

Student Activity Sheet 2-1: The Coming of War

The following is an extract from an editorial in *The Vancouver Province* of July 27, 1914. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Austria has used the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand to cover an attempt to crush the rising power of the Serbs. She fears that if the national Serb movement goes any further it will inevitably break up her empire. It is almost certain she has been backed by Germany, despite the attitude of the German Emperor and his love of peace. But rattling the sabre and donning shining armor cannot always be indulged in with safety. Striking at Serbia is merely putting the match to the powder barrel. This is obvious, for Austria's ultimatum was impossible to answer satisfactorily, without sacrificing Serbian nationalism and becoming an Austrian appendage.

Thus the German-Austrian action is seemingly nothing but a direct challenge to Russia. If Russia intervenes actively on behalf of Serbia, Germany will advance on Russia. This entails French participation by the terms of her alliance with Russia. Germany will probably trust to Austria, with her help holding back the notoriously slow moving Russia, while she flings herself on France. It really seems as if the hour has struck, and Germany is famed for her punctuality.

—*The Vancouver Province*

Questions

1. What "empire" is threatened by the "rising power of the Serbs"?

2. Paraphrase (i.e., put into different words) the sentence, "But rattling the sabre and donning armor cannot always be indulged in with safety."

3. Why is the German-Austrian action "a direct challenge to Russia"?

4. Why will Germany "advance on Russia" if Russia supports Serbia?

5. Which country does the editor suggest Germany will attack first? Why?
