Germany feared that its’ neighbours’ jealousy of them would push them to have a policy of encirclement (Einkreisungspolitik), which would aim to stifle Germany’s growth and vitality. Germany therefore stopped attending International Conferences. The international co-operation between the French, British and Russians had side effects Discussions between the nations ceased (Russian-Britain colonial discussions ended with a treaty – August 1907 that solved many disagreements) – Britain wanted Russia to stay away from Turkey, India/Afghanistan (British control of Persia made sure of this). If the Ottoman Empire collapses, the Suez Canal would be under serious threat. Although the Algeciras Conference temporarily solved the First Moroccan Crisis, it only worsened the tensions between the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente that ultimately led to the first world war.

The First Crisis Over Bosnia – 1908-1909
In July 1908, the revolution caused by the ‘Young Turk’ movement overthrew the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid and offered the prospect to other powers of easy gains in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary was eager to re-establish the prestige of its Empire and this was a perfect opportunity to do so. Austria-Hungary wanted to annex the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina that had been under Austrian administration since the Congress of Berlin in 1878. It was also an opportunity to counter the Serbian influence over the Empire’s Slav population. Russia had to be dealt with since the presence of Slavs in the desired territories also attracted the Russian Foreign Minister.

The Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
The Austro-Hungarian and Russian Foreign Ministers met at Buchlau in 1908 and concluded the agreement where in Russia would accept the new status of Bosnia and Herzegovina in return for Austro-Hungarian support for a Russian annexation of the Dardanelles. Izvolski, the Russian Foreign Minister, expected the matter to be referred to in an international conference like the one in 1878. However, Austria-Hungary proclaimed the annexation of the territories without such need. Austria-Hungary failed to keep its part in the pact, and Izvolski was forced to act alone, encountering not only hostile reaction by Britain and France, but also from the Russian government itself. Izvolski demanded a conference again, with the result of a broadening of international tension and provoking Germany into a military agreement with Austria-Hungary in case the annexation was threatened. Russia was humiliated as it disagreed with its Foreign Minister’s actions. Germany’s actions disagreed Bismarckian principles by involving itself in the so-called Eastern Question where no German interest was involved.

The Humiliation of Serbia and Russia
Strong of a recent victory over Russia and Serbia, Germany and Austria-Hungary decided to ‘put the boot in’ by demanding a formal acknowledgement of Austro-Hungarian authority over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The crisis ended in 1909, when Russia and Serbia both gave such an acknowledgement. Russia suffered from another humiliation, far greater than that suffered by Germany over the first Moroccan crisis. Austrian success and the prompt German support encouraged it to engage in other Balkan adventures. Serbia was to build hate towards Austria-