The Balkans

The spark that caused World War I

1st Balkan War – 1912

- Italy attacks the Ottoman Empire, Libya. The Balkan league gets created and is made up of – Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro.
- Austria is concerned about Serbia.
- Germany supports Austro-Hungary.
- The purpose of the league was to gain territory.
- The league attacks Ottoman.
- Serbia invades Albania on October 7th.
- In November 1912 Austria demands that Albania becomes independent – Serbia ignores them as they have Prussia’s support.
- Kaiser calls on a council of military advisers on the 8th December. To which there was a diplomatic solution – Treaty of London 1913. This ended the first Balkan war.
- An independent Albania was also created.
- There was a brief 2nd Balkan war where Serbia again invades Albania.
- By this point Austro-Hungary and Germany were under no direct threat but it was their fear of encirclement that encouraged them to get involved in the affairs of others.

July Crisis

- Took place between 18th June 1914 – 4th August 1914
- Heir to Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated by an independent terrorist group from Serbia. Austro-Hungary was furious and declared war on Serbia which escalated into a general European war.
- 3rd – 6th July – Germany back Austria and gave them a blank cheque which means that Germany will do whatever Austria needs in order to support them. They were aware of the risks and implications of this.
- On the 7th July – Austria offers unrealistic demands (An ultimatum) to Serbia. However this was not delivered until the 23rd of July and for that reason the Serbians only had less than a week to agree to the terms. The Serbians refuse to agree, so Austria declares war on 28th July.
- Russia offers public support to Serbia however in private they were telling Serbia to accept the ultimatum. When Serbia rejects the proposal then Russia only partly mobilises its army. When the Germans demand a halt on Russian mobilisation then the Russians respond by fully mobilising their army.
- On 1st August – Germany declares war on Russia.
- On 3rd August – France honours the Triple Entente and sides with Russia – Germany demands that Russia remains neutral and takes over the borders. Germany declares was on France as they refuse to remain neutral.
- 4th August – Britain declares war on Germany due to the Triple Entente. Germans march through Belgium in order to attack France. Due to a long term treaty with Belgium Britain was dragged into the war.