

Planning for a war:

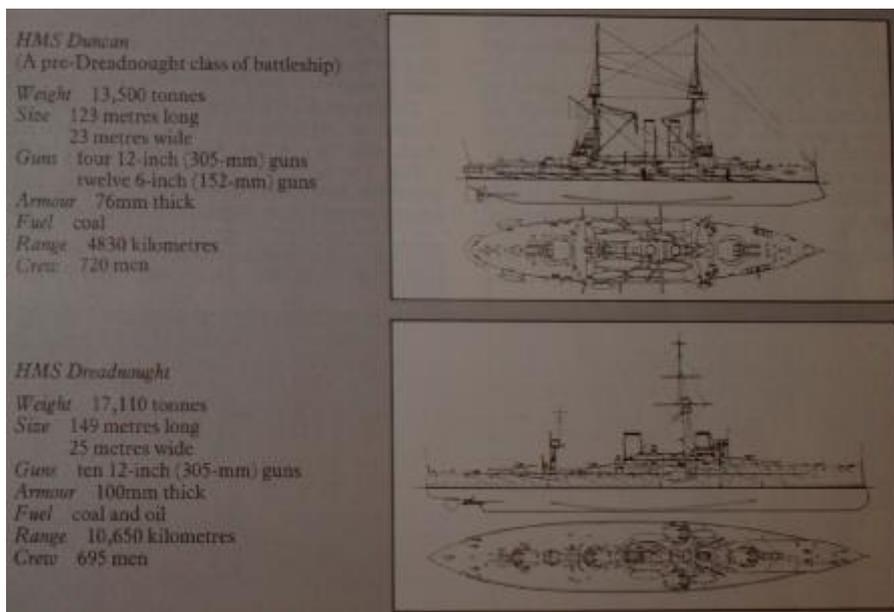
Table: Great powers in Europe 1900

	warships	soldiers
Britain	200	700 000
France	62	1000 000
Russia	30	1 200 000
Austria-Hungary	28	800 000
Germany	100	2000 000

Planning for a war: at sea

The naval race between Germany (naval chief, Admiral Tirpitz) and Britain (naval chief, Admiral Fischer): **Germany wanted to become great world power** and to achieve this, the Germans needed a navy that could challenge **Britain's navy, the largest in the world**. Britain was not prepared to allow this build-up of the German navy. **Britain needed a large fleet to protect her colonies and the trade routes to them**. So the British naval chiefs decided to **make the Royal Navy equal size to the two strongest navies in the rest of Europe put together**. This was known as the “two-power standard” and the idea was to have a fleet so big that no other navy would ever dare to attack it.

The race between the two powers began in 1900 when the **German Navy Law** ordered the building of 41 battleships and 60 cruisers. Britain responded: **Navy League** was formed and in 1906 the most powerful battleship so far, named **Dreadnought**, was built.



Dreadnought was faster and more thickly armoured than any other warship. More importantly, the ship was designed to fight at long range. Her ten huge guns could blow up an enemy ship from 32 kilometres away.

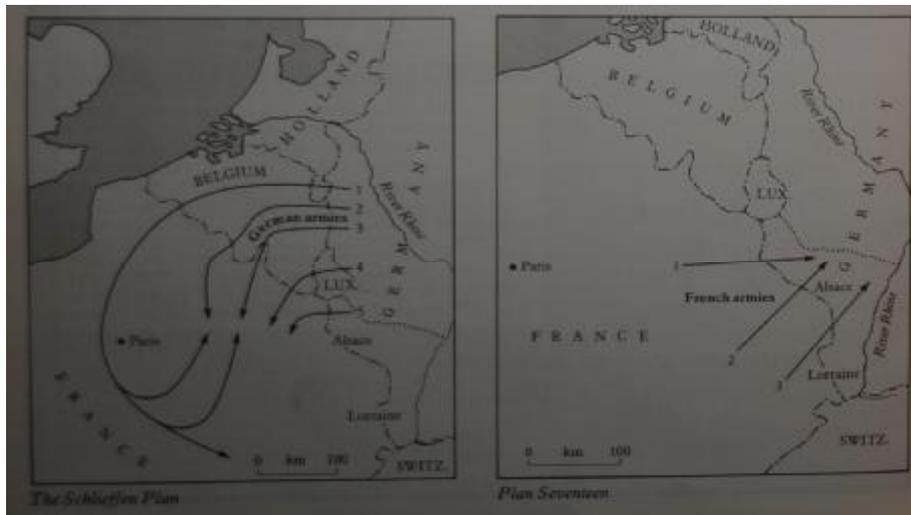
By 1914, when war began, Britain seemed to have won the “naval race”. Germany had 17 Dreadnought-class battleships while Britain had 29.

Planning for a war: on land: Schlieffen Plan (1905), Plan Seventeen (1913)

Schlieffen Plan: plan made by the senior general in the German Army, Alfred von Schlieffen. Germany's two main enemies were France and Russia. If Germany fought France, Russia would attack Germany from the east. To protect country, Schlieffen would then have to split his army into two and fight a war on two fronts – east and west. No general wants to do this because he can only use half an army to fight each enemy. **The plan that Schlieffen made in 1905 aimed to avoid a war on two fronts.** He said that although the Russian armies were big, the roads and railways in Russia were so bad that the Russians would take 6 weeks to get into position for fighting Germany. **So if war began, the whole German army should invade France by travelling at high speed through Belgium and northern France to capture Paris. Having defeated France within 6 weeks, the German army would then be sent to the other side of Europe to fight the Russians who would still be getting ready.**

Plan Seventeen: made by General Joffre in 1913

If war broke out, the French army would make an all-out attack on **Alsace** and **Lorraine**. After capturing the two “lost provinces” they would cross the river Rhine and head for Berlin.



Schlieffen Plan (on the left)

Plan Seventeen (on the right)

Other plans:

British war minister Richard Haldane set about improving the British army. He formed an **Expeditionary Force** of 144 000 soldiers whose task would be **to travel quickly to France as soon as war was declared on Germany**. To back them up he created a **Territorial Army** of volunteers. And to make sure that there would be a good supply of officers to lead this enlarged army, he set up **Officers Training Corps** for older pupils in schools.

Planning for a war: two tests of strength

The Tangier Crisis, 1905: In 1905 the French were getting ready to make Morocco into one of their colonies. Britain, Spain, Italy had no objection, but the Germans decided to test the French by opposing. The Germans wanted to find out whether France would declare war on them, more importantly whether Britain, France's new ally, would come to her aid. After all, the whole situation was resolved at the **conference in Algiers in 1906:** Germany was forced to back down, France was given special rights in Morocco. But Germany found out one important thing: Britain and France were not willing to join together to fight against Germany.

The Agadir Crisis, 1911: In 1911 Moroccan rebels attacked the town of Fez, the French sent some soldiers over. Germany accused France of invading Morocco and sent warship to a small port called Agadir. Britain was

afraid that the Germans would make Agadir into a rival base for Germany. The British navy was told to make ready for the war. At the last moment German warships were ordered to leave Agadir and the war was avoided.



Morocco: cities of Tangier, Algericas, Fez, Agadir