

Source: [KBhHIST201WWI](#)

1 | Essay Template

General Information

Due Date	Topic	Important Documents
Monday, Jan 28th	Causes of WWI	Basically Palmer ch. 17 only??

Prompt

The political scientist Kenneth Waltz argues that the causes of war can be analyzed at three different levels: the individual human level, the state level, and the international system level. Those who view things from the first level believe that war is best explained by “selfishness,” “misdirected aggressive impulses,” or “stupidity” within the human psyche. Those who favor the second level believe there are hostile or aggressive or revisionist states who, because of their form of government or other domestic issues, behave in a warlike manner while other states simply want to keep the peace (the status quo). Those who favor the third level believe that the international system itself, because it is an anarchy with “no system of law enforceable” between states, and in which each state acts according to its own interest and reserves the right to use force to achieve its aims, makes war inevitable.

Analyze World War 1 according to one (or a blend) of these levels of analysis. Make an argument that combines an explanation of the general causes of the war with the specific sequence of events (including events that prolonged the war beyond the initial outbreak).

Thought Bucket

- Formation of alliances?
- The wish for peace is a cause or an effect?
- Governments

Self-interested cooperation compromises with other parties causes war.

Quotes bin

- “He formed a military alliance with Austria-Hungary, to which Italy was added in 1882. Bismarck signed a ‘reinsurance’ treaty with Russia also. Since Russia and Austria were enemies (because of the Balkans), to be allied to both at the same time took considerable diplomatic finesse.” AA
- “They had long prided themselves on a ‘splendid isolation,’ going their own way, disdaining the kind of dependency that alliance with others always brings” AB
- “The older Triple Alliance faced a newer Triple Entente, the latter somewhat the looser, since the British refused to make any formal military commitments.” AC
- “In 1904 the British and French governments agreed to forget Fashoda and the accumulated bad feeling of the preceding 25 years. ... There was no specific alliance; neither side said what it would do in the event of war; it was only a close understanding, an entente cordiale.” AD
- “They would call an international conference, at which Russia would favor Austrian annexation of Bosnia, and Austria would support the opening of the Straits to Russian warships. Austria, without waiting for a conference, proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia without more ado... Isvolsky was never able to realize his plans for Constantinople. His partners in the Triple Entente, Britain and France, refused to back him.” AE

- “An agreement of the great powers, to keep the peace, conjured up an independent kingdom in Albania. This confirmed the Austrian policy, kept Serbia from the sea, and aroused vehement outcries in both Serbia and Russia. But Russia again backed down. Serbian expansionism was again frustrated and inflamed.” AF
- “Arthur Zimmermann, dispatched a telegram to the German minister at Mexico City, telling him what to say to the Mexican president. He was to say that if the United States went to war with Germany, Germany would form an alliance with Mexico and if possible Japan, enabling Mexico to get back its ‘lost territories.’ ... Zimmermann’s telegram was intercepted and decoded by the British, and passed on to them to Washington. Printed in the newspapers, it shocked public opinion in the United States.” AG
- “By the end of 1917 the submarine was no more than a nuisance. For the Germans the great plan produced the anticipated penalty without the reward—its net result was only to add America to their enemies.” AH
- “The Germans, issuing their famous ‘blank check,’ encouraged the Austrians to be firm. The Austrians, thus reassured, dispatched a drastic ultimatum to Serbia” AI
- “France, terrified at the possibility of being some day caught alone in a war with Germany and determined to keep Russia as an ally at any cost, in effect gave a blank check to Russia.” AJ
- “The first victim of the First World War, among governments, was the Russian empire” AK

Claim Synthesis

Compromises for peace will inflame tensions

- AA Bismarck tried to double ensure his country by forming two-sided alliances that failed
- AF the creation of the independent Albanian kingdom meant to keep peace further inflamed tensions

Preemptive use of absolute force will lead to the victimization of the user

- AI Germans encouraged Austria-Hungary to use full force, bringing war
- AJ Russians got also issued a blank check for Russia to fight, which actually led Russia to be victimized during the war (AK)

Subversive deals with opposition will cause systemic collapse

- AE Capitulation between Austria and Russia ended up screwing Russia over
- AG attempts to coax Mexico for security + to end the stalemate foreshadowed the involvement of the US in the war

(um... Raison freaking d'état again! Or maybe [KBHIST201Realism](#))

Instead of leveraging a more passive strategy of defense to maintain peace, European nations in the early 19th century chose a more active role for national security though compromising peacekeeping agreements, preemptive use of absolute force, and subversive deals with opposition that resulted in the disruption of preset balances of power and led to World War I.

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