



[home](#) > [expertise](#) > [use of force and diplomacy](#) > war planning 1914

[Use of Force and Diplomacy](#)
[Ideas, Identities and](#)
[Decisional Processes that](#)
[Affect Security](#)
[Institutions that Manage](#)
[Violent Conflict](#)

War Planning 1914

Principal Investigators: Richard Hamilton; Holger Herwig, University of Calgary

War is one of the most complex operations undertaken by a society. Large numbers of young men are pulled out of the labor force. Manufacturing shifts from consumer goods to military goods. International trade is interrupted. In the midst of this, governments must deal with the enemy while balancing relationships with allies and neutral powers.

In *The Pathology of War Plans*, Hamilton and Herwig look at the plans of six European countries in the buildup to World War I. Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Russia all developed, discussed and tested war plans. In all six cases, the plans were seriously flawed. Yet all six countries implemented them anyway.

How did this happen? To answer this question, Hamilton and Herwig have asked six scholars to review each country's plans leading up to World War I. An opening chapter provides a general discussion of war planning and the kinds of problems encountered.

The final chapter provides a discussion and analysis, answering questions like:

- What processes give rise to these planning failures?
- How typical is the 1914 experience?
- What is the social psychology of complex decision making?

This project began with a 2005 conference at the Mershon Center. Contributors include:

- John Gooch, University of Leeds
- Guenther Kronenbitter, Universitaet Augsburg
- Bruce Menning, University of Kansas
- Keith Neilson, Royal Military College of Canada
- Robert Doughty, U.S. Military Academy at West Point (retired)



Richard Hamilton
Professor Emeritus of
Sociology and Political
Science
The Ohio State
University

Fax: 614.292.2407

Email: mershoncenter@osu.edu