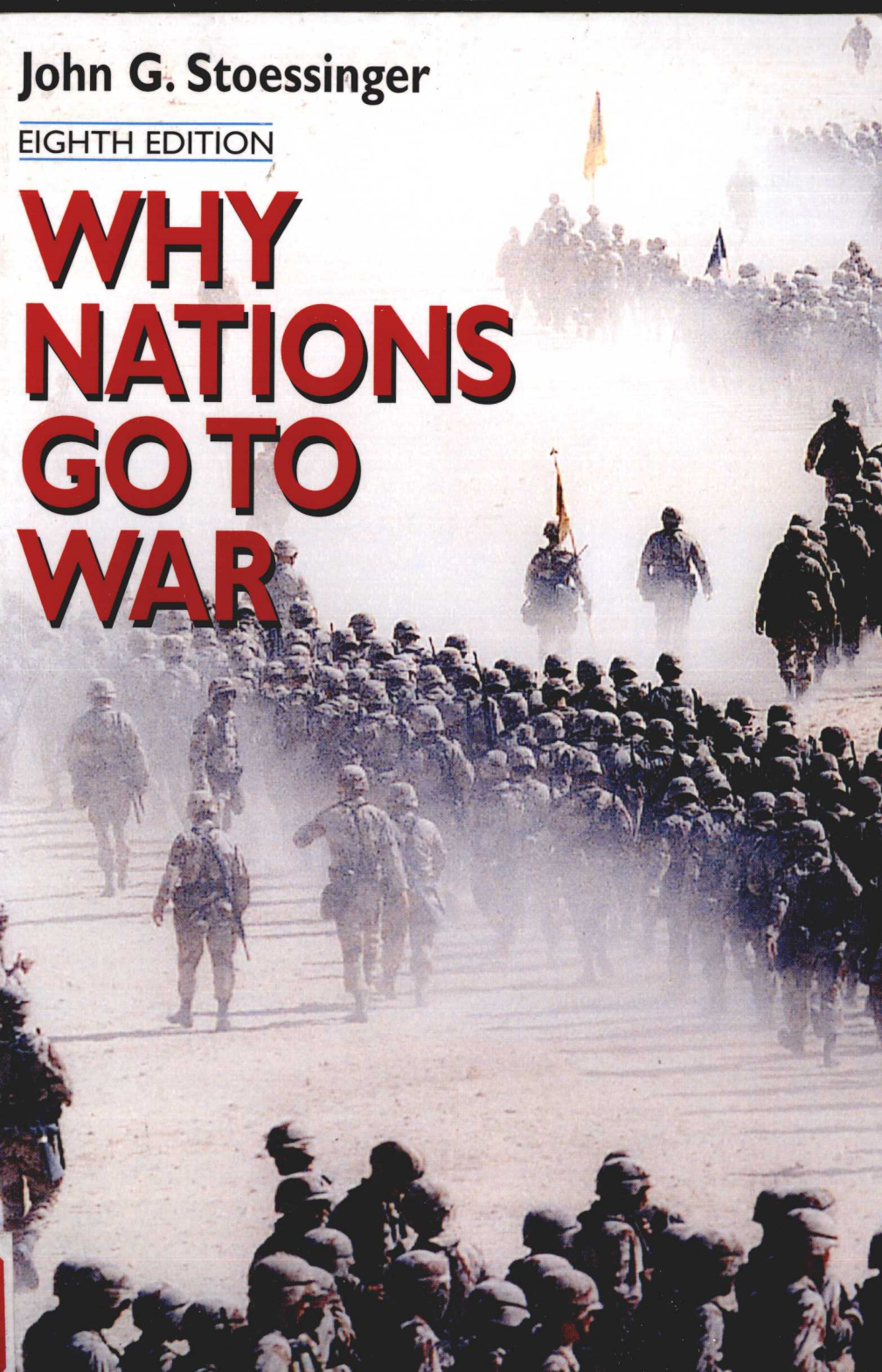


John G. Stoessinger

EIGHTH EDITION

WHY NATIONS GO TO WAR



Why Nations Go to War

Eighth Edition

John G. Stoessinger

University of San D

THOMSON

WADSWORTH

Australia • Canada • Mexico • Singapore • Spain

United Kingdom • United States

For Bedford/St. Martin's

Executive Editor for History and Political Science: Katherine E. Kurzman
Developmental Editor: Louise Townsend
Senior Editor, Publishing Services: Douglas Bell
Production Supervisor: Cheryl Mamaril
Project Management: Publisher's Studio/Stratford Publishing Services, Inc.
Graphics: Mapping Specialists Ltd.
Cover Design: Donna Lee Dennison
Cover Photo: AP Photo/Greg English/Stringer
Composition: Stratford Publishing Services, Inc.
Printing and Binding: Haddon Craftsmen, an RR Donnelley & Sons Company

President: Charles H. Christensen
Editorial Director: Joan E. Feinberg
Director of Marketing: Karen R. Melton
Director of Editing, Design, and Production: Marcia Cohen
Manager, Publishing Services: Emily Berleth

Library of Congress Control Number: 00-104759

ISBN: 0-312-25660-4

COPYRIGHT © 2001 Wadsworth, a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.
Thomson Learning™ is a trademark used herein under license.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution, or information storage or retrieval systems — without the written permission of the publisher.

Wadsworth/Thomson Learning
10 Davis Drive
Belmont CA 94002-3098
USA

For information about our products, contact us:
Thomson Learning Academic Resource Center
1-800-423-0563
<http://www.wadsworth.com>

For permission to use material from this text, contact us by
Web: <http://www.thomsonrights.com>
Fax: 1-800-730-2215
Phone: 1-800-730-2214

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements and copyrights appear at the back of the book on page 274, which constitutes a continuation of the copyright page.

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Preface

I first wrote this book in order to transmit an understanding of twentieth-century warfare to my students. Over the past two decades, I have received a multitude of letters from students and teachers all over the world. Many of these contained suggestions for improvement that have found their way into the present edition. In response to numerous requests, I have included an updated chapter on the wars between India and Pakistan. I have also updated the chapters on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Gulf War, as well as all the chapter bibliographies. Five new maps should also be helpful.

As I write these lines, it is still my fervent hope that future historians will not regard the Balkans as a prologue to a larger war. Accordingly, I hope that my last case study on Kosovo may provide some encouragement.

In my Conclusions, I have included some reflections on the changing nature of war from a phenomenon *between* states to one increasingly *within* states, as in Rwanda.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Brigadier General F. J. (Buck) Walters, U.S. Army, Retired, for his valuable advice on the chapter on Yugoslavia, and to Margaret Walters, for her sensitive editorial assistance and professional handling of the manuscript. Louise Townsend of Bedford/St. Martin's deserves my gratitude for preparing the manuscript for publication, and Colleen Ashworth has challenged me with several superb insights from which I have greatly benefited. Also at Bedford/St. Martin's, Executive Editor Katherine Kurzman, Senior Editor Doug Bell, and Editorial Assistant Amy McConathy all helped to update this edition, as did Copyeditor Leslie Connor.

I am also grateful to the reviewers who made suggestions for the eighth edition: John Conybeare, University of Iowa; John R. Danley, Southern Illinois University—Edwardville; John H. Gilbert, North

Carolina State University; Kate Graney, Skidmore College; Yogesh Grover, Winona State University; Valerie M. Hudson, Brigham Young University; Joseph Lepgold, Georgetown University; Margaret H. Mahoney, Bellarmine College; Rita P. Peters, University of Massachusetts at Boston; Frank Riddel, Marshall University; Don Rhoades, Southern Oregon University; Barry Seldes, Rider University; and Claudena Skran, Lawrence University.

Finally, this book is not the product of teamwork or of a massive research apparatus. It is in essence a product of reflection. In that sense, this is an old-fashioned book, and the ultimate responsibility for both its strengths and its weaknesses is truly mine alone.

John G. Stoessinger

About the Author

John G. Stoessinger (Ph.D., Harvard) is Distinguished Visiting Professor of Global Diplomacy at the University of San Diego in San Diego, California. He has taught at Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, the City University of New York, and Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. In 1969 he led the International Seminar on International Relations at Harvard University, and in 1970 he received honorary doctor of law degrees from Grinnell College, Iowa, and from the American College of Switzerland.

Stoessinger is the author of ten leading books on international relations, including *The Might of Nations: World Politics in Our Time*, which was awarded the Bancroft Prize by Columbia University in 1963 and is now in its tenth edition. He is also the author of *The Refugee and the World Community*; *Financing the United Nations System*; *Power and Order*; *The United Nations and the Superpowers*; *Nations in Darkness*; *China, Russia, and America*; and *Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power*. Dr. Stoessinger also served as chief book review editor of *Foreign Affairs* for five years and as acting director of the Political Affairs Division at the United Nations from 1967 to 1974. He is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations.

Introduction

This book attempts to take a new look at the age-old scourge of war. Ever since I was a student, I have found most explanations of war somehow wanting. I read that wars were caused by nationalism, militarism, alliance systems, economic factors, or some other “fundamental” cause that I could not connect directly to the actual outbreak of a given war. Often I was told that war was an ineradicable part of human nature. Having lived through most of the major wars of this century, I wondered if this could be true. I yearned for a deeper understanding, in the hope that insight might bring healing. The conventional wisdom left me totally dissatisfied, both intellectually and emotionally. It somehow always missed the human essence of the problem. Forces over which people apparently had no control were frequently enthroned as “fundamental” causes. Yet it was *people* who actually *precipitated* wars. This personality dimension was seldom given its due weight in traditional books on war. The outline for this book grew out of my need to know the human truth behind the mechanistic forces.

In this edition, I decided to embark on eight case studies of the major international wars fought in this century: the two world wars, Korea, Vietnam, India and Pakistan, the Arab States and Israel, Saddam Hussein’s two wars in the Persian Gulf, and the war over the remains of Yugoslavia. What interested me most in each case was the “moment of truth” when leaders crossed the threshold into war. I decided to “blow up” that fateful moment, to capture it in flight, as it were, in all its awesome tragic meaning. In the process, I sought answers to the questions that have always haunted me: At what moment did the decision to go to war become irreversible? Who bore the responsibility and why? Could the disaster have been averted? Did the eight cases, different though they were, reveal some common truths about war in our time?

My first unforgettable exposure to World War I was Erich Maria Remarque's classic, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a book dedicated to the memory of a generation that "had been destroyed by war even though it may have escaped its guns." Yet many old people to whom I spoke about the war remembered its outbreak as a time of glory and rejoicing. Distance had romanticized their memories, muted the anguish, and subdued the horror. I have attempted to recapture the atmosphere of those few weeks in July 1914 that changed the world forever, and I have tried to portray the leading personalities who contributed to the disaster.

I remember well the charismatic nature of Hitler's grip on the German nation. Most of my boyhood years were spent fleeing from the Nazi terror. I have always been haunted by the personality of Hitler and driven by a need to understand his demon. That is why I chose to examine the attack on the Soviet Union—an assault that witnessed Hitler at the zenith of his power but also bore the seed of his ultimate destruction. Why did he launch this suicidal assault? Why did Stalin, who trusted no one, place his trust in Hitler? And what explains the fact that so many German soldiers followed Hitler to their doom in Russia like obedient schoolchildren?

When the Korean War broke out, I remember that I applauded President Harry Truman for repelling the armed aggression from the north. But when General Douglas MacArthur's forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel into North Korea, I began to wonder. And when the general drove on toward the Chinese border, I shuddered with anxiety that China might intervene. My fear was justified. I have attempted in this case study to recapture each decision separately and to place responsibility where it belongs.

In no war did personalities play a greater role than in Vietnam. I believe that, in the course of a single generation, five American presidents based their policies in Indochina not on Asian realities but on their own fears and, ultimately, on their hopes. Each president made a concrete policy decision that escalated the war and left it in worse shape than before. It is for this reason that this case, like a Greek tragedy, has five "acts," each a virtually new step in a gradually escalating conflict that became the "Thirty Years' War" of our century.

Some of the most dreadful wars of the twentieth century were fought on the Indian subcontinent. The human suffering that accompanied them was on a scale so vast as to defy the imagination. I have attempted to study the personalities of the Hindu and the Moslem

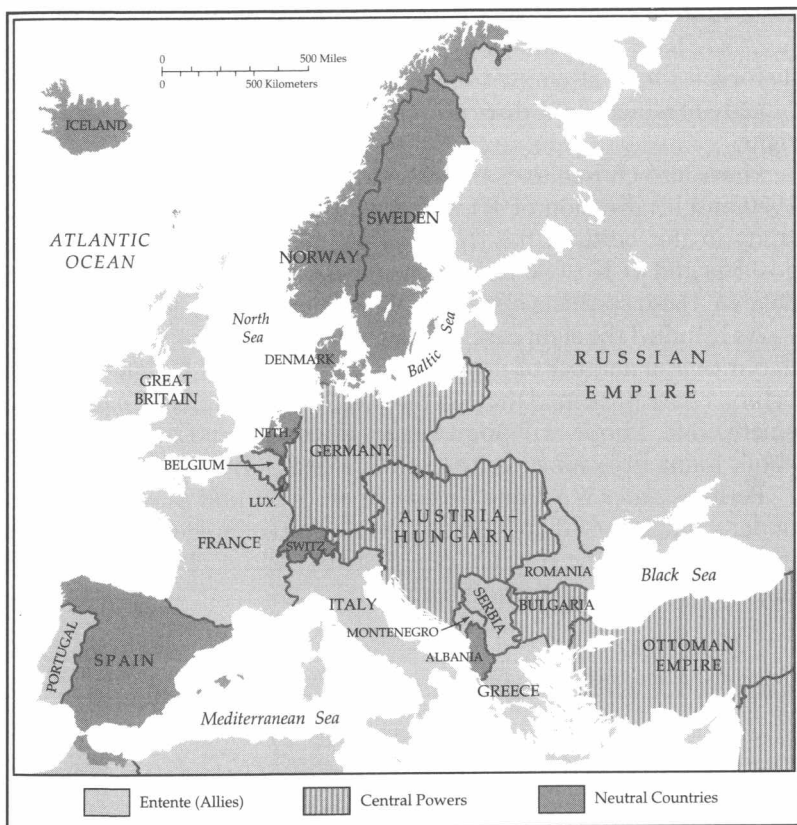
leaders for whom religious war was just as real in our secular era as it was at the time of the Crusades a thousand years ago.

A Fifty Years' War was fought in the twentieth century between Arab and Jew. Six times in a single generation these two peoples have turned on each other with a terrible ferocity. Both Arab and Jewish leaders have seen their cause as just and firmly based on the will of God, morality, and reason. And in the name of two appeals to justice, they have done things to one another that neither side will easily forget. I have attempted to capture the human truth of this great tragedy in which right does not clash with wrong, but with another right.

I have also chosen to examine Saddam Hussein's attack on Iran in 1980 and his invasion of Kuwait ten years later. And as a final case study in this edition, the tragedies of the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and of Kosovo have been considered. With an eerie sense of *déjà vu*, these conflicts elicit ghostly echoes from an earlier era.

As I studied the eight cases and surveyed the entire spectacle of war in our time, a number of new themes emerged that I had never noted before. I have presented these in the concluding chapter. A pattern did emerge that, I hope, will point to new directions and start a dialogue about humanity's most terrible self-imposed affliction.

Perhaps *chaos* is a name we give to an order that as yet we do not understand. I hope that this book may bring some order to the chaos by presenting some original perspectives. And such insight, I dare hope, may be a first step to liberation.



MAP 1 Europe in 1914

Contents

Preface vii

List of Maps xi

About the Author xiii

Introduction xv

1 The Iron Dice: World War I	1
The Kaiser's Fateful Pledge	3
The Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia	5
The Closing Trap	8
The Iron Dice	13
Conclusion	19
Selected Bibliography	23
2 Barbarossa: Hitler's Attack on Russia	25
Hitler and Russia	26
Stalin and Germany	36
Conclusion	46
Selected Bibliography	51
3 The Temptations of Victory: Korea	53
President Truman's Decision	54
General MacArthur's Gamble	66
Conclusion	74
Selected Bibliography	78
4 A Greek Tragedy in Five Acts: Vietnam	81
Act One: Truman—Asia Was Not Europe	82
Act Two: Eisenhower—The Lesson of France Ignored	85
Act Three: Kennedy—The Military	90
Act Four: Johnson—The Catastrophe	94
Act Five: Nixon—Full Circle	102
Conclusion	106
Selected Bibliography	109

5 Four Battles over God: India and Pakistan in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1998	111
Colonialism, Partition, and War	112
The Kashmir War of 1965	120
The Bloody Dawn of Bangladesh	123
Nuclear Viagra	132
Conclusion	134
Selected Bibliography	136
6 The Fifty Years' War in the Holy Land: Israel and the Arabs	139
The Palestine War of 1948	140
The Sinai Campaign and the Suez Crisis of 1956	150
The Six-Day War of 1967	156
The October War of 1973	163
The Lebanese Tragedy	173
The Palestinian Uprising	176
The Peace Process: Between Fear and Hope	179
Conclusion	181
Selected Bibliography	184
7 The War Lover: Saddam Hussein's Two Wars in the Persian Gulf	187
The Iran-Iraq War: The Price of Martyrdom	188
Hitler's Heir: Saddam in Kuwait	193
Conclusion	212
Selected Bibliography	214
8 From Sarajevo to Kosovo: The War over the Remains of Yugoslavia	217
The Dismemberment of Yugoslavia Begins	220
The War in Bosnia	223
The Tide Turns against the Serbs	229
The Dayton Peace Accords	230
The UN War Crimes Tribunal	232
Kosovo: The War against Europe's Last Dictator	236
Conclusion	246
Selected Bibliography	250

9 Why Nations Go to War 251

The Determinants of War	253
War Lovers and Tyrants, and Our Future	260
Selected Bibliography	264

<i>Epilogue</i>	267
-----------------	-----

<i>Index</i>	275
--------------	-----

List of Maps

MAP 1	Europe in 1914	xviii
MAP 2	Europe in 1945	24
MAP 3	Operation Barbarossa and the Eastern Front, 1941–1942	37
MAP 4	The Korean War, 1950–1953	52
MAP 5	Vietnam, 1954–1975	80
MAP 6	The Indian Subcontinent	110
MAP 7	Israel and Its Neighbors	138
MAP 8	Israeli Conquests, 1967	162
MAP 9	Iraq and the Persian Gulf Region	186
MAP 10	The Gulf War, February 1991	206
MAP 11	Yugoslavia and the Breakaway Republics, 1991	216
MAP 12	Crisis in Kosovo	241

The Iron Dice: World War I

If the iron dice must roll, may God help us.

Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg
German chancellor, August 1, 1914

The emperors and generals who sent their men to war in August 1914 thought in terms of weeks, not months, let alone years. "You will be home before the leaves have fallen from the trees," the German Kaiser told his troops in early August; at the same time, members of the czar's Imperial Guard wondered whether they should take along their dress uniforms for their victorious entry into Berlin or have them brought to the front by the next courier. Few foresaw the world catastrophe that would snuff out the lives of an entire generation and consign the next to disillusion and despair. When it was all over, no one was who he had been and, as D. H. Lawrence said, "all the great words were cancelled out." In one of history's consummate touches of irony, one of the few who did see the shadow of war lengthening into years was the chief of the German general staff, Helmuth von Moltke, who predicted "a long and wearisome struggle," but who also believed that sooner or later war was inevitable; on June 1 he saw fit to pronounce that Germany was "ready, and the sooner the better for us."

This theme of inevitability is a haunting and pervasive one. Most of the statesmen who made the crucial decisions behaved like actors in a Greek tragedy. The terrible dénouement was foreseen, but somehow it could not be prevented. Time and again, people shifted responsibility from themselves to an impersonal God or Providence that was deemed to be in ultimate control. In the words of German chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, on August 1: "If the iron dice must roll, may God help us," or in those of Emperor Franz-Joseph of Austria-Hungary: "We cannot go back now." Historians too have been affected by this fatalistic attitude. As one leading

scholar has summed up his analysis of the outbreak of the war: "All the evidence goes to show that the beginning of the crisis . . . was one of those moments in history when events passed beyond men's control."¹

The thesis of this chapter is that such a view is wrong: Mortals made these decisions. They made them in fear and in trembling, but they made them nonetheless. In most cases, the decision makers were not evil people bent on destruction but were frightened and entrapped by self-delusion. They based their policies on fears, not facts, and were singularly devoid of empathy. Misperception, rather than conscious evil design, appears to have been the leading villain in the drama.

In this analysis I shall not dwell on the underlying causes of the world war. Not only have these been discussed exhaustively by leading historians,² but I seriously question whether they can be related directly and demonstrably to the fateful decisions that actually *precipitated* the war. For example, historians are virtually unanimous in their belief that the system of competitive alliances dividing Europe into two camps in 1914 was a principal factor that caused the war to spread. This strikes me as a mechanistic view that undervalues psychological and personality considerations. On July 5 Germany fully supported her ally Austria-Hungary's desire to punish Serbia for the assassination of the Austrian crown prince. By late July, however, when Austrian policy threatened a general mobilization in Russia on Serbia's behalf, Germany attempted to restrain her ally. In this attempt she failed, and the result was world conflagration. But had the German Kaiser or his chancellor *succeeded* in restraining the Austrians, historians would have had to credit the alliance system with the *prevention* of a war. In other words, a study of the leading personalities of the time and the manner in which they perceived one another may be a more fruitful analysis than to postulate such abstractions as alliance systems, militarism, or nationalism.

The crucial events that led to—and over—the threshold of war are the German pledge of support to Austria in her policy toward Serbia; Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and rejection of the Serbian response; Germany's efforts to mediate and to restrain Austria; and the actual outbreak of general war on August 1, precipitated by Germany's declaration of war on Russia and the invasion of Luxembourg and Belgium.

The Kaiser's Fateful Pledge

Word of the assassination of the Austrian crown prince Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, reached the German Kaiser on his yacht near Kiel. According to an eyewitness, Wilhelm II turned deathly pale as he heard the fatal news from Sarajevo.³ He had been drawn to the Austrian archduke and his wife and had just returned from visiting the couple at their castle. Franz Ferdinand's intention to marry a lady-in-waiting had aroused the sullen opposition of the aged emperor, Franz-Joseph, who had consented only on the condition that the marriage be a morganatic one, that is, that the couple's children would be deprived of the right of succession to the throne. This act of renunciation had embittered Franz Ferdinand, a condition further aggravated by the condescension of the Austrian court toward his wife, Sophie.

Kaiser Wilhelm was a moody man with a mercurial temper. The romantic predicament of his Austrian friend had appealed to him, and he had formed a deep and apparently genuine personal attachment to him. He was deeply shaken when he heard that the archduke's last words to his wife were, "Sophie, Sophie, do not die, live for our children,"⁴ before death claimed them both, and his fury and indignation toward the Serbians were thoroughly aroused; he described them as "bandits" and "murderers." In addition to his personal grief, he believed that the assassination represented a profound threat to the monarchical principle. Therefore it is not surprising that Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz reported in his *Memoirs* the Kaiser's conviction that the Russian czar would not support "the assassins of royalty."⁵ The crowned heads of Europe would have to take a common stand against the threat of regicide.

With characteristic impetuosity, the Kaiser wanted Austria to punish Serbia as quickly as possible. He was convinced that the entire civilized world, including Russia, would be sympathetic. He put it in no uncertain terms: "Matters must be cleared up with the Serbians and that soon. That is self-evident and the plain truth."⁶ On July 5 he took the fateful step of assuring Austria that she could count on Germany's "faithful support" even if the punitive action she was planning to take against Serbia would bring her into conflict with Russia. In other words, the Kaiser issued Austria-Hungary a blank check. Before he left on a vacation cruise the next morning, he exclaimed confidently:

"I cannot imagine that the old gentleman in Schönbrunn will go to war, and most certainly not if it is a war over the Archduke Franz Ferdinand."⁷

The incredible fact is that the German Kaiser had not the slightest idea of what the Austrians would do. Impelled by a generous impulse of loyalty to his dead friend, he offered what he thought would be moral support to the aggrieved party. That this guarantee would entail military support never seriously occurred either to him or to the German military and governmental apparatus that fully supported his move. Even more important, the Kaiser believed that a common loyalty to monarchy would be a stronger bond than the links of ethnic kinship; in other words, that the czar would support the Kaiser against his fellow Slavs in Serbia. On both these counts Wilhelm II proved to be terribly mistaken.

The Kaiser used a special term for his pledge to Austria: *Nibelungentreue*. There is no adequate English translation for this term. The *Nibelungenlied* was a collection of German sagas peopled with heroes whose highest virtues were honor, courage, and loyalty. The pledge of a *Nibelung* is a blood bond that is sacred and irrevocable; once given, it can never be retracted. Wilhelm's cousin Ferdinand I of Bulgaria understood its significance when he observed: "I certainly do not like my cousin Kaiser Wilhelm, but I feel sorry for him all the same. Now he will be dragged into the whirlpool, be entangled, and he will have to fight, whether he wants to or not. That is all he gets out of his *Nibelungentreue*."⁸

The Kaiser's decision to support Austria-Hungary under any circumstances demonstrated an extraordinary confusion of personal ethics and political judgment. His friendship with the archduke prompted him to place the fate of his nation in the hands of another power. His view of the Russian czar as a kindred-spirited fellow monarch led him to assume that such a relinquishment of control carried no risk whatsoever. And his romanticism robbed him of all flexibility in the emerging crisis.

It is not true, as many historians have stated, that the Kaiser wanted war. Nor is it true, as his definitive biographer has said, that he "succumbed to a power he had not reckoned with: the power of Fate; had it not been for that, the war would never have started."⁹ Such thinking is guilty of blind determinism. The Kaiser was indeed to blame. His flaw was both moral and political, for his form of loyalty demanded sacrifice beyond himself. It offered up the German nation,