International Relations Revision: An overview of events by 1890
1870-1871 - The Franco-Prussian War

The German states fought against France in 1870-1871. After their victory Germany was unified.

Legacy?

France always remained bitter by the conflict and wanted revenge. Especially over Alsace-Lorraine.

A long term strategy of Bismarck was to ensure that France remained isolated in Europe.
1873- Dreikaiserbund

Lead by the diplomatic influence of Otto Van Bismarck, the ‘League of the Three Emperors’ was set up between;

- Germany
- Austria-Hungary
- Russia
1878- Berlin Congress

Came after Russo-Turkish war where Russia were victorious.

Results;
- Austria allowed to rule over Bosnia as a ‘satellite state’
- Russian influence weakened and managed as a result of British interests.
- Balkan nations ignored and lead to ill feeling from areas like Serbia.
1879- Dual Alliance

Signed by Austria-Hungary and Germany.

This was an easy step made between two nations who shared borders and had a long established history as close allies.

Both agreed to help each other if attacked by Russia but not others.
1882- Triple Alliance

- Italy joined Austria-Hungary and Germany.
- This was beneficial to Germany who now had a willing ally to fight against France.
1884-1885- Berlin Conference

In 1880, 90% of Africa came under European control and set off the Scramble for Africa.

As a result there was a formal meeting of the great powers in Berlin led by Bismarck.

Decisions were made (see map), but it did not settle territorial disputes.
1887- Re-Insurance Treaty

This was a secret alliance between Russia and Germany.

It was agreed that both would remain neutral and not attack each other.

This allowed Bismarck to be a negotiator between Austria-Hungary and Russia whose relationship was unstable due to the Balkans.
In 1888, Wilhelm II became Kaiser of Germany.

He had a very different foreign policy approach, centred around getting Germany a ‘place in the sun’ through Weltpolitik.

This clashed with ‘Bismarck the Diplomat’ and meant that he was forced to resign by Wilhelm in 1890.
1890- Failure to re-sign the Re-Insurance Treaty

As part of Wilhelm’s ‘new course’, he decided against re-signing the re-insurance treaty with Russia.

This forced Russia to look for new allies and is considered a crucial factor for the formation of the Franco-Russian alliance in 1894.