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The Legacy of First World War: A Critical Evaluation of its Causes Results and Consequences

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ABSTRACT

The First World War otherwise known as The Great war was the First of two global wars. WWI was fought between the year 1914 and 1918 around the world. The disastrous global war was fought between Allied Powers and Axis Powers. The First World War was often described as the great war to end all other wars. It is described as one of the deadliest wars fought in Human History. According to several estimates The Great War led to the mobilization of about 70 million military personnel around the world. The war was so catastrophic that it spread on to 3 continents involving 70 million soldiers. The estimate of loss is considered to be around 37 million casualties. The war saw the first use of technology to harm, destroy or kill enemies using poisonous gases which took a total of 91,195 deaths. The war also caused severe loss of maritime assets including 6395 ships lost in naval warfare across several seas and oceans. The monetary loss is considered to be huge as 186.3 billion dollar lost and all of these destructions had occurred in and around 31 countries. The war was started as a sudden caused by the assassination of Austro-Hungarian heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, leading to the July Crisis. In response Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia. By July 1914 the great powers of Europe were divided into two coalitions: The Triple Entente which consisted of France, Russia, and Britain and The Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.

Keywords: War, Alliance, Military Glory, Assassination, Imperialism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The First World War was one of the earliest wars that saw tremendous changes and deviations from the previously fought wars due to its changes in existing traditions, tactics, weapons and altogether. It was war that led to the changing of almost all of the traditional rules which included all kinds of war and military ethics.

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II. TRADITIONS OF WAR

The tradition of war formulated and practised till then included the belligerents declaring war against each other before attacking a country. There was a custom that the belligerents should identify each other with uniforms. Even Though they were enemies who were at war there commanders were treated gently making a provision that their Commanding officers should not be killed and should be exempted from getting killed by enemy forces. The wars fought at that time had an ethical policy that they observed civilians, surrendering soldiers and medical staff should be protected and should not be attacked by both or any of the belligerents. The military ethics was of the view that Hand to Hand Combat is more honorable and desirable than shooting war or shooting from distance under invisible conditions and both were considered to be a cowardly act which should not be encouraged. The Traditions of War also gave the soldiers of both belligerents an opportunity to surrender should be observed and practiced.

The dimensions and dynamics of the First World War saw several tremendous and unbelievable changes that deviated from the centuries old war ethics, military ethics and other traditions of wars that was mentioned above to a greater extent that many of the above mentioned traditions of War were violated during the course of war and hostilities. It actually led to an unprecedented and unparalleled threat scenario that it led to the development and formulation of separate and new laws and regulations and restrictions at the international level in order to cater the needs of military and governments to reduce the casualties, destructions and havocs in the future warfare and to uphold War and Military ethics as well as to minimise the danger and destructions caused by the future wars and hostilities.

III. CAUSES OF FIRST WORLD WAR

M - Military Glorification

A - Alliance

N - Nationalism

I - Imperialism

A - Assassination

(A) Military Glorification

Military Glorification and Arms Race between the major superpowers like Britain, Germany, USA and other European Countries involved in the belligerents of Central Powers and Allied Powers was one of the most important and crucial factors or reasons that led to the cause of the

First World War. The accumulation of Military Hardwares, ammunitions, Naval race, arms race and glorification of military might and power led to strong mutual suspicion, lost mutual trust, led to the rise of war rumours, led to the establishment of military pacts and secret alliance between the governments.

The Post Vienna Congress, we saw Austria becoming a Big Brother in Europe controlling the power balance in Europe. This Big Brother Policy was not well received by the Prussian Empire which grew to Imperial Germany in 1871 under the charismatic leadership of King Leopold and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Otto Von Bismarck laid the foundation of Imperial Germany through waging wars and executing Machiavellian tactics as well as following a Blood And Iron Policy. The establishment of Imperial Germany was fulfilled and was attained through unbelievable and tremendous growth in military strength for Prussia and later for Germany also. The establishment and rise Of Imperial Germany as a powerful and crucial Military and economic superpower led to mutual suspicion among the neighboring countries like Britain, France, Russia, Austria and Germany.

The wars fought by Prussia for the establishment Of Imperial Germany and the activities of Imperial Germany to acquire colonies to obtain markets and mineral resources created and resulted in confrontations, struggles and stiff competition with other European Countries like Britain and France rose to mutual suspicion of being attacked by a group of enemy countries led to secret pacts and Naval Arms Race between Britain and Germany as well as German accumulation of huge amounts of technological superior military Armaments led to the war's shadow and the to the unending enmity between Germany and Britain and France was a major reason for the cause of First World War.

(B) Alliances

The Unification of Germany and German emergence as a world superpower defeating France and Austria caused great changes in strategic power balance in Europe created mutual suspicion of being attacked by the enemy power grew as time went on. The French initiated an Alliance with Russia forming the 'Franco-Russian Alliance' which became 'Triple Entente' with the British joining the Alliance. This power group later became the 'Allied Power' in First World war Germany responded to this threat by forming Alliance with Austria - Hungary and later with Italy which came to be known as 'Triple Alliance' entered the war as 'Central Powers'.

These power blocks played a crucial role of the cause of first world war as they triggered a chain of war declarations leading to a global war after the assassination of arch duke ferdinand and his wife sofia.

(C) Nationalism

Nationalism is an important cause for the First World War. Unification of Germany and Italy which was driven by nationalistic emotions led to Aggressive Nationalism. More than that this created Nationalistic emotions in France also due to the past glory as well as due to the major defeat that the French people got from Germany in the Franco Prussian War which resulted in the German annexation of Alsace And Lorraine Province and sar coal mine fields from France. By the 20th century Europe became a continent of powerful Nation States. The issue of Balkan Crisis was also led by this Nationalistic emotions created by Pan Slavic and German Nationalisms led to a disturbance on the equilibrium of balance of power in Europe leading to some dangerous wars in the local areas of Balkan Region shattering the soul out of already dead or broken Ottoman Empire that created a power vacuum in the area leading to several confrontations between the super powers that led to the beginning of First World War. German, Slavic and Italian Nationalism was the main Nationalist Movement in Europe that was a reason for the First World War.

(D) Imperialism

Imperialism is one of the most serious problems that created the First World War. Since the Unification of Germany, Germany became a dominant industrial, economic and military super power that needed a lot of colonies as reliable markets. This led to German invasion of several colonial countries which was left by the previous colonizers. German Aggression led to several international crises which become causes for First World War. The confrontations created by the need of colonies between Britain and Germany led to a breach in International problem solving methods, creating enmity toward each other especially toward aggressive nationalism. The need of colonial forced these master countries to wage local wars to protect their colonies to support their mineral resources and raw materials supply and need for colonial markets. The ballooning size of the Imperial German Colonies across the globe was feared by most European Countries who had possessions in Africa, America and Asia. Imperialism aimed at expansion of the empire became the reason for the First World War Need for colonies for Germany forced German Administration to aggressively pursue colonial expansion. They had to be made using forceful measures and aggressive tone led to fear also. The need for colonies also led to several International Crisis like the

1. First - Moroccan Crisis
2. Second - Moroccan crisis
3. German issues with Japan in China.

1. The First Moroccan Crisis

The First Moroccan crisis was also known as the Tangier Crisis. This was a scenario of great international concern. The First Moroccan Crisis was one of the most influential and crucial international crises that led to the First World War. It happened between March 1905 and May 1906. It was a major crisis led to as a cause for the First World War which began over the controversies and accusations and confrontations over status of Morocco which was also a consequence of the colonial rivalry also. Imperial Germany wanted to play a Big Brother Role in Morocco and to challenge and reduce the influence of France over Morocco. This German stand was countered by both France and the United Kingdom with the help of Triple entente countries. Even Though the crisis was later resolved by the Algeciras Conference of 1906 that affirmed the French control the decision actually worsened international balance of power and strained the German relationship with the both the belligerents of France and the United Kingdom and actually paved the way for more suspicious relationship between Imperial Germany and Britain and France which again fueled the way to help and enhance the new Anglo-French Entente alliances culminating in the First World War after the assassination of Austrian Heir Prince ArchDuke Ferdinand in 1914 in the Serbian capital of Sarajevo by local Young Bosnia activist Gavrilo Princip that sparked World War I.

2. The Second Moroccan Crisis

The Second Moroccan Crisis is also known as the Agadir Crisis. The Agadir Incident or Second Moroccan Crisis was one of the most tensed event of crisis or challenge that led to the First World War .Imperial rivalries pushed France, Germany, and Britain to compete for control of Morocco led to a short lived war scare in the year 1911. The crisis started with the deployment of French military troops in Morocco that led to the retaliatory deployment of an Imperial German Navy gunboat to the Agadir triggering the crisis. The primary reason for this was even though Germany did not want to object French claims or expansion they too wanted territorial compensation from France for itself. Germany moved with aggressive nationalism and threatened warfare by sending a gunboat to influence the German interest.

Even Though the crisis declined and reduced through negotiations done in between Germany and France, it created a gap and a breach in mutual trust and created an anti German feeling in the whole Europe. The crisis ended according to the negotiations dictated by Germany and France which resulted in France taking over Morocco as a protectorate and exchanged some territorial concessions to Imperial Germany from the French Congo. The main result of this Second Moroccan Crisis was a development of deeper suspicion between Britain and Germany

and closer military alliance between Britain and France. This Second Moroccan Crisis increased mutual fear and hostility that led to a scenario in which both countries engaged in Arms Accumulation and drew Britain closer to France rather than Germany. The crisis also led to the British backing of France during the crisis and reinforced the Entente Cordiale between the two countries and with Imperial Russia and also increased the Anglo-German estrangement and struggles and created a rift between the two that led to a more aggressive Anglo German Naval Race that deepened the divisions and rift created in between the countries of Europe that would later erupt in 1914.

The Second Moroccan crisis led British and French to make a secret naval agreement in which The Royal Navy agreed to protect the northern coast of France from German attack and the French agreed to focus the French Naval might in the Mediterranean sea and to protect British Imperial interests there. This helped France to secure its communication and supply lines with its North African colonies and the British to give more focus to defend the German High Seas Fleet.

3. French Distrust of Germany

The French distrust of Imperial Germany can be seen as one of the most important reasons that caused the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This distrust was the result of Franco-Prussian War which resulted in the unification of Germany. A great atmosphere of enmity grew between France and Germany after the Imperial German annexation of French Province of Alsace and Lorraine that led to the desire for revenge (revanchism).

Even Though France recovered from its defeat and paid its war indemnity along with rebuilding the lost military might and strength, France was smaller than Germany in terms of population, industry and military that it felt insecure to being next in a region to a more powerful neighbor who is considered to be an enemy.

4. The Anglo German Naval Arms Race

The Anglo German naval arms race was one of the most important reasons that caused World War One. The British was the greatest Naval power in the world and the German built up to match or outnumber the British Royal Naval led to a grave arms race and naval warship built up that triggered great concern to both countries and to the entire world. The accumulation and build of battleships led to the enmity between the nations, lost mutual trust and confidence and led to war scare which abruptly erupted in 1914 after the assassination of ArchDuke Ferdinand.

5. Russian Interests in Balkans and Ottoman Empire

One of the most important reasons that led to world war one was the decline of Ottoman Empire and the Russian intervention in the Balkan Region. The Russian targeted to become the protector of Eastern Orthodox Christians in the Balkans Region as well as aimed to expel the Ottomans from Constantinople that will help them to extend the Russian domination into eastern Anatolia, Persian Azerbaijan, and had a desire to annex Galicia as these conquests would help Russian predominance in the Black Sea region helping them to access the Mediterranean sea which has warm water ports which in turn help Russia to increase its trade and commerce and to built its economy unhindered which it cannot challenge in Baltic or Barent sea region as they are the main regions controlled by Britain and other European countries.

6. Balkan Wars

The Balkan Wars were one of the most crucial events happened in the Balkan Region that led to the World War One. The Four Balkan states waged a war against their previous masters and defeated the Ottoman Empire in the first war which sparked another war in which one of the Balkan country of Bulgaria was defeated. The war caused a breach in the balance of power in Europe and resulted in The Ottoman Empire losing nearly all of its territory in Europe.

The Balkan Wars led to an increase in international tensions between Russia and Austria-Hungary which also led to the strengthening of Serbia, weakening of Ottoman Empire and disrupting the balance of power in Europe toward Russia.

(E) Assassination

The immediate cause of the First World War was the Assassination of Heir Prince Of Austria ArchDuke Ferdinand and his wife Sofia by a Serbian Nationalist at the Serbian Capital Of Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, caused a chain of events across Europe which came to known as July Crisis caused the sudden spark of war declarations resulting in the starting of the First World War.

1. July Crisis and the Blank Cheque of German Support to Austria Hungary

After the Assassination of ArchDuke Ferdinand Germany declared its unconditional support to Austria Hungary's confrontations with Serbia which came to be known as blank cheque in the course of history.

2. The Timeline and Chain of Events that Happened in July Crisis that Led to the First World War

- June 28 of 1914:- Gavrilo Princip assassinated Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo.
- June 30 of 1914:- Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Leopold Berchtold and Emperor Franz Josef decided to end the policy of patience with Serbia.
- July 5 of 1914:- The Austro-Hungarian diplomat Alexander visits Berlin to learn about the German position.
- July 6 of 1914:- Germany declared unconditional support to Austria Hungary which came to be known as the blank cheque.
- July of 1914(20–23):- French President Raymond Poincaré called to defend any Austro-Hungarian moves against Serbia.
- July 23:- Austria-Hungary sends an ultimatum to Serbia containing their demands and giving only 48 hours to comply.
- July 24:- Sir Edward Grey asks that Germany, France, Italy and Britain should act together for the sake of peace simultaneously.
- July 24: Serbia seeks support from Russia who advised Serbia not to accept the ultimatum. Germany officially declares support for Austria-Hungary's position.
- July 24: Russian goes for a secret partial mobilization of the Russian Army and Navy.
- July 25:- Russia begins the partial mobilization troops against Austria-Hungary
- Austria-Hungary breaks diplomatic relations with Serbia who mobilizes its army.
- July 26: Serbian reservists accidentally violate the Austro-Hungarian border at Temes-Kubin.
- July 26: A meeting is organised to take place between ambassadors from Britain, Germany, Italy and France to discuss the crisis. Germany declines the invitation.
- July 28: Austria-Hungary having failed to accept Serbia's response on the 25th, declares war on Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian mobilisation against Serbia begins.
- July 29: Sir Edward Grey appeals to Germany to intervene to maintain peace.
- July 29: The British ambassador in Berlin Sir Edward Goschen is informed by the German Chancellor that Germany is contemplating war with France and wishes to send its army through Belgium. He tries to secure Britain's neutrality in such an action.

- July 29: In the morning the Russian general mobilisation against Austria-Hungary and Germany is ordered
- July 30: The Russian general mobilization is reordered by the Tsar on the instigation of Sergei Sazonov.
- July 31: The Austro-Hungarian general mobilization is ordered.
- July 31: Germany sends an ultimatum to Russia demanding a halt to general mobilization within twelve hours which Russia refuses.
- July 31: Both France and Germany are asked by Britain to declare their support for the ongoing neutrality of Belgium. France agrees but Germany does not respond.
- July 31: Germany asks France if it would stay neutral in case of a war between Germany and Russia.
- August 1: The German general mobilization is ordered.
- August 1: The French general mobilization is ordered.
- August 1: Germany declares war against Russia.
- August 1: The Tsar responds to the Kaiser's telegram by stating I would gladly have accepted your proposals had not the German ambassador this afternoon presented a note to my Government declaring war.
- August 2: Germany and the Ottoman Empire sign a secret treaty that entrenches the Ottoman–German Alliance.
- August 3: France declines Germany's demand to remain neutral.
- August 3: Germany declares war on France and states to Belgium that it would treat her as an enemy if it did not allow free passage of German troops across her lands.
- August 4: Germany implements an offensive operation inspired by Schlieffen Plan.
- August 4 (midnight): Having failed to receive notice from Germany assuring the neutrality of Belgium Britain declares war on Germany.
- August 6: Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia.
- August 23: Japan, honoring the Anglo-Japanese Alliance declares war on Germany.
- August 25: Japan declares war on Austria-Hungary.

IV. RESULT AND CONCLUSION

The course of the First World War started with German invasion of Belgium to attack France. War began to sprout out in Europe, Africa and Asia. Germany had to do a two front, two way war with Russia and France. British Royal Navy held the command of the sea. Unrestricted warfare was fought simultaneously in Land, Air and Sea for the first time in history. The battle of Jutland, Tannenberg and many other wars saw great casualties till then. The USA entered the war in 1917 Making the Allied forces to victory.

(A) Treaty of Versailles and the Aftermath of World War One

The Treaty of Versailles was the most important result of the First World War. In this Treaty Germany was badly humiliated and was treated as the reason for the War.

(B) Provision of the Treaty and Results

- Germany was disarmed.
- German colonies were partitioned between the Allied Powers.
- Germany was accused and found guilty for the destruction of war.
- Arms Limitations were imposed on Germany.
- Germany had to pay War Compensation/War Indemnity to the Allied Powers.
- Germany had to give back the Alsace And Lorraine Province and Saar Coal Mines to France.
- Imperialism and Reign of Royal Dynasties like the Romanov Of Russia, German Royalty, Austrian Royalty, Ottoman Sultanate, etc were dissolved creating new countries.
- Fascism and Nazism grew in Italy, Japan and Germany as a result of the 1919 Versailles Treaty.
- The First World War was the reason for the Second World War.
- First World War was the reason for the establishment of League of Nations
- This First World War was the reason for 1920 Washington Naval Treaty
- The First World War was the reason for the 1929 Great Economic Depression.

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