



Russia in 1895 an outline

Russia was ruled by Tsar (emperor) Nicholas II and his selected advisers. The Tsar refused to accept any form of democracy and did not believe in his people having a say in government.

Russia was very backward and was only just beginning to develop industries that had been growing in Western Europe for almost a hundred years.

Russia was a Christian country but its people belonged to what was called the Orthodox church. They were not Protestants or Roman Catholics and they had more in common with Christians in south east Europe who also followed Orthodox Christianity. The people of south east Europe were also Slavs, just like the most Russians.

One problem that limited Russia was its location in the north where the seas often froze in winter. In order to catch up with the growing wealth of western European powers Russia wanted to have warm water ports in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean or the Sea of Japan. To achieve this, Russia would need to conquer land in those regions or arrange alliances with the nations there.

Russia was alarmed by the growth of Germany its army, but her greatest European rival was Austria-Hungary. Like Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was keen to control south-east Europe and would block Russian ships from reaching the Mediterranean if they were in charge of the region.

The Tsar built up the Russian army but it was still only half the size of the German army so he knew he would need an ally (partner/supporter) in Europe if he wanted to balance the power of Germany.

Russia also upset Japan and Britain by its plans to spread its power in Asia.

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- What Russia feared
- What Russia wanted
- Who Russia might want as an ally (partner/friendly nation)



Austria-Hungary in 1895 – an outline

Austria-Hungary was ruled by Emperor Franz Joseph. Parts of his empire had some form of democracy, but Emperor Franz Joseph and his advisers had control of foreign affairs.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire included many different people such as Czechs, Poles, Romanians and Serbs. Some of these wanted to break away from the empire to set up their own nations. Austria-Hungary wanted to stop this happening, especially South Eastern Europe, known as the Balkans.

In the 19th century a new state called Serbia had appeared in the Balkans, from lands that had once been ruled by the Ottoman Empire. Many Serbs still lived under Austro-Hungarian rule in the region of Bosnia. Serbia wanted to take this land from Austria-Hungary so that all Serbs could live together.

Austria-Hungary was mainly a Christian country. Most Austrians were Roman Catholics but many of its people in the Balkans belonged to what was called the Orthodox church. They were not Protestants or Roman Catholics and they had more in common with Christians in Russia. Most people in the Balkans were also Slavs, like the Russians.

For many centuries Austria had been an enemy of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, but the Turks were too weak to be any serious threat by 1895. By then Russia was Austria-Hungary's greatest rival as they each wanted to control the Balkans.

The armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was really quite small. The Emperor knew he would need support in any serious dispute or war with another major power. Austria-Hungary did not need to want a large navy as it was mainly a land power.

Based on the information above, decide ...

- a) What Austria-Hungary feared
- b) What Austria-Hungary wanted
- c) Who Austria-Hungary might want as an ally (partner/friendly nation)



The Ottoman Empire in 1895 – an outline

The Ottoman (Turkish) Empire was ruled by Sultan Abdulhamid II. He had considerable power and had rejected democracy. He worked with a close group of his chosen advisers.

For hundreds of years the Ottoman Empire had seemed to be a serious threat to Europe, especially the Austrian Empire. It had conquered large areas of south east Europe, the region known as the Balkans. For the past two hundred years, though, the Ottoman Empire had been weakening.

In the 19th century, the Ottomans lost important parts of their land in Europe such as Greece and Serbia. Russia was keen to take control of the Balkans as the Ottomans weakened. In 1878 Russia defeated the Ottomans in a war, but Britain and Germany worked hard at a peace conference to make sure the Ottomans still kept many of their lands in Europe.

Russia was not the only power that wanted to replace the Ottomans in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary also wanted to control that region.

The Ottomans main aim in 1895 was simply to find friendly powers who would help it survive! Britain and France had helped in the past and more recently Germany had shown friendship by financing the building of railways across its lands. Germany hoped this might help its own trade with the Middle East and Far East.

The Ottoman Empire was a Muslim empire although it still had some Christians living in its European lands.

The Ottomans had quite a small and weak army. It knew it could not defend itself without help.

Based on the information above, decide ...

- a) What the Ottomans feared
- b) What the Ottomans wanted
- c) Who the Ottomans might want as an ally (partner/friendly nation)

