

repeated his request and three times received a positive refusal. Thereupon diplomatic connections were severed and Russia and Germany were at war.

Germany served a similar ultimatum on France, which France likewise refused, and before the expiration of the ultimatum, Germany had already begun her invasion of the French Republic.

In this conflict Germany is easily the strongest single nation; the spirit of militarism has been alive for years, and it has been in active preparation for just such a crisis as this. Its army is the best trained in the world, and might be victorious were it not for the overwhelming odds against it.

France's Reason:

France is a member of the Triple Entente between Russia, England and itself, as opposed to the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria and Italy. In this war she became the natural ally of Russia, but preferred to remain on the defensive rather than the aggressive. Upon delivery of the ultimatum by Germany, she could not do otherwise than refuse. Her ancient hatred of Germany, dating back to the Franco-Prussian war, was probably another reason for this decision.

England's Reason:

England finds herself involved in European warfare through her participation in the Triple Entente. This was construed by English statesmen to be a defensive rather than offensive alliance, and England's participation in the conflict was doubtful.

Germany's first steps against France consisted of an invasion of Belgium, hoping thereby to gain access to an unprotected part of the French Republic. Belgium protested on the grounds that she was a neutral nation. Germany declared that due indemnity would be paid at the end of the war. This was not satisfactory to Belgium, and she accordingly appealed to England to preserve her neutrality, which France had already agreed to respect. England thereupon demanded that Germany cease immediately its operations on Belgian soil. England had previously advised the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean, which left the northern coast of France with little protection. It therefore ordered the German navy not to direct an attack upon the north French coast. Germany acceded to the latter request, provided England would remain neutral, but would give no satisfactory reply concerning Belgium. Thereupon England declared war against Germany and ordered her fleet to give battle to the German fleet concentrated in the North Sea, while at the same time she mobilized her army.