powerfully helped by the eruption of the Bulgarian crisis (see page 23), and in the autumn of 1886 for a brief period of time it looked as if a Franco-Russian Alliance directed against Germany might be possible.

### Summary diagram: Anglo-French quarrel over Egypt and its consequences



## 5

## The Bulgarian crisis 1885–7

► How did Bismarck seek to avoid an Austro-Russian war breaking out over the Bulgarian crisis?

At the Berlin Congress it had been agreed that **rump Bulgaria** would be administered by an elected ruler, who would administer it within the Turkish Empire (see page 17). In April 1879 Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the Russian tsar's nephew, was elected, but when he refused to become a puppet, the Russian government had him kidnapped and forced him to abdicate. Inevitably, this revived British and Austrian fears of Russia's intention of taking over Bulgaria. Russia brushed aside Austrian objections and privately in Berlin the Russian ambassador told Bismarck that 'It is absolutely necessary that we should make Austria disappear from the map of Europe.'

The League of the Three Emperors had disintegrated. War between Russia and Austria now seemed possible, and Austria and Britain both looked to Berlin to take the lead against Russia, but Bismarck was determined not to be pushed into confrontation, especially at the very time that Boulanger was urging a war of revenge against Germany. He attempted to restrain both Austria and Russia, which he described as 'two savage dogs'. Bismarck again made very clear to his Austrian allies that Germany would not be dragged into war against Russia. On the other hand, he was not prepared to stand back and see Austria defeated by Russia. To reconcile these two often conflicting objectives he pursued his traditional policy of strengthening Austria while at the same time attempting to reassure Russia of Germany's peaceful intentions.

### The Mediterranean Agreement, February 1887

Bismarck aimed to deter Russian expansion into the Balkans by encouraging Britain, Italy and Austria-Hungary to negotiate the First Mediterranean Agreement in February 1887. This provided for the maintenance of the **status quo** in the Mediterranean, including the Adriatic and Aegean seas. He hoped that the agreement would encourage these three powers to stand up to Russia and convince Tsar Alexander III that only through negotiations with Berlin could a compromise over Bulgaria be arranged.

### The Reinsurance Treaty, 18 June 1887

Any improvement in Germany's relations with Russia was dependent on the outcome of the struggle to influence the tsar, which was bitterly waged between the Pan Slavs and the traditionally pro-German officials of the Russian foreign office. In March 1887, Tsar Alexander III finally became impatient with the increasingly more outspoken attempts of the Pan Slavs to influence his foreign policy and rejected their demands for a break with Germany. While refusing to renew the Three Emperors' Treaty of 1881, he agreed to negotiate a secret



## KEY TERMS

**Rump Bulgaria** What was left of Bulgaria after its partition at the Berlin Congress.

**Status quo** A Latin term to denote the state of affairs as it exists at the moment.

agreement with Germany, the Reinsurance Treaty, which was signed on 18 June 1887. Its terms were as follows:

- Both empires were pledged to be neutral in a war fought against a third power unless Germany attacked France, Russia or Austria.
- Germany recognised the rights ‘historically acquired’ by Russia in the Balkans, particularly in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia.
- Turkey was not to open the Straits to the navy of a power hostile to Russia – this essentially meant Britain. If the Straits were opened, Germany and Russia would regard it as a hostile act towards themselves.

In his attempt to reconcile Austria and Russia, Bismarck had effectively created two contradictory diplomatic systems. On the one hand, the Reinsurance Treaty promised Russia German backing at the Straits and in Bulgaria, while the Mediterranean Agreement, the negotiation of which was encouraged by Bismarck, supported Austria by encouraging the territorial *status quo*.

## The aftermath of the Bulgarian crisis

The Reinsurance Treaty did not immediately calm the tension in the Balkans. The election of a new ruler to the Bulgarian throne, Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, in July 1887 was regarded by the Russians as an Austrian conspiracy. Once again the Pan Slavs whipped up a press campaign against Germany, which was accused of secretly supporting Austria, and by the autumn it looked as if the Russians were on the verge of invading Bulgaria. To stop this, the German government ordered the **Reichsbank** in November not to accept Russian **bonds** as **collateral security** for loans raised in Germany. This had very serious economic consequences for the Russians as Germany was the source of most of its foreign loans. Russia was plunged into financial chaos which effectively prevented it from occupying Bulgaria or risking war with Austria. In December, Bismarck, again quite contrary to the spirit of the Reinsurance Treaty, further strengthened the position of Austria by persuading Britain and Italy to conclude with it a second Mediterranean Agreement aimed at keeping Russia out of Bulgaria and Turkey. These measures successfully deterred the Russians from invading Bulgaria, but also caused them to turn to France for the loans which the Germans were no longer ready to finance. Inevitably, this was to strengthen Franco-Russian relations.

## Bismarck’s dismissal

When William II came to the German throne in June 1888, and began to urge on Bismarck a British alliance, the tsar rapidly became more appreciative of Bismarck’s policy and offered to renew the Reinsurance Treaty permanently. Bismarck, however, was dismissed in March 1890 before negotiations could begin, and his successor, General von Caprivi (1831–99), convinced that it



### KEY TERMS

**Reichsbank** The national bank of Germany.

**Bonds** Certificates issued by a government or large company promising to repay borrowed money at a fixed rate of interest by a specified date.

**Collateral security** Bonds or property pledged as a guarantee for the repayment of a loan.

contradicted the Triple Alliance and would complicate Germany's relations with Britain, did not renew it. In retrospect, this was a dangerous step, which was to encourage Russia to draw closer to France.

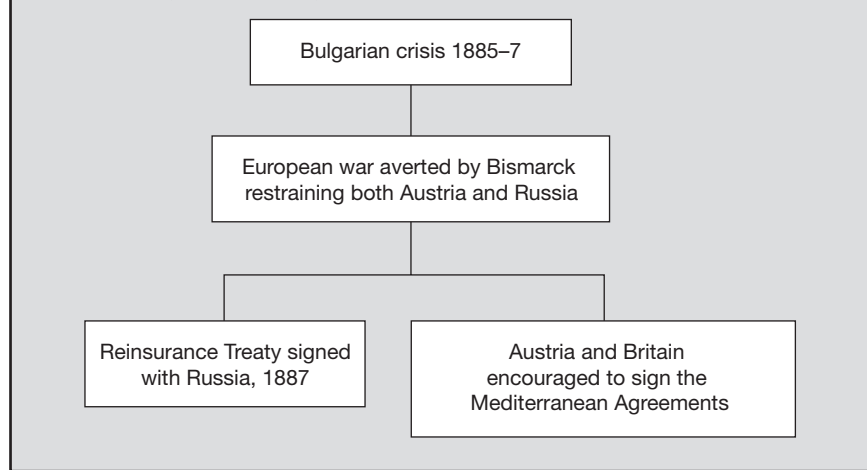
### SOURCE C



Study Source C. How successful had Bismarck been as a 'pilot' of Germany's foreign policy?



**'Dropping the Pilot.'** The satirical magazine *Punch*'s view in 1890 on Bismarck's departure. Its message is that the statesman who had unified Germany and then it guided through many crises over the years 1871–90 was now rashly being dropped by the Kaiser.

**Summary diagram: The Bulgarian crisis 1885–7**

## Chapter summary

German unification in 1871, after the defeat of France, created a strong power with immense economic and military potential in the middle of Europe. Bismarck's aim until his resignation was to isolate France and reassure the European powers that Germany was a 'satiated nation'. Above all, he wanted to avoid the outbreak of a major war on the continent of Europe. As long as Austria and Russia enjoyed good diplomatic relations, there was little danger from France. In 1884–5 France and Germany were able to co-operate briefly in

Africa. It was the Balkans that were the real threat to peace. The accelerating decline in Turkish power left a vacuum which neither Russia nor Austria could allow the other to fill. This nearly led to war in 1878 and again in 1885–7. An Austro-Russian war might quickly escalate into a European war and give France a chance to regain the territory and power it lost in 1871. Thus, in order to safeguard Germany from encirclement and to preserve the peace between Austria and Russia, Bismarck constructed a web of sometimes contradictory alliances: the Dual Alliance, the Treaty of the Three Emperors, the Triple Alliance and finally the Reinsurance Treaty. Up to a point, these worked and ensured a fragile peace.



## Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

- 1 Why did a united Germany change the balance of power in Europe?
- 2 Why were the Balkans an area of potential international crisis?
- 3 What international problems did the Eastern crisis of 1875–8 cause?
- 4 What decisions were taken at the Berlin Congress?
- 5 What was the significance of the Dual Alliance?
- 6 What was the aim of the Three Emperors' Alliance of 1881?
- 7 How did Bismarck strengthen Austria against Russia?
- 8 What were the consequences of the Anglo-French quarrel over Egypt?
- 9 Why did the Russians want to remove Prince Alexander, the ruler of Bulgaria?
- 10 How did Bismarck keep the peace between Austria and Russia during the Bulgarian crisis?
- 11 What was the role of the Reinsurance Treaty in Bismarck's alliance system?
- 12 What were the consequences of the Bulgarian crisis?
- 13 What immediate impact did Bismarck's dismissal have on German-Russian relations?



## Question practice

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1 'Between 1871 and 1890 Germany was forced into pursuing a European rather than a German foreign policy out of self-preservation.' Assess the validity of this view.
- 2 'Bismarck successfully dealt with the consequences of Austro-Russian hostility in the Balkans.' How far do you agree?
- 3 Assess the consequences of a united Germany for Europe during the period 1871–90.
- 4 'A European war caused by Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans seemed increasingly likely by 1889.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

### INTERPRETATION QUESTION

- 1 Read the interpretation and answer the question that follows. '[Apart from Bismarck] no other statesman ... had ever before shown the same great moderation and sound political sense of the possible and desirable' (from W. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, 1951). Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations you have studied.