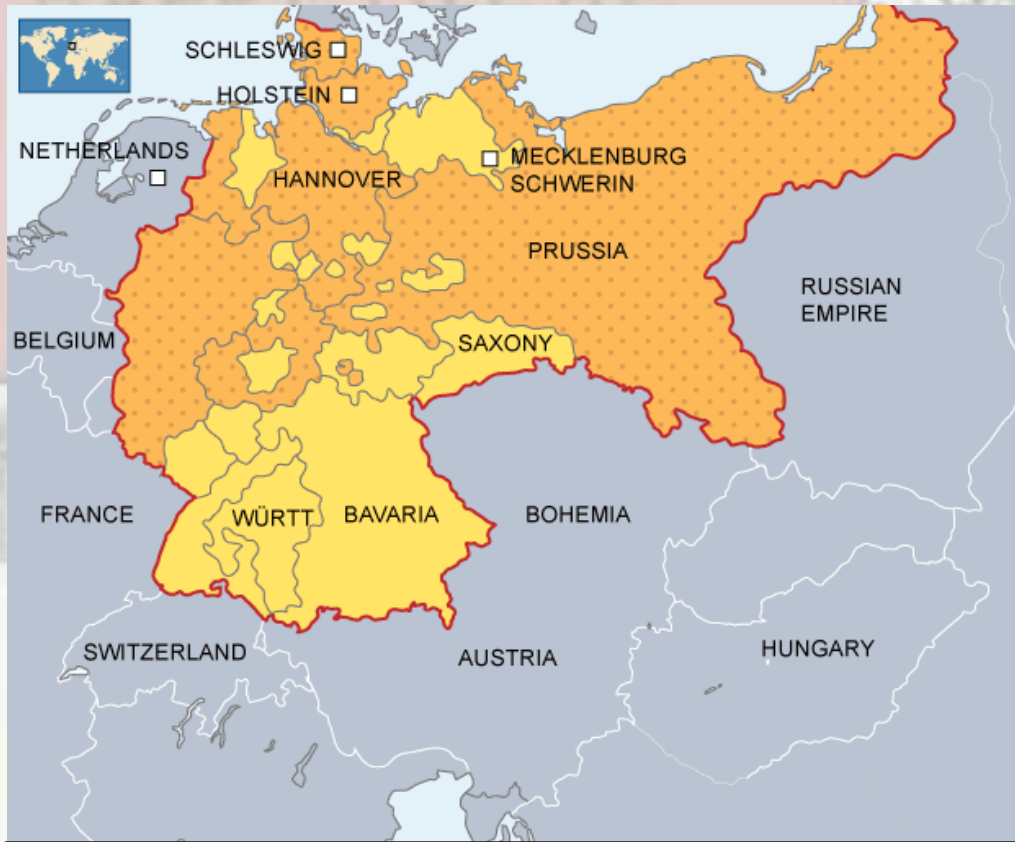


Prussian Militarism



1) Why do you think the Prussian generals influenced the Kaiser so much?

Hint: Did the Kaiser respect military men?

Hint: How is the Kaiser linked to these men?

- Germany became a united country in **1871** because of the leadership of its biggest state, **Prussia**. Prussia had defeated France in the Franco-Prussia War of 1870-71;
- **The King of Prussia automatically became the Kaiser (emperor) of Germany;**
- **Prussia's generals automatically became Germany's generals;**
- Wilhelm II liked to surround himself with military figures (he had grown up with them), which meant that **the opinions of Prussian generals held a lot of influence** – very few other groups influenced German decisions.

Prussian Militarism

The Kaiser and his Army

Source 1: "The only nations which have progressed and become great are warring nations. Those which have not been ambitious and gone to war have been nothing."

The Kaiser, quoted in A.N. Davis' book, 'The Kaiser I Knew'

2) What evidence (facts) can you provide to support the ideas being put forward by the Kaiser in Source 1?

Prussian Militarism

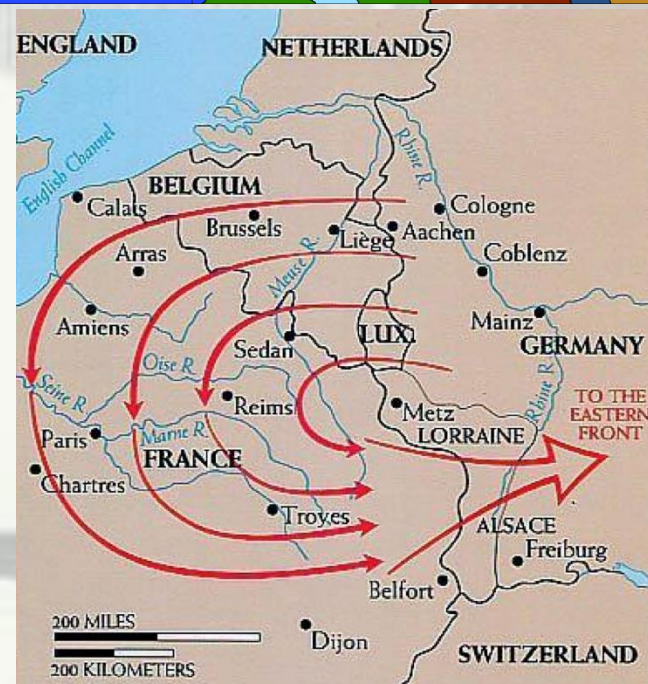
The Kaiser and his Army

The Kaiser was interested in growing Germany's power in Europe.

But there was a problem: use the map at the top, **Q3) what issue did Germany face?**

As a result, the Kaiser was determined to build up Germany's armed forces as he believed that Germany would more than likely fight a war against France but war with France also meant war with her ally (friend), Russia. Germany was stuck in the middle.

The Germans had even come up with a plan to defeat France quickly in the event of war - **The Schlieffen Plan (see map at bottom)**. The aim was for a quick, war against France, forcing France to give up, and then turn its attention to Russia, depending on such a big country being slow to mobilise its soldiers.



Weltpolitik and the Navy Laws

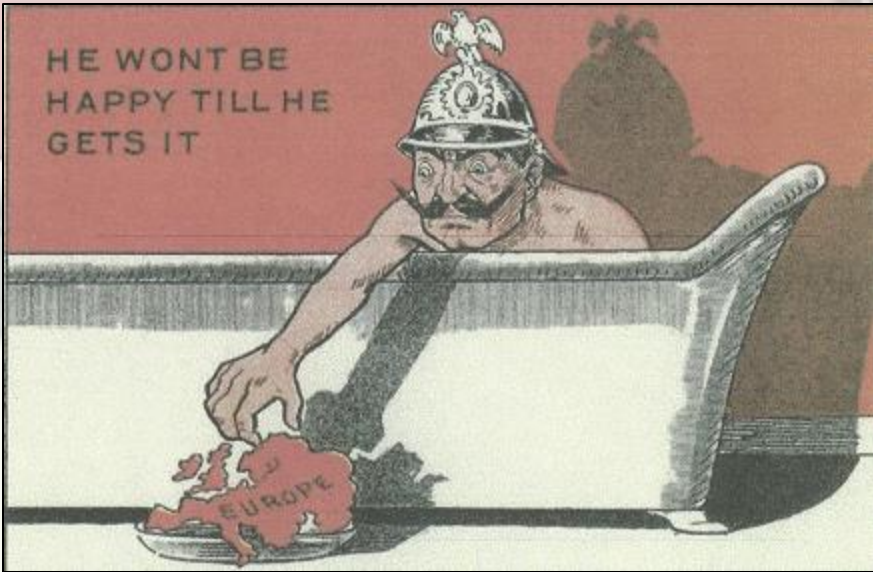
Keyword Definition Alert!



Weltpolitik



HE WONT BE
HAPPY TILL HE
GETS IT



**COPY
DOWN!**

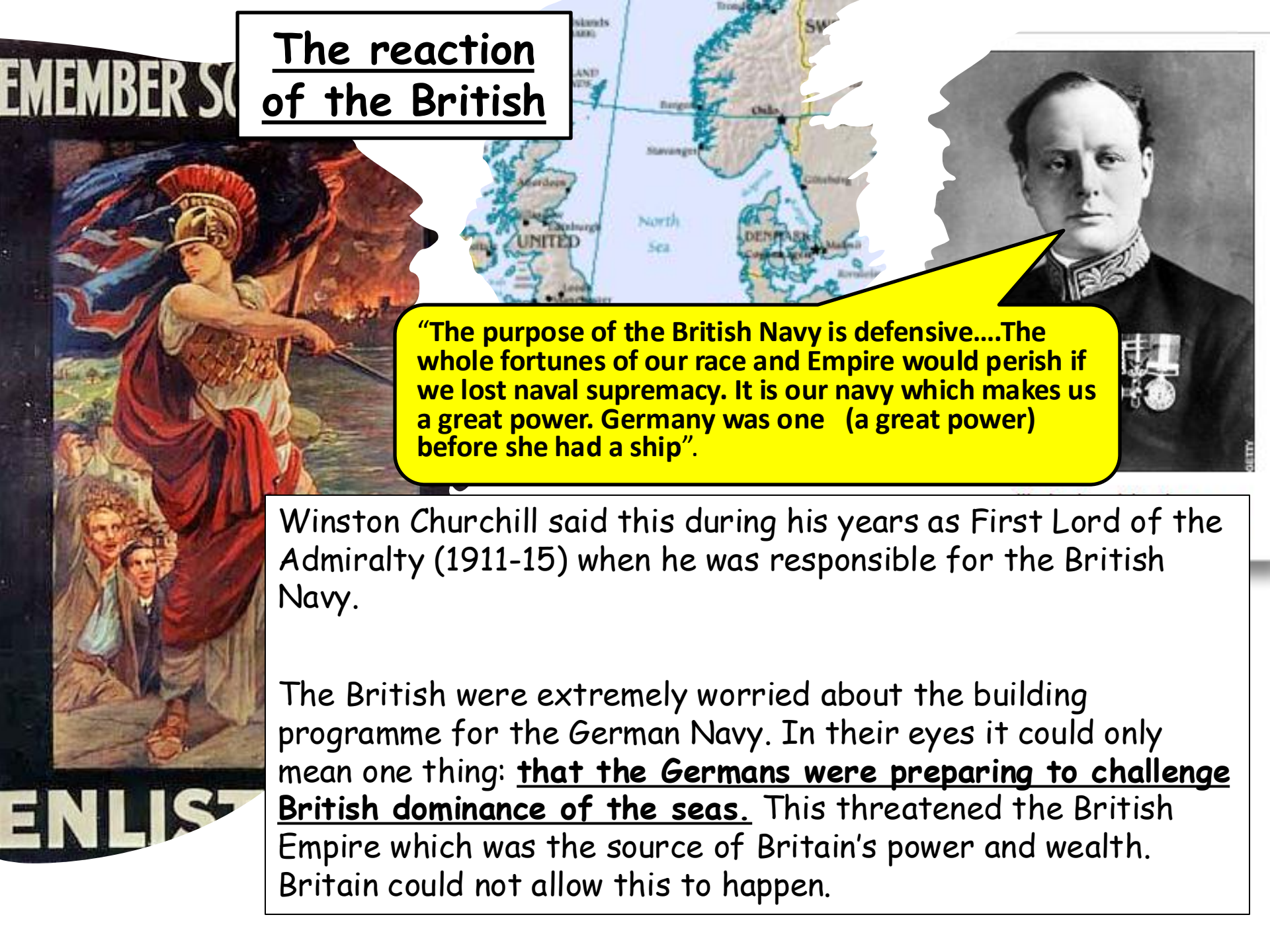
Meaning 'world policy'. This was the Kaiser's plan to turn Germany into a global power largely through the building up of the German armed forces (especially the navy) and gaining a large empire abroad.

Weltpolitik and the Navy Laws

- The Kaiser's push for a significantly larger German navy was led by **Admiral Von Tirpitz**;
- Tirpitz created a **Navy League** in 1898 to act as a pressure group to encourage the Reichstag to pass a series of Navy Laws, expanding the Navy;
- Belonging to the Navy League proved that you were **patriotic** (proud of being German) and it quickly gained **1 million members**;
- The League sent out magazines containing arguments that more money was needed to be spent on the navy. The people behind the league were **industrialists** (rich factory and business owners who hoped to do well from building ships);
- It's no surprise then that three **Navy Laws were passed in 1898, 1900 and 1906**. When the Reichstag had been reluctant to give the Kaiser the money to build the Navy in 1897 he had threatened to march the army into the Reichstag!



The reaction of the British



“The purpose of the British Navy is defensive....The whole fortunes of our race and Empire would perish if we lost naval supremacy. It is our navy which makes us a great power. Germany was one (a great power) before she had a ship”.

Winston Churchill said this during his years as First Lord of the Admiralty (1911-15) when he was responsible for the British Navy.

The British were extremely worried about the building programme for the German Navy. In their eyes it could only mean one thing: that the Germans were preparing to challenge British dominance of the seas. This threatened the British Empire which was the source of Britain's power and wealth. Britain could not allow this to happen.

Task 7

The Kaiser's Navy Laws

| Year of Navy Law | What did it involve? | How would Churchill/Britain feel? (5 = very nervy! 3 = looking over his shoulder 1= not worried at all!) |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1898 | Allowed for the building of 7 extra battleships to join the 12 Germany already owned. These would still not be enough to match the British navy but was a sign of things to come. | 3 – Britain would be slightly worried because it would start to question why Germany wanted to build its navy up. However, at this point, Germany's navy was a lot smaller than Britain's, and posed no real threat. But, where would German ambitions end? |
| 1900 | Doubled the size of the German fleet to 38 battleships. Germany had also sympathised with the South African Boers who Britain were at war with at this time. It was now clear that Germany saw itself as a rival to Britain. | |
| 1906 | From 1902 onwards a naval arms race had developed between Britain and Germany. Germans became convinced that Britain was intent on increasing the size of its empire and stopping Germany becoming a world power. German ships were now built to rival Britain's 'Dreadnought' fleet. | |