

# TEKMUN'25



## Study Guide

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**Agenda: Franco Prussian War : Last War to Unite  
Deutschland**

# **TEKMUN'25 JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE**

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**“Franco-Prussian War”**

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## **1. Letters**

### **1.1. Letter from Secretary General**

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is with great honor and excitement that I welcome you all to the second edition of TEKMUN. As the Secretary General, I am truly proud to witness the gathering of bright, passionate and globally minded individuals who are ready to discuss, debate and shape solutions to the pressing issues of our time.

TEKMUN was founded with a vision and to create a platform where ideas meet diplomacy, and where every delegate finds their voice. This year we aim to uphold that vision by providing a conference that not only challenges your intellect but also inspires collaboration, empathy and leadership.

Each committee has been carefully designed to reflect the diversity and complexity of international relations. From humanitarian crises to global security, TEKMUN'25 invites you to think critically, speak confidently and act diplomatically.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated Secretariat, Organizing Team and our Academic Team for their endless efforts in bringing this conference to life. To our delegates, I wish you fruitful debates, new friendships and unforgettable experiences. May TEKMUN'25 be a milestone in your MUN journey and a reminder that your voice matters.

Warm regards,

Sıla Bayram

Secretary General of TEKMUN'25

## ***1.2. Letter from Co-Under Secretaries General***

Dear Delegates,

We are glad to invite you to TEKMUN 25 and our committee (Franco-Prussian War), which was a pivot moment in the history of the political arena of Europe. The most important aspect of our discussion on this complicated era is to invite all of the delegates to come to the sessions with open minds, good research and intentions to go into the finer details of the crisis. Even the most minor input can influence the torrent of discussion that is why we encourage you to take any opportunity possible to share your ideas and react to the emergencies.

During the conference, keep in mind that diplomacy can be developed due to cooperation, active listening, and precise communications. Being able to remain cool in the face of the pressure and adjusting your tactics to the new information is going to make you an achiever in this historical race.

We would also like to say our heartfelt thanks to the Executive Team of TEKMUN 25 and to our Academic Assistants, who devoured and consumed us with their hard work and effort. They have been critical in ensuring the existence of this committee.

We hope that you have an inspiring and productive experience and we are looking forward to receiving creative and strategic decisions that you will bring to the table.

Sincerely,

Co-Under Secretaries-General

Ahmet Erdem Çakmak

Beyza Nur Okumuş

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 What is the Franco-Prussian War?

The Franco-Prussian War was fought between July 19, 1870, and January 28, 1871. The Second French Empire, headed by Napoleon III, and the North German Confederation, dominated by Prussia, fought the Second French Empire. Even though the war took less than one year, its aftermath changed the face of Europe over decades. The war started with political disputes and conflicts. France had always regarded herself as the dominant power in Europe, and Prussia, with Otto von Bismarck in command, wanted to hold the fractured German states under her rules. A diplomatic crisis took very quickly the shape of a full scale war that settled the future of Central Europe and changed the balance of powers on the continent.

At the very core of it, the war was the last step of German unification. Bismarck had already overpowered Denmark in 1864 and Austria in 1866 and thus the northern part of Germany was joined to Prussia. The southern states, Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt remained reserved and autonomous. Bismarck thought that only a foreign danger could put these states into the unification process. France had feared the possible emergence of an



united, strong Germany on her border and became her ideal enemy. Through diplomatic manipulation, Bismarck had turned France's unreliability into a cause for war and portrayed Prussia as the protector of German honour. This was a prelude to war and ultimately led to a conflict that would shape not only Germany's but also Europe's political order.

On the military side, the war demonstrated a clear opposition between two systems: a modern and industrialized Prussia whose organisation was highly advanced and a France whose military was still trying to endure by its military traditions. Prussia had an effective mobilization due to the good usage of the railways and the qualified General Staff that organized their operations with accuracy. France had had a proud imperial army but the scale and the pace of the Prussian attack were threatening to it. Prussian leadership in logistics and planning was proved by initial combats, both at Wissembourg and Spicheren, as well as at Gravelotte. At the Battle of Sedan - September 1, 1870 -, in which Napoleon III was taken prisoner together with more than 100,000 of his men, the turning point was reached. The defeat in this way killed the French army, the legitimacy of the Second Empire and proclaimed the French Third Republic in Paris.

The war, with the new French government, which would not surrender, did not stop becoming reality after the capture of Napoleon. In September 1870, Prussians surrounded Paris, encircling it and cutting off its supplies. Siege became a period of over four months in which the population was destroyed by starvation, disease, and bombardment. The city faced valiant resistance, but it surrendered in January 1871. France had signed the Treaty of Frankfurt which contained drastic conditions, a huge financial compensation and the departure of Alsace and Lorraine to the new German nation. These annexations created an ever painful moment in a French memory that is symbolic of humiliation and desire for revenge which would eventually lead to World War I.

The Franco-Prussian war brought a new European order politically. This took place on the 18th of January 1871, in the hall of mirrors at Versailles, with King Wilhelm I of Prussia crowned German Emperor (Kaiser), formally establishing the German Empire. This was a culmination to all the unification that Bismarck had long wanted to happen and also this was the rise of Germany as a great European power. Meanwhile, France descended into a season of internal conflicts: civil unrest, economic hardship, and the Paris Commune uprising. The consequences of the war led to permanent hostilities, affecting the power balance and preconditioning decades of political conflict. The Franco- Prussian war was more than just a

military battle because it marked the beginning of the making of modern Europe and harnessed the authority of nationalism, the strength of diplomacy and the expansive implications of political ambition.

## ***2.2 Why Is This War Important?***

The Franco-Prussian war (1870 -1871) marked a revolution in the history of Europe in modern times. Before years had passed after the battleground, it had defined politics, identities and diplomacy. The war was the last German unification under the leadership of the Prussians. It had changed the status quo established at the Congress of Vienna (1815) and preconditions, which later gave rise to World War I (1914).

Politically, the war eliminated the French Second Empire and introduced the German Empire into life, with Kaiser Wilhelm I. in the middle of a powerful, industrialized, militarized state, which disrupted the balance of great powers traditionally existing between the European powers. France, which used to be the powerful state in Europe, lost the image during Sedan in 1870. The loss caused a sense of national humiliation and transformed the policy of France, both in foreign and domestic affairs. Annexation of Alsace and Lorraine was not incorporated in the French psyche and gave rise to revanchism that pervaded France over the decades.

The war demonstrated, in a military sense, that industrial efficiency was capable of executing modern war. Prussians made use of railways, telegraph, conscription, and inspired artillery in coordination of their troops. Their General Staff which was led by Helmuth von Moltke provided another example that other powers followed. The principles of professionalism in army types, national unity, and effective management of resources were demonstrated by the rapid mobilization and clear triumphs, which were the dominant principles in the battles of the 20th century.

The war diplomatically mutated the power structure in Europe. The creation of a coherent Germany changed the sides and the conflicts and made the continent polarized and militaristic. Britain, France and Russia were threatened causing an intrigue of alliances and suspicions. Bismarck made attempts to maintain peace through isolating France but these attempts did not succeed to avoid the huge-scale wars of the early 20 th century. Territorial and political results were successful, but the Treaty of Frankfurt (1871) was the planting ground of instability as it degraded France and reinforced Germany.

The war gave rise to nationalism in Europe socially and ideologically. This victory of Germany inspired other movements to unify Italy and Eastern Europe. Conversely, the loss of France caused internal instability, civil war and the formation of the Paris Commune that unveiled major disparities within French society. The period was an indication of how contemporary conflicts could redefine societies, economies as well as ideologies bringing about advancement and radicalisation.

At the international level, the war affected the colonial rivalry and the international relations all over the world. The new German Empire wanted prestige and resources, and entered the competition of overseas colonialism, and led to the subsequent Scramble of Africa. France, who wanted superficiality, extended its territories such as colonies, increasing rivalry between European nations in the foreign countries. This international competition demonstrated the impact on international relations in the whole world due to a European conflict.

To sum up, the Franco-Prussian war was not just a military confrontation. It became a historical turning point to change the political landscape of Europe, to bring modern ways of war and to recreate the sense of power, nationalism and diplomacy. Unity and tension, which characterized Europe until the 20th century, were the foundations of the war. This war is a critical understanding required in understanding the root cause of the current international relations and the balance of power that remains fragile and seems to dominate global politics to date.

### ***2.3 Goals of the committee***

The main aim of this Joint Crisis Committee is to reconstruct the political, military, and diplomatic environment (Franco Prussian War, 18701871) that was complicated. The representatives are to make quicker decisions, organize the ways of action, and use the unpredicted events when the war is developing. The committee aims to discuss the reason and effects of conflict as well as persuade individuals to discover how national ambition, diplomacy and survival are balanced by states in crisis. Delegates will not just be policymakers but they should also be strategists who will be able to examine larger implications of their actions not only to the nation they represent but Europe once more. In this, the committee will be trying to re-create the environment of high-pressure politics in the

19th century, as dominated by Europe, where alliances, communication, and military force saved or ruined empires.

The committee is also trying to assess the long-term geopolitical and social impacts of the war in addition to assigning the direct outcome of the events in the war. Delegates will attempt to mould peace agreements, establish post-war settlements as well as rebuilding stability in Europe following the collapse of the French Second Empire and the emergence of the German Empires. The committee inspires participants to discuss such issues like nationalism, the legitimacy of the state power, and exercise of power balance in Europe. At the conclusion of the simulation, the delegates are expected to show a solid understanding of the ways the Franco-Prussian War affected modern diplomacy, warfare and relations of countries. The final objective is to make sure that everything done in the committee must not just help solve the existing crisis but also put in place a lasting structure that ensures involvement of European peace and cooperation.

### ***3. Background Information***

#### ***3.1 Europe Before the War***

In the middle part of the 19th century, Europe prior to the onset of the Franco Prussian War was a transitional continent. It was in between the conservative order that the Congress of Vienna had produced in 1815 and an ever-increasing wave of nationalism, liberalism, and industrial strength that transformed the societies. The political environment was intended by the legacies of the Napoleonic Wars that terminated in the restoration of the monarchies and the establishment of delicate power balance among the great powers. But this facade of calmness carried with it some things: ethnic tensions, rival ambitions, unsettling issues of national unity which would soon burst out into war.

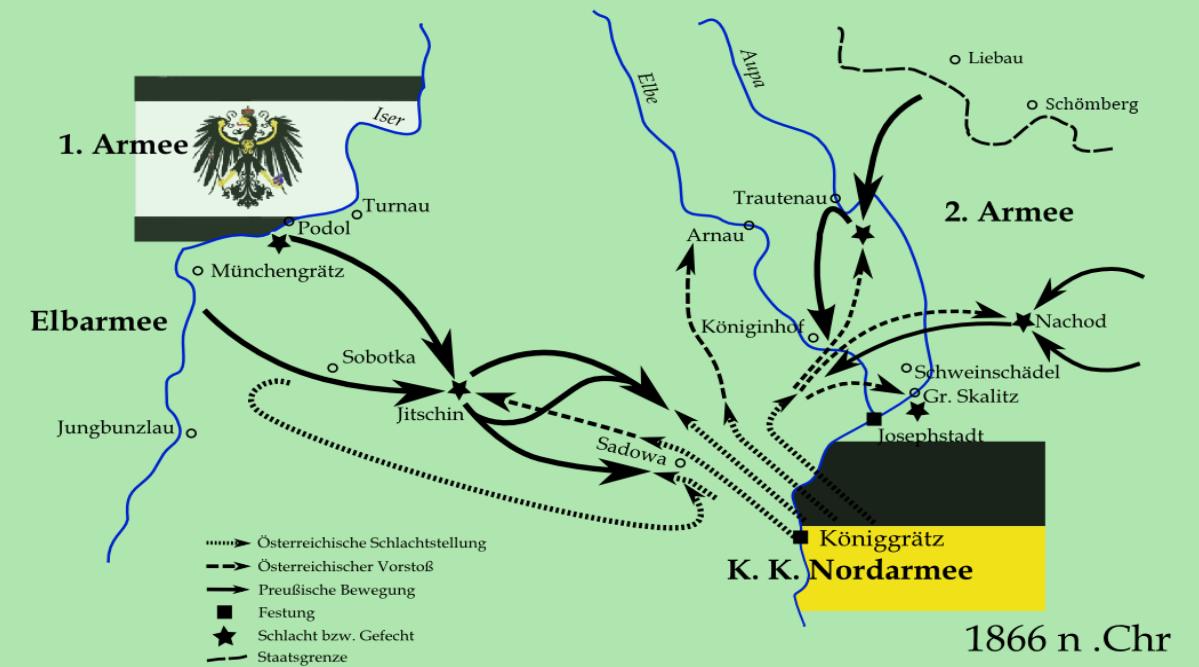
The congress of Vienna aimed at achieving long-term peace through reliance on France and ensuring no country takes control of the continent as before. It has reestablished classical monarchies and has introduced new borders that tend to disrespect ethnic or linguistic facts. The outcome was shaky stability which was dominated by conservative forces that included Austria, Russia and Prussia united through the Holy Alliance. Liberal and nationalist movements in 1848 led to the weakness of this system manifested in the revolutions. The uprisings, though not very successful in the shorter term, showed how the strength of the

people's opinion and the willingness of people in Europe and in Italy, Germany, Hungary and so on to have independent countries, to the self-determination and to the constitutional changes.

In this regard Prussia came out as a cog in the wheels of the German states. After the collapse of the Austrian power following the unsuccessful Revolutions of 1848, Prussia established itself as the head of German unification, led by the conservative, although pragmatist, Otto von Bismarck who was named as the Minister-President of Prussia in 1862. Realpolitik, the policy of Prussia which was based on practical and strategic decisions and not ideology, was designed by Bismarck to unite the divided German states under the leadership of the Prussians through blood and iron. In his view, diplomacy and war might be considered as the tools of union, but they have to be applied at the appropriate time and in the most possible desirable conditions. His vision directly criticized the historical supremacy of the traditional Austria in Central Europe and preconditioned rivalry which would later be over with the war.

The Austro Prussian War of 1866, which was also the seven weeks war, was a big leap towards this objective. The defeat of Austria by Prussia resulted in the North German Confederation, a federal form of union of states in the North of Germany under the leadership of Prussia. Once the key actor at the center of German affairs, Austria was not involved in German politics anymore, but installed its power into the Balkans. This development was a drastic shift in power in the middle of Europe. Prussia has grown to be a major military and political force, with states in the south of Germany like Bavaria, Wuerttemberg and Baden sovereign yet more and more affiliated to Prussia as a result of clandestine military alliances.

## Schlacht von Königgrätz



In the meantime a unified Germany was an alarming prospect to France under the reign of the emperor Napoleon III. In the desire to protect French prestige and French influence, Napoleon 3 was afraid that a powerful German state would come to threaten the European balance of power and weaken the French status as the main power in the continent. Although the French Empire recorded its first achievements and economic modernization, it was a politically weak country and it became more and more isolated on the international arena. The foreign policy of Napoleon III had mixed outcomes: although France had gained prestige during the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the Second Italian War of Independence (1859), they had not resulted in alliances and security. The emperor wanted another foreign exploit to be successful so as to strengthen his regime and bring France into the limelight but the forming German unity complicated this.

The UK being the leading industrial and naval power in the world had a policy of splendid isolation. It did not concentrate on being directly involved in the continental conflicts but in expansion and protection of free trade which was also colonial. Britain regarded France with neutral suspicion, and Prussia with similar suspicion, interfering only in cases of its commercial or maritime interests at stake. Its major worry was to keep the power of the balance in Europe and ensure no one state took control of the continent and this worry would come back once the German was united.

On the other front, Austria Austria Hungary had been facing internal unrest after undergoing a reorganization following the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867. It was a multi-ethnic nation that the empire had a hard time managing its various people; Hungarians, Czechs, Croats and Serbs who were demanding increased autonomy. Such division undermined the capacity of Vienna to transfer power to other countries, exposing the empire to be militarily weak and diplomatically quiet in front of the increasing power of Prussia.

In Eastern Europe, there was the Russian Empire that had just come out of the defeat of Crimean War and was severely reforming under the watch of the Tsar Alexander II, including the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Although Russia continued to be a significant military force, it was not so active at the time in Western European issues, but committed itself to modernization of the country and building of the Balkans and the Central Asian regions. However, Russia observed events progressing on Central Europe keenly because any drastic situation in the equilibrium of power could influence its long-term strategic interests.

Europe during the 1860s was in the rapid industrialization process particularly in Britain, France and the German states, economically. Modern industries, the growth of railways, telegraph networks, transformed war, diplomacy, and the communication process. This technology development not only enabled Prussia to mobilize and organize troops effectively but it also formed the economical basis of modern nation-states. The rise of a literate middle class, newspaper spread, and rise of political awareness further added fuel to the nationalistic feeling and involvement of the population in the affairs of the state.

Overall, Europe before the Franco Prussian War can be described as a network of interests and unions, full of emotions of insecurity. The continent had been enjoying peace at a relative level since 1815, though it was an uneasy experience which was founded on old diplomatic institutions, and an upsurge of ideology. The ambition of Prussia to unite Germany, the wish of France to maintain its supremacy, the weakened role of Austria and the cautiousness of both Britain and Russia all led to the unstable balance. The war in 1870 was thus not an abrupt confrontation but a natural development cycle of decades of power rearrangement, nationalism clashing, the incapacity of the great powers in Europe to make changes in the order of political and social life.

### ***3.2 Main Causes of the Conflict***

The Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) did not come out of circumstances; it was an outcome of a series of years of increasing tensions, reports, and distrust between France and Prussia. The causes of the conflict may be connected with the balance of powers in Europe, the desires of the politicians like Otto von Bismarck and Napoleon III, and nationalism development which turned the continent post-mid-nineteenth century. This war was influenced by a combination of long-term structural reasons: political, diplomatic, ideological, and short-term reasons which provoked the confrontation into a full-fledged war.

#### **a) The Prussian Power rivalry with France**

The main issue of the struggle was the competition of the French Second Empire and the Kingdom Prussia. Following the clear triumph over Austria in 1866, Prussia got to be the most powerful state of Central Europe and approached even nearer to the aim long desired by the Germans: their unification. It was this very change that was raising alarm in France which believed that a united and an armed German state would upset the European status quo that had left France in a superior position since the Napoleonic period. Prussia was an expansion that threatened the prestige, security and influence of Napoleon III France.

At the end of the Austro-Prussian War, the Austrian power had crashed and as Prussia was ultimately left in the control of North German Confederation, the southern part of the German states, which were formally independent on paper, had now allied to Prussia in a military treaty. France was in its turn diplomatically alone; Britain had not taken any position, Austria was in its weakness, and Russia was not concerned with French interests. This loneliness increased the insecurity of Napoleon III. In his opinion, he needed a dramatic diplomatic or war victory to regain the positions of France in the international system and reinforce his unstable home government.

#### **b) The Contribution of Otto von Bismarck and Realpolitik**

One of the most essential reasons for the war was the foreign policy of Otto von Bismarck who was a Chancellor of Prussia and a Realpolitik master. The fundamental objective of Bismarck was to bring Germany together under the leadership of Prussians but he knew that this would not be possible unless first of all the interference by the French was removed. He understood that only the southern German states - Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and Hesse-Darmstadt - could be united to Prussia, only in case the latter gave them a sense that they were at risk by an external opponent. Therefore, a war against France might be a unifying element among the entire Germans.

Bismarck was manipulative when it comes to diplomacy. He wanted to instigate France to declare war, and thus the image of Prussia as the victim was created and the German states were brought to one side with a patriotic purpose. His political ambition to play with the Ems Dispatch in July 1870 was a stroke of genius stroke. And one of the times when Bismarck was editing a telegram that had been dispatched by King Wilhelm I, was when a dispute occurred over the candidacy of a Hohenzollern prince to the Spanish throne; Bismarck edited the telegram so that it could give the impression that the French ambassador had been insulted. The distorted message, after being released, heated the politics of the French people and brought war to the political inevitability in Paris. By doing this, Bismarck transformed a diplomatic dispute into a war reason that was to be turned into a national interest to Prussia.

### **c) Nationalism in France, Pride, and Domestic Disunity**

Though strategic provocations by Bismarck were a critical factor, internal conditions in France had a great contribution in the eruption of war. In the late 1860s, the rule of Napoleon III started to be threatened by increased criticism by republicans and liberals within the country. Economic instabilities, increased political opposition and waning faith in the imperial leadership undermined the powers of the government. To a great number among the French elite, a win in war was a chance at regaining unity in the nation and bringing back the favour of people to the Empire.

Furthermore, the French national pride and superiority were seriously burned by the fast military and political achievements of Prussia. The very notion of a strong, united Germany, dominating enormous industrial power and a well-drilled army, was a menace to not only the safety of France, but to her ancient fame as the cultural and political center of Europe. Newspapers and politicians were very nationalistic, which required a strict position against

the Prussian expansions, and framed war as a national issue. More so, nationalism, domestic politics and prestige conformed to make a diplomatic solution more challenging.

#### **d) The German Question and Spirit of Nationalism**

Whether Germany could be a loose great alliance of independent states or include a central authority was the main stream of European politics in the middle of the 19th century under the name of the German Question. The defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866 had resolved this question in favour of a solution of Kleindeutschland (Lesser Germany) in which case Austria would not be a part of German unity but Prussia would be the core of German unity. However, complete unification of Germany could not be achieved without the loyalty of the southern states who were still reluctant to become a part of the confederation led by Prussians.

The German people were however becoming nationalistic. France was considered by many Germans to be the historical foe and this had been keen on maintaining Germany weak and in pieces. The fact that France protested against the Hohenzollern candidacy and then declared war was a direct plunge into the strategy of Bismarck. The German southern states either united to the Prussian cause and a political alliance became a national movement. The war, therefore, changed into a nationalist fight to have German unity whereby the local animosity became a continental fight to find sense and independence.

#### **e) Isolation of France by Diplomacy**

The other conclusive factor was France's inability to form strong alliances over the years preceding the war. The diplomacy of Napoleon III had disaffiliated the potential partners. Britain feared his ambitions and was harboring Turkish colors, Russia was not happy with the French participating in the Crimean War and was on the side of Prussia, Austria had just lost a war in 1866 which it was not keen on fighting with Prussia again. This meant that France was being set to fight independently.

France was exposed to this isolation. Napoleon III never saw any possibility of a coalition against Prussia, and his mobilization rate at Prussia was swift to an extent that France was taken by surprise. The incapacity of French diplomacy to establish any lasting alliances, coupled with the success that Bismarck had in his acquisition of friendly relationships with

the Russians and the Italians, left France to the war with very few friends and little sympathetic support of the rest of the European practitioners.

#### **f) Causes on the Spot: The Hohenzollern Candidacy and the Ems Dispatch**

What the Hohenzollern candidacy to the Spanish throne was, the lightning to set the war on fire. This occurred in 1869 when a Spaniard queen, Isabella II was overthrown, and the Spanish government proposed the throne to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a cousin to the Prussian king. This was viewed as an extension of Prussian stock in France who feared to be surrounded by Hohenzollern kings both at Berlin and at Madrid. The French diplomats insisted that the candidacy should be revoked and King Wilhelm I agreed to do so.

But France in its turn did wrong by insisting on a permanent relinquishment of the claim, virtually affronting the independence of Prussia. Back at Ems in the course of a conference, the French ambassador, Count Benedetti, urged King Wilhelm further to make commitments. Upon the king kindly declining, Bismarck intercepted and revised the telegram that the king had made and published it publicly. The Ems Dispatch, which it adopted, was distorted to give the impression that both parties had offended one another. Outbursts of French public opinion were the order of the day, and as early as 19 July 1870, France officially declared war on Prussia.

#### **g) Structural Causes and Ideological Causes**

In addition to the events that occurred, there were also the underlying structural reasons behind the eruption of the war. Militarism, industrial nationalism, and imperial competition were the phenomena of the middle of the 19th century that made Europe more volatile. Modernization of the armies and the development of railways led to the realization of quick mobilization and the nationalist propaganda was disseminated in mass literacy and the press. The military in France as well as Germany had turned out to be an icon of national pride as well as strength. Although the theory of war as a valid method of solving conflict was already a common belief particularly among conservative elites who considered war as the way of unity and regeneration.

In this meaning, Franco-Prussian war was the product of and in this case the catalyst of modern nationalism. It symbolized the confrontation between the two competing visions of Europe, the one that embraced the old imperial order symbolized by France and the one that

represented the new order of the nation-states symbolized by Prussia and the then-becoming German Empire.

## **Summary**

To sum up, the principal reasons of the Franco-Prussian War were power struggles over the long term, nationalism, diplomatic blunders, and direct provocations. The political ambition of both Bismarck and Napoleon III, political control over the masses through the use of media, and the unstable political balance of power acted all to bring war to an inevitability. What started as a quarrel over the royal nomination soon turned out to be an ultimate confrontation of European supremacy and the French Empire fell, Germany was united, and a new era was born in European history.

### ***3.3 The Path to War (Ems Dispatch and Tensions)***

This road leading to Franco-Prussian war was not the explosion of confrontation but a logical culmination of the extremely thought out chain of diplomatic provocations and national aspirations. Tension had been on its peak following several years of rivalry between France and Prussia and finally culminated in the summer of 1870. The actual trigger of the war was the Ems Dispatch, which otherwise was a small diplomatic incident but got out of control and resulted in a full-fledged war. However, beyond this, there were other motives, France wanted to maintain its control over the continental Europe, Prussia wanted to end the unification of Germany under its command. Otto von Bismarck the Prussian Chancellor knew that only a common external enemy would be able to bring the disunited entities of Germany together. The then reign of France led by Emperor Napoleon III was also committed to reclaim its declining status following many years of domestic crisis and failure in foreign policies. A clash that was beginning to take shape was between two sides that felt this would enhance their positions in the country but instead overturned the European order.

The crisis started when the throne in Spain that had been vacated by the 1868 revolution was given to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a cousin to the Prussian king. This was an encirclement policy by France--to having a Prussian ally on its south was not acceptable by Napoleon III. The French diplomats insisted that King Wilhelm I of Prussia guarantee permanent withdrawal of Leopold out of the candidacy. Being polite, Wilhelm did not make any promises that were binding. In the meantime Bismarck obtained the telegram of

their conversation--the Ems Dispatch--edited it to give it the impression that both the leaders had offended each other. At the time of publishing the edited version to the people, it created outrage in both countries. Following a feeling of humiliation and the pressure of nationalist ardor, the French government went to war with Prussia on 19 July 1870. Bismarck had managed to play the game of influencing France to make the initial attacking move hence corralling the southern German states around the Prussian side. What started as a diplomatic misunderstanding very soon evolved into a continental war thus rearranging the balance of power in European territories and it was the last step which made the two parts of Europe one.

#### ***4. Key Powers and Leaders***

##### ***4.1 The Kingdom of Prussia***

The Kingdom of Prussia, the architect of one of the most significant moments in European history. The kingdom found itself in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 not only as a participant in the conflict, but as the gamecreator that would use political events to bring Germany together. Its military superiority, tactical leadership, and relentless ambition changed the politics in the continent.

By 1870, the Kingdom of Prussia had already become an impressive European power, and this image was built with a row of successful military campaigns and clever political moves. It was actually stronger in a mixture of a highly efficient and professional army, an economic foundation, and a politically integrated state with a strong leadership. The Prussian army was the envy of Europe and was built on a system of universal conscription to provide a large, well trained reserve army. This enabled Prussia to mass its troops most efficiently and quickly, which was in sharp contrast to the French system which was mostly cumbersome. On the economic front, the “Ruhr” was an important region of Prussia because of its coal deposits which led to its industrialization and made it possible to produce sophisticated weapons. The best among them being the “Krupp guns” that were superior in range and rate of fire as compared to those in France.

The biggest advantage of Prussia was a highly organized military that was technologically advanced for its time. The General Staff, with its mastermind, Helmuth von Moltke had

developed detailed war plans that focused on fast mobilization and encirclements. The Prussians had a major advantage in terms of logistics because they used railways to supply troops to the front lines. Additionally, the Prussian forces had the “Dreyse needle gun” which was a breech loading rifle which, though not as effective on the range as the “French Chassepot” but was supplemented by the sheer power of their artillery. Prussia, however, had its own weaknesses. Although the southern German states were allied to Prussia, they were not quite so sure of the northern neighbors ambitions. Diplomatically, it was always a possibility that other great powers would intervene.

The Kingdom of Prussia was politically a constitutional monarchy, though the authority was heavily concentrated in the hands of the king and his ministers, the most notorious minister-president being Otto von Bismarck. The “Realpolitik policy” of Bismarck, also referred to as the politics of the practical, put ideology second to the interests of the state and power. Prussia had succeeded in



crushing Austria in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866. And with this, the North German confederation came to existence under the Prussian leadership and this was a major milestone towards German unification. Geographically, Prussia was strategically placed in the central part of Europe, as it bordered France as well as the south German states it wanted to annex. This central position also made the state vulnerable to potential encirclement. The diplomacy of Bismarck was thus very instrumental in isolating France and neutralizing other key powers.

The Prussian leadership during the Franco-Prussian war was a three occupant triumvirate of remarkable individuals. This stability and royal power were occasionally needed by his ministers and generals and king Wilhelm I was the one that could offer it despite his caution. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was a political genius, a master of diplomacy and a man who could control events to his side’s advantage to start the war in conditions that would favor Prussia. His main goal was going on a war with France that would bring the southern German

states into the unification movement. Prussia not only had one political and military genius, it had many of them. One of the military geniuses was General Helmuth von Moltke the Elderwhich, who enabled Prussia to succeed at the battle front and was the head of the Prussian General Staff. The Prussian army was able to win a decisive and fast victory, with his innovative application of railways, extensive planning, and focus in decentralized command.

Bismarck thought that a shared adversary in France would give rise to a surge of German nationalism and overcome the scruples of the southern German states forcing them to join a single German Empire. This political goal would not only be achieved with victory in the war but it would also establish Prussia as the powerhouse in Central Europe, replacing France.

#### ***4.2. The French Empire Under Napoleon III***

In the scene of 19<sup>th</sup>-century European politics, the Second French Empire under the rule of Emperor Napoleon III stood as a prestigious and influential power. However, as everyone loses its power status over time, the French state was not very different. Until the year of 1870, the French Empire's glittering image was masking her internal problems, fragilities and strategic miscalculations which would be ruthlessly exposed by the rising power and the most disciplined state of the European continent.

Before the war, the Empire projected an image of a significant strength. The empire had enjoyed its economic prosperity and industrial growth, which is shown by the expansion of its railway system. The empire also had a large and professional army with a great reputation gained by victories. It also held colonies around the world which provided the state resources and reaching abilities. These proved that France has cemented its position as a leading European power and was determined to maintain it.



For much of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, France held the critical position of the dominant power in the European continent. However, this supremacy was about to be challenged by the new dominant power of Prussia, especially after their swift victory over the Austrian Empire in 1866. The formation of the North German Confederation under the Prussian leadership created a powerful press on France's east border, which Paris viewed with alarms. France also failed to secure any territorial interests with its diplomacy, which led to a sense of national humiliation and the Prussian growth in Europe. In conclusion France started to feel increasingly threatened and isolated, especially as Bismarck skillfully ensured neutrality with the other major powers such as Great Britain and Russia.

On the military side, France's main military advantage lay in its infantry's weapons. The army was equipped with the "Chassepot Rifle" which was a technologically superior breech loading weapon than the outranged Prussian "Dreyse Needle Gun". The French army was not limited with only this weapon; it also possessed the "mitrailleuse" which was the ancestor of the machine gun and was capable of immense firepower.

However, they had their own disadvantages. The French mobilization process was more unplanned, chaotic and slower when it was being compared to the highly organized Prussian systems. It also suffered from poor coordination between its commanders and lack of adaptive war plans. So, basically while it was professional, it lacked the vast majority.

On the internal side, the political landscape of the Second French Empire was complex and its instability was increasing. Emperor Napoleon III had transitioned his government from an authoritarian regime to a more liberal system in the late 1860s. In May 1870, a referendum showed his reforms and agendas were being supported and giving the impression of popular backing. But at the same time, it had masked the growing republican and liberal oppositions. The emperor and his court aimed to quell domestic political problems with a glorious military victory, and they hoped that a victory would secure the Bonaparte dynasty's survival. But this showed that the government's stability was directly tied to the achievements on the battlefields.

Most of the time, France's primary goal was regaining its dominance in Europe and showing its dominance over Prussia. An indicator victory was expected in order to halt the process of German unification, which was seen as a national major threat to its influence and security. But things didn't go as the French expected, and the war was about to change everything.

### 4.3. The Southern German States (Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse)

The Southern German states, (the kingdom of Bavaria and Württemberg, the Grand Duchy of Baden, and the Grand Duchy of Hesse) had very individual characters and could not have been confused with their powerful neighbor, Prussia. These states, mostly Catholic, especially Bavaria, had a common cultural and historical orientation, which tended to be similar to Austria and sometimes even France, rather than Berlin. Politically they were constitutional monarchies, and, particularly in Baden and Württemberg, had cultivated a more vibrant liberal tradition than the very conservative and militaristic state. This led to a strong sense of particularism, so that loyalty was primarily shown to one's own kingdom or duchy, while the concept of Germany as a single entity was a more abstract concept and a rather suspected idea. Their sovereignty was a matter of pride, with centuries of history in the ancient Holy Roman Empire and they defended their sovereignty.

Self-preservation was the chief geopolitical interest of these states who were torn apart between the ambition of the two great German powers, Austria and Prussia. Their fundamental political policy throughout most of the 19th century was the balancing act within the context of the German Confederation, a union of 39 states of Germany which was formed in 1815. In this construct, the southern states tended to exercise a policy of Third Germany or “Triaspolitik” and tried to create a unified bloc that would serve as an alternative to the influence of Vienna and Berlin.



Their unity would ensure that they were able to safeguard their sovereignty and deny both the major powers the ultimate control of German affairs. This policy was based on diplomacy and the balancing of power and this made them an important, a very delicate component in Central European politics.

The decisive Austro-Prussian War of 1866 broke this long standing equilibrium. The Southern German states, allied to Austria, were also a part of the rapid and humiliating Prussian defeat through the use of its modernized forces. Their isolation and vulnerability was due to the disintegration of the German Confederation in the aftermath of the war. In peace accords Bismarck took a clever political step of being relatively lenient to them but requiring them to enter into so-called protection and defense alliances (Schutz- und Trutzbündnisse) with Prussia. These treaties compelled them to put their armies under Prussian control in case their country faced an external war and as such this essentially decreased their strategic autonomy and let their military destiny rest on the same fates as Berlin. This essentially changed their political strategies and now they had to look forward to balancing between Austria and Prussia. But now, they had to look into their new and extremely uncomfortable state of dependence on a mighty and ambitious northern neighbor.

The Southern German states were already highly integrated with their northern neighbor economically, in spite of their political worries about Prussia. Prussia had started the Zollverein, or German Customs Union in 1834, which had formed a free-trade zone into which all the German states had entered except Austria. This economic bloc had led to decades of industrialization and the unification of their economies, that had formed strong business and found the real advantages in greater German unity.

This caused a major domestic crisis; whilst monarchs and conservative forces were terrified of losing sovereignty to a Prussian led nation, an expanding group of the population acting under the influence of both economic pragmatists and liberal nationalists was becoming increasingly favourable to unification. This was an intense economic assimilation that offered a strong undertone that was dragging the South into the North despite their respective political leaderships playing a game directly aimed at sustaining their beloved independence.

#### ***4.4. Other European Powers (Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy)***

While France and the new German Federation waged their struggle, the other great powers of Europe watched the developments from a tense and neutral position. Their individual position of not intervening was crucial for the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War.

#### **Great Britain**

As the world's leading and unquestionable naval and colonial power, Great Britain under the rule of Queen Victoria and Minister William Gladstone, operated on a foreign policy focused on maintaining the balance of power on the European continent and protecting its own vast empire. The British government viewed the Second French Empire as its traditional rival and a possible threat to its dominance. At first, London didn't oppose Prussia's challenges to the French state. It was believed that a possible conflict would weaken both of the nations and in the end would strengthen Britain's position in Europe. But this didn't mean that Britain supported Prussia.

Minister Gladstone was fully committed to the policy of "*Splendid Isolation*", which was avoiding continental problems that did not threaten British interests. The main British goal was to ensure the war did not spill over around the continent, and most critically securing the neutrality of Belgium which was vital for its own interests. By securing its most critical goal by getting guarantees from both France and Prussia, Britain contended to remain neutral and as an observer.



## The Russian Empire

The Russian Empire under the rule of Tsar Alexander II was an enormous territory power that was dedicated to restoring its power following the embarrassing defeat in the Crimean War of the 1850s. That war, where France and Britain had joined forces with the Ottoman Empire against Russia had caused a feeling of resentment in St. Petersburg, especially towards France and Austria. Prussia on the other hand had not been involved in the Crimean war and had also gained Russian goodwill by assisting in the Polish Uprising of 1863. This formed a solid diplomatic relationship, which Bismarck cultivated.

The main geopolitical objective of Russia at that period was to abolish the embarrassing terms of the



1856 Treaty of Paris that prohibited the Russian Empire to have a naval fleet in the Black Sea. The Franco-Prussian War was a golden opportunity for Tsar Alexander II and his foreign minister, Prince Gorchakov. Russia essentially gave Prussia the green light for its war by giving a pledge of neutrality as well as by assuring Austria-Hungary that it would not intervene in the name of France. As an appreciation of this important diplomatic service, a grateful and successful Germany was expected to support the renunciation of the Black Sea clauses. And in 1871, at the London Conference, Russia accomplished her goal.

## **The Austro-Hungarian Empire**

The Franco-Prussian War was a stalemate and a strategic paralysis for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The court of Emperor Franz Joseph I. had a strong thirst of revenge after being decisively beaten by Prussia, only four years prior in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. For these reasons they had a strong interest in French diplomacy in order to establish an alliance with Vienna, which would make Prussia to fight a two front war. Nonetheless, there were a number of reasons why the Austrian intervention did not happen.

The empire was also still struggling with the tremendous internal restructuring that had come in the wake of the defeat of 1866 which had left the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary and had left its military forces weak and requiring restructuring. Moreover, the Hungarian part of the empire was firmly resistant to another war with Prussia. Above all was the unmistakable indication of Russia that she was prepared to cooperate together with Prussia, in a case of Austria's intervention in the conflict, and this was what made the idea of entering the war too dangerous. A possible war with both Prussia and Russia, and its military not yet fully prepared, the only possible ambition of Austria-Hungary would be to stay neutral.

So they stayed neutral while painfully accepting that his rival's victory cemented his position in German politics and established a powerful new empire on his very border.

## **The Kingdom of Italy**

The Kingdom of Italy, under King Victor Emmanuel II, was the youngest major European power, having only been unified in 1861. Its major political and geopolitical ambition was the accomplishment of this unification known as "*the Risorgimento*" that demanded acquisition of Rome. The city was still the seat of the Papal States and was garrisoned by a French

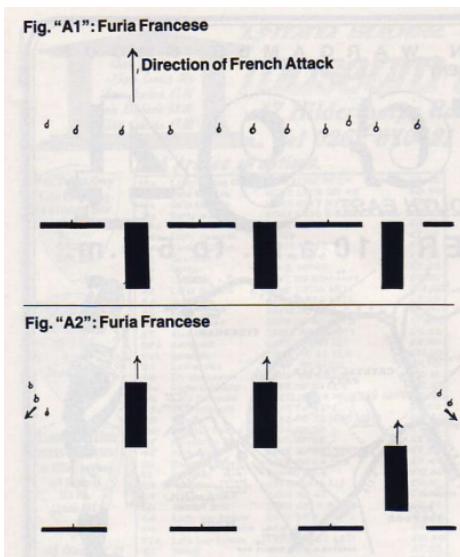
military force, which was the message of Napoleon III being on the side of the Pope. This turned out to be the French emperor as the major obstacle to the national ambition of Italy.

Although there were also people in Italy (such as the renowned nationalist, Giuseppe Garibaldi) who had a sense of loyalty to France due to previous help during times of need against Austria, the strategic reality was very obvious. The Franco-Prussian war was the chance that Italy was waiting to get. The way was cleared when Napoleon III had to withdraw his garrison out of Rome to protect France in August 1870. Italy announced that it was neutral in the war, but it was in reach of its real objective. On September 20, 1870, as France started to lose the war and its emperor was defeated and captured at Sedan, Italian troops entered and annexed Rome. And Italy made Rome its capital as a fully unified country.

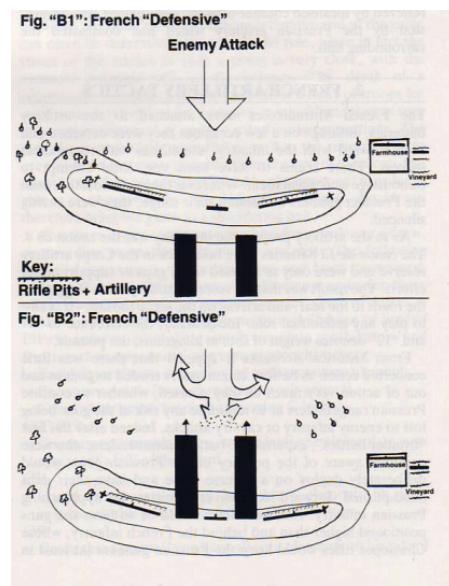


## 5. Course of the War

### 5.1 Early Battles and Strategies

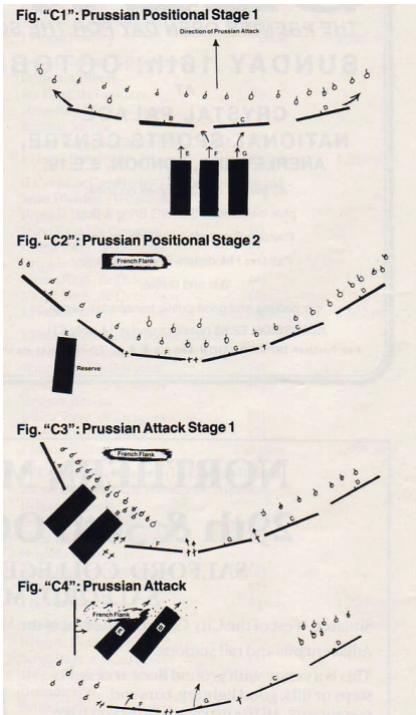


Until 1869 French infantry tactics had been steeped in the value of offensive action, relying heavily on French elan and the irresistible momentum of the bayonet charge - tactics which came to be known as 'furia francese' (French Fury). These were the tactics which had been adopted in the Crimea and more recently in Austria and Italy. And the artillery divisions of French army were attached to the batteries, limiting their operational efficiency and



chance to support the infantry in a counter-offensive to stop enemy troops to reorganise. In a word, French cavalry reconnaissance was appalling. The tendency was for reconnaissance to be undertaken by a combined arms force which had the effect of restricting its movement to the roads, and reducing its speed and range. The French advantage in the battles were their more effective and long-ranged breechloading rifle, the Chassepot. Although the rifle were

better than the German version Dreyse, because of the lack of production of Chassepot rifles, the guns could not be able to save French army. The breechloading guns importance understood after the Austro-Prussian War, which resulted in Prussian victory after 4 years of clashes.



Prussian infantry, supported by their artillery, were used aggressively, at times recklessly. Their main function was attack. Due to their numerical superiority in most of the initial battles, and to their superior command and control, they would pin the enemy frontally whilst expanding either or both of their own flanks in order to find the extremities of the enemy's flank. That flank would then be pounded mercilessly by their artillery before the Prussian infantry was sent in. There is absolutely no doubt at all that the Prussians

used their

artillery as an infantry support weapon. It was always deployed as rapidly as possible and pushed well forward with the main infantry line. Whether in attack or defence, its first priority would normally be to silence enemy batteries and Mitrailleuse positions. It would then pound the enemy infantry. Unlike their French counterparts, Prussian batteries would invariably be grouped together and would act in concert. It is worth noting that the resupply caissons came up close to the batteries to replenish their ammunition, thereby ensuring continuity of fire - there was no need for the batteries to retire to the rear for that purpose

The war started by the French offensive to German forces in Saarbrücken. Napoleon III was under substantial domestic pressure to launch an offensive before the full might of Moltke's forces was mobilized and deployed. The French infantry under General Frossard and Marshal Bazaine crossed the German border on 2 August, attacked to Prussian 16th Infantry Division. The Chassepot rifle showed their worth in this battle, superioring against

Dreyse rifle. However the Prussians resisted strongly, and the French suffered 86 casualties to the Prussian 83 casualties. And this battle showed the importance of logistics in warfare, easing German army's retreat and organisation. Napoleon III were receiving alarming reports from foreign news sources of Prussian and Bavarian armies massing to the southeast in addition to the forces to the north and northeast, so the French General Staff ordered a retreat to a defensive position, while Moltke had indeed massed three armies in the area, the Prussian First Army under General Karl von Steinmetz, Prussian Second Army under Prince Friedrich Karl and Prussian Third Army under Prince Friedrich Wilhelm. General Frossard, without instructions, hastily withdrew his elements of the Army of the Rhine in Saarbrücken back across the river to Spicheren and Forbach.

The first real action of the Franco-Prussian War took place on 4 August 1870. The Battle of Wissembourg saw the unsupported division of General Douay of I Corps, with some attached cavalry, which was posted to watch the border, attacked in overwhelming but uncoordinated fashion by the German 3rd Army. During the day, elements of a Bavarian and two Prussian corps became engaged and were aided by Prussian artillery, which blasted holes in the city defenses. Douay held a very strong position initially, thanks to the accurate long-range rapid fire of the Chassepot rifles, but his force was too thinly stretched to hold it. This disaster happened because of lack of organization due to a lack of supplies and misinformed agency reports from headquarters. The fight went on until the town surrendered and French army retreated. The German cavalry tried to catch up, yet they failed. The Germans had an initial superiority of numbers, a broad deployment which made envelopment highly likely but the effectiveness of French Chassepot-rifle fire inflicted costly repulses on infantry attacks, until the French infantry had been extensively bombarded by the Prussian artillery.

## ***5.2 Turning Points and Major Events***

On 5th of August, the Battle of Spicheren started by the German offensive. Moltke had originally planned to keep Bazaine's army on the Saar River until he could attack it with the 2nd Army in front and the 1st Army on its left flank, while the 3rd Army closed towards the rear. The aging General von Steinmetz made an overzealous, unplanned move, leading the 1st Army south from his position on the Moselle. He moved straight toward the town of Spicheren, cutting off Prince Frederick Charles from his forward cavalry units in the process.

The French were unaware of German numerical superiority at the beginning of the battle as the German 2nd Army did not attack all at once. Treating the oncoming attacks as merely skirmishes, Frossard did not request additional support from other units. By the time he realized what kind of a force he was opposing, it was too late. The German First and Second Army charged to French Army under the control of Frossard. Because the reserves had not arrived, Frossard erroneously believed that he was in grave danger of being outflanked, as German soldiers under General von Glume were spotted in Forbach. Instead of continuing to defend the heights, by the close of battle after dusk he retreated to the south. This battle became the second disaster of French army, showing the supremacy of Prussian war doctrines.

While the Battle of Spicheren was going on, the Battle of Wörth started by the two armies clash near to Wörth in the town of Frœschwiller. The Crown Prince of Prussia's Third Army had, on the quick reaction of his Chief of Staff General von Blumenthal, drawn reinforcements which brought its strength up to 140,000 troops. The French had been slowly reinforced and their force numbered only 35,000. Although badly outnumbered, the French defended their position just outside Frœschwiller. By afternoon, the Germans had suffered 10,500 killed or wounded and the French had lost a similar number of casualties and another 9,200 men taken prisoner, a loss of about 50%. The Germans captured Frœschwiller which sat on a hilltop in the centre of the French line. Having lost any hope for victory and facing a massacre, the French army disengaged and retreated in a westerly direction.

About 160,000 French soldiers were besieged in the fortress of Metz following the defeats on the frontier. A retirement from Metz to link up with French forces at Châlons was ordered on 15 August and spotted by a Prussian cavalry patrol under Major Oskar von Blumenthal. Next day a grossly outnumbered Prussian force of 30,000 men under General Constantin von Alvensleben, found the French Army near Vionville, east of Mars-la-Tour.

Beside the four to one armies, von Alvensleben launched a risky attack, starting the last battle with major cavalry engagement in Western Europe. The French were routed and the German Cavalry captured Vionville, blocking any further escape attempts to the west. Once blocked from retreat, the French in the fortress of Metz had no choice but to engage.

On 16 August, the French had a chance to sweep away the key Prussian defense, and to escape. Two Prussian corps had attacked the French advance guard, thinking that it was the rearguard of the retreat of the French Army of the Meuse. Despite this misjudgment the two Prussian corps held the entire French army for the whole day. Outnumbered 5 to 1, the extraordinary élan of the Prussians prevailed over gross indecision by the French. The French had lost the opportunity to win a decisive victory.

On 18 August, with Moltke's order to advance against the French positions, the Battle of Gravelotte started. The First and Second Armies of Prussia, backed by artillery fire, started to go against to where the French were dug in with trenches and rifle pits with their artillery and their mitrailleuses in concealed positions. The Second Army under Prince Frederick Charles used its artillery to pulverize the French position at St. Privat. His Twelfth Corps took the town of Roncourt and helped the Guard conquer St. Privat, while Eduard von Fransecky's Second Corps advanced across the Mance ravine. The fighting died down at 22:00. The next morning the French Army of the Rhine retreated to Metz where they were besieged and forced to surrender two months later.

### ***5.3 The Fall of Napoleon III and the Paris Siege***

The Battle of Sedan, which occurred on 1 September 1870, was the turning battle of the Franco-Prussian War. Napoleon III and Marshal MacMahon, after the defeats at Wörth and Spicheren, attempted to relieve the French besieged in Metz. But Moltke had anticipated this and commanded three armies of the Germans to encircle the French before the fortress town of Sedan. The French Châlons Army of some 120,000 troops was weary and low on provisions, and the Germans sent more than 200,000 men better trained and equipped with artillery.

Early in the morning, the Prussian and Bavarian forces simultaneously attacked, surrounding Sedan on the north and east. The French tried to hold their ground, but the Krupp guns, firing from commanding positions, wrought havoc. French Marshal MacMahon was wounded early in the fight, confusing French command. Several counterattacks were launched, including sweeping cavalry charges by General Margueritte's Chasseurs d'Afrique, but they all broke against relentless German fire.

By noon, the French were completely committed and encircled, between the Meuse River and the German front line. Napoleon III, present on the battlefield, saw the hopelessness of the situation and had the white flag raised. On 2 September 1870, he himself surrendered along with 83,000 soldiers, ending the Second French Empire. The defeat at Sedan opened the gates of Paris to Germans and the Government of National Defence established in France to resist German, yet they failed after campaigns and on 26 January 1871, the Government of National Defence based in Paris negotiated an armistice with the Prussians. Although public opinion in Paris was strongly against any form of surrender or concession to the Prussians, the Government realised that it could not hold the city for much longer, and that Gambetta's provincial armies would probably never break through to relieve Paris. President Trochu resigned on 25 January and was replaced by Favre, who signed the surrender two days later at Versailles, with the armistice coming into effect at midnight.

## ***6. Results and Consequences***

The armistice of January 28 included a specific condition which was for the election of a French National Assembly, which would have authority and conclude peace. The settlement, finally negotiated by Adolphe Thiers and Favre, was signed on the 26th of February and officially approved on the 1st of March. Afterwards, up until the time of the formal Treaty of Frankfurt on May 10, 1871, Paris saw a rebellion by radicals against the republican government consequently establishing their own government, the Paris Commune. After two months, the Commune was eventually put down and the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Frankfurt were implemented: Germany took control of Alsace and half of Lorraine, with Metz. Additionally, France had to pay a massive indemnity to Germany amounting to 5 billion francs and they also had to pay the costs of German occupation in France's northern provinces until the entire sum had been paid. However, the final stage of victory had already come on January 18, 1871 when King William I of Prussia was officially announced German emperor at Versailles, which was the triumph of Bismarck's plans.

The Franco-Prussian war had other major consequences as well. It led to the establishment of both the German Empire and the French Third Republic. Since Napoleon III no longer was in power after the war ended, Italy annexed the Papal states, completing the unification of the country. Also, the victory strengthened belief in Prussian militarism in Germany which remained dominant until 1945.

However, the French were left longing for revenge due to losing Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and between 1871 to 1814 peace was unstable due to the issue. Their deep hate also led to brutal battles on the Western Front during WW1.

### ***6.1. The Unification of Germany and the German Empire***

The German Empire was founded on January 18, 1871, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. It wasn't established based on the outpouring nationalist feeling after the war, but by diplomacy and agreement through the traditional cabinet by the leaders of the states in the North German Confederation, led by Prussia. Prussia, having dominance in both land and population in Germany, remained the dominant force in the German Empire until its demise in 1918.

The empire was originally governed under the constitution which Otto von Bismarck, the Prussia prime minister for the North German Confederation, had designed four years earlier. There were two houses: the Reichstag that represented the people and the Bundesrat that represented the 25 states. The constituencies established in 1867 and 1871 were never altered to reflect population shifts, and rural areas thus retained a vastly disproportionate share of power as urbanization progressed.

A problem that was to constantly follow the German Empire in its existence was the disparity between the Prussian and imperial political systems. In Prussia's lower house, elections were based on a three-class voting system where voters were divided into three based on how much taxes they paid. However, this was very unequal as the wealthiest 15% of men were able to choose most of the delegates, which gave the rich significant political influence. However, at the Reichstag every man could freely vote. This led to larger numbers of centre-mid left-wing representatives which showed broader populations' opinions. William I was both German Emperor (1871-88) and king of Prussia (1861-88). The chancellor also served as Prussian prime minister. Thus, the executives had to work with two separate legislatures. Another problem was that government ministers were usually inexperienced with government or foreign affairs because they were generally selected from the public.

The constitution had been designed by Bismarck to give the chancellor and monarch primary-decision making power. However, he had not planned upon new parties to appear such as the Centre Party, a Roman Catholic confessional party, or the Social Democratic Party. Beginning in 1871, Bismarck launched the Kulturkampf (cultural struggle) which was a campaign against political Catholicism. It was clear that he aimed to destroy the Centre Party. However, the Kulturkampf failed and Bismarck abandoned the battle in the late 1870s. Instead, he launched another campaign this time targeting the SPD along with two conservative parties and many National Liberals. Like the Kulturkampf, it failed, and when the 1890 elections showed huge gains for the Reichsfeinde, he began to consider drawing up a new constitution. The new emperor, William II, didn't want to start his reign in tension, and requested that Bismarck resign. Thus, Bismarck, the great founder of German unity, left the scene humiliatingly, in the belief that his creation had major flaws. And he was right in believing so as his policies did lead to persistent crisis.

## ***6.2. The Fall of the Second French Empire and Rise of the Third Republic***

The Second Empire period in France was between 1852 and 1870 under the rule of Napoleon III. The Second Empire met its end after France's defeat during the Battle of Sedan where Napoleon III surrendered in the Franco-Prussian War consequently causing an uprising in Paris on September 4, 1870 which resulted with the government being overthrown and the establishment of the Third Republic. However, things didn't settle down until the suppression of the Paris Commune, and afterwards the new Constitutional Laws of 1875 were adopted making up for a regime that was based on parliamentary supremacy. The early governments of the French Third Republic thought of re-establishing monarchy as the way of rule, but due to disagreements it wasn't implemented. As a result, the Third Republic which was to be a provisional government at first (due to Napoleon III's surrender during the war) became the permanent governmental form of France.

The composition of the Third Republic was defined by the French Constitutional Laws of 1875. There was a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate in order to form the legislative branch of government and a president to be the head of state. The first two presidents, Adolphe Thiers and Patrice de MacMahan were constantly faced with calls to re-establish the

monarchy. However, as previously mentioned, the idea wasn't implemented and over time the support for anrepublican government grew among the French.

During the Third Republic, many French colonial possessions were established, most of them being in Africa which were obtained during the Scramble for Africa. Later on during the 19th and 20th centuries, the French colonial empire was the second largest in the world.

Politics under the Third Republic were sharply divided. On the left stood the reformists and on the right were the conservative of the French. However, despite this sharp division and persistent attempts to overthrow the government, the Third Republic survived 70 years, making it the longest-lasting system of government in France since the collapse of the Ancien Régime in 1789.

## ***7. Matrix of the Characters***

### ***7.1. Prussian/German Cabinet***

#### **1. King Wilhelm I**

He was the King of Prussia from 1861 and the German Emperor from 1871 until 1888. He was the first head of state of a unified Germany. He was the partner of Otto von Bismarck whom he appointed to the post of Minister President in order to try and force through his proposals. He established Prussia as the leading German power by getting important victories.

#### **2. Otto von Bismarck**

He was the prime minister of Prussia and the founder of the great German Empire. After the establishment he pursued policies in foreign affairs and succeeded in preserving peace in Europe for a long time. He had a very bright political career. His actions were very significant for the future of Prussia and the German Empire. His influence and the idea of German nationalism were very important for both.

#### **3. Helmuth von Moltke the Elder**

He was a Prussian field marshal and the chief of staff in the Prussian Army for thirty years. He was considered one of the best military minds of his generation. He commanded troops in many regions such as the Middle East, the Second Schleswig War, Austro-Prussian War and Franco-Prussian War.

#### 4. Albrecht von Roon

He was a Prussian soldier and statesman. He was the Minister of War from 1859 to 1873 and along with Otto von Bismarck and Helmuth von Moltke, he was a dominating figure in Prussia's government during the period of Prussia's successful wars that led to German unification. He worked to improve the efficiency of the army.

#### 5. Friedrich Wilhelm Nikolaus Karl

He was German Emperor and King of Prussia for 99 days in 1988. He was the heir to his father William after the German Empire was established. He was the Commander of the Third Army during the Franco-Prussian War.

#### 6. Albert, King of Saxony

He was the king of Saxon from 1873 to 1902. He had a successful military career, leading Saxon troops that participated in the First Schleswig War, the Austro-Prussian War and the Franco-Prussian War.

#### 7. Prince Friedrich Karl Nikolaus of Prussia

He was the son of Prince Charles of Prussia. He is highly regarded as a military commander. He had a major influence on the Royal Prussian Army's progress in their training and tactics. He also commanded one of the armies which defeated the French Army of Rhine.

#### 8. Ludwig II of Bavaria

He was the King of Bavaria between 1864 and 1886. His nickname outside Germany is "the Mad King". He fought along with Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War which he was required to do. Later, as part of German unification under Prussia, Bavaria lost its independence under King Ludwig.

#### 9. Karl Friedrich von Steinmetz

He was a Prussian Generalfeldmarschall. He joined the Army of Prussia during the War of Liberation and later during the Seven Weeks' War he led the V Corps against Austria. He earned the nickname Lion of Nachod for his victories in other wars as well.

#### 10. August Karl von Goeben

He was a Prussian Infantry General and he won the Iron Cross after the Franco-Prussian War. He commanded the 13th Division during the Austro-Prussian War. At the start of the Franco-Prussian War, he was placed at the head of Rhineland Province Corps, which formed part of the first army under Karl Friedrich von Steinmetz.

## 11. Kraft, prinz zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen

He was a Prussian army officer and military writer. He led the Guard Artillery during the Seven Weeks' War with great success against the Austrian Corps. He was promoted to major general in 1868 and assigned to command the Guard Artillery Brigade.

## 12. Leonhard Graf von Blumenthal

He was an officer of the Prussian Army and field marshal of the Imperial German Army. He notably served the Rhine Province. He saved the day in Königgrätz in the Austro-Prussian War and he was chief of staff of the Third Army in the Franco-Prussian War.

## ***7.2. French Cabinet***

### 1.Napoleon III

Napoleon III was the President of France between 1848 and 1852 and afterwards he became the monarch (Emperor of the French) until 1870. He was a crucial figure for France's development. He led France both in the Crimean War and the Italian campaign. He surrendered during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870.

### 2.Empress Eugénie

Eugénie, the daughter of a Spanish noble, was the wife of Napoleon III and the empress of France between 1853-1870. During that period of time, she came to have an important influence on Napoleon's foreign policy. She was the official representative of her husband whenever he was outside of France.

### 3.Marshal Patrice de MacMahon

He was a French general and politician. He served as the second president of the Third French Republic. During his presidency, the constitutional laws of 1875 were adopted. He commanded the I Army Corps in Alsace during the Franco-Prussia War. Later he was appointed head of the Versailles Army.

### 4.Marshal François Achille Bazaine

He was a marshal of France. He was commissioned as second lieutenant in 1833. He led a brigade in the Crimean War as a colonel and was later promoted to major general. After being sent to Mexico, he was promoted to marshal on September 5, 1864. During the war, he was appointed commander in chief and took command of the Army of the Rhine.

## 5. Léon Gambetta

He was a French lawyer and a republican politician. He made significant contributions to founding the Third Republic. Through his political influence he spread the ideals of moderate democratic republicanism and he gathered support for an elective democratic political party, the Republican Union. He also helped transform the regime into a parliamentary republic.

## 6. Jules Favre

He was a French statesman and lawyer. After the Third Republic was established, he became one of the leaders of Moderate Republicans in the National Assembly. He originally opposed the war. At some point, he also became minister of foreign affairs and negotiated peace with Germany.

## 7. Adolphe Thiers

He was a French statesman and historian who served as the President of France between 1871-1873. He was a key figure in the July Revolution of 1830 and the Revolution of 1848. He also served as prime minister from 1836 to 1840.

## 8. Charles Cousin-Montauban

He was a French general who briefly headed the government of the Second Empire during its collapse. He participated actively in the military throughout his life. After the outbreak of the war he was designated prime minister by empress Eugénie on August 9, 1870. However, his short-lived government witnessed the downfall of the Second Empire.

## 9. Jules Trochu

He was a French military leader and politician. Between September 1870 and 22 January 1871 he served as president of the Government of National Defense (first republic of the Third Republic of France). He was also elected into the National Assembly.

## 10. Adolphe Le Flô

He was a French Army general, diplomat and politician who served as the first Minister of War of the Third Republic and was appointed Major General. However, he resigned after the siege of Paris in 1871.

## 11. Charles de Freycinet

He was a French political figure who served in many different governments. He was also responsible for important military reforms in the final decade of the 19th century.

## 12.Jules Simon

He was a French statesman and philosopher. He was one of the leaders of the Moderate Republicans in the Third French Republic. He also took place in the National Assembly.

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