

# Europeans Claim Muslim Lands

## MAIN IDEA

**EMPIRE BUILDING** European nations expanded their empires by seizing territories from Muslim states.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Political events in this vital resource area are still influenced by actions from the imperialistic period.

## TERMS & NAMES

- geopolitics
- Crimean War
- Suez Canal

**SETTING THE STAGE** The European powers who carved up Africa also looked elsewhere for other lands to control. The Muslim lands that rimmed the Mediterranean had largely been claimed as a result of Arab and Ottoman conquests. As you learned in Chapter 18, the Ottoman Empire at its peak stretched from Hungary in the north, around the Black Sea, and across Egypt all the way west to the borders of Morocco. (See map opposite.) But during the empire's last 300 years, it had steadily declined in power. Europeans competed with each other to gain control of this strategically important area.

## TAKING NOTES

### Determining Main Ideas

Use a diagram to fill in three details that support the main idea.

Muslim states failed to keep European imperialists out of their lands.

detail detail detail

## Ottoman Empire Loses Power

The declining Ottoman Empire had difficulties trying to fit into the modern world. However, the Ottomans made attempts to change before they finally were unable to hold back the European imperialist powers.

**Reforms Fail** When Suleyman I, the last great Ottoman sultan, died in 1566, he was followed by a succession of weak sultans. The palace government broke up into a number of quarreling, often corrupt factions. Weakening power brought other problems. Corruption and theft had caused financial losses. Coinage was devalued, causing inflation. Once the Ottoman Empire had embraced modern technologies, but now it fell further and further behind Europe.

When Selim III came into power in 1789, he attempted to modernize the army. However, the older janissary corps resisted his efforts. Selim III was overthrown, and reform movements were temporarily abandoned. Meanwhile, nationalist feelings began to stir among the Ottomans' subject peoples. In 1830, Greece gained its independence, and Serbia gained self-rule. The Ottomans' weakness was becoming apparent to European powers, who were expanding their territories. They began to look for ways to take the lands away from the Ottomans.

## Europeans Grab Territory

**Geopolitics**, an interest in or taking of land for its strategic location or products, played an important role in the fate of the Ottoman Empire. World powers were attracted to its strategic location. The Ottomans controlled access to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic sea trade. Merchants in landlocked countries

that lay beyond the Black Sea had to go through Ottoman lands. Russia, for example, desperately wanted passage for its grain exports across the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean Sea. This desire strongly influenced Russia's relations with the Ottoman Empire. Russia attempted to win Ottoman favor, formed alliances with Ottoman enemies, and finally waged war against the Ottomans. Discovery of oil in Persia around 1900 and in the Arabian Peninsula after World War I focused even more attention on the area.

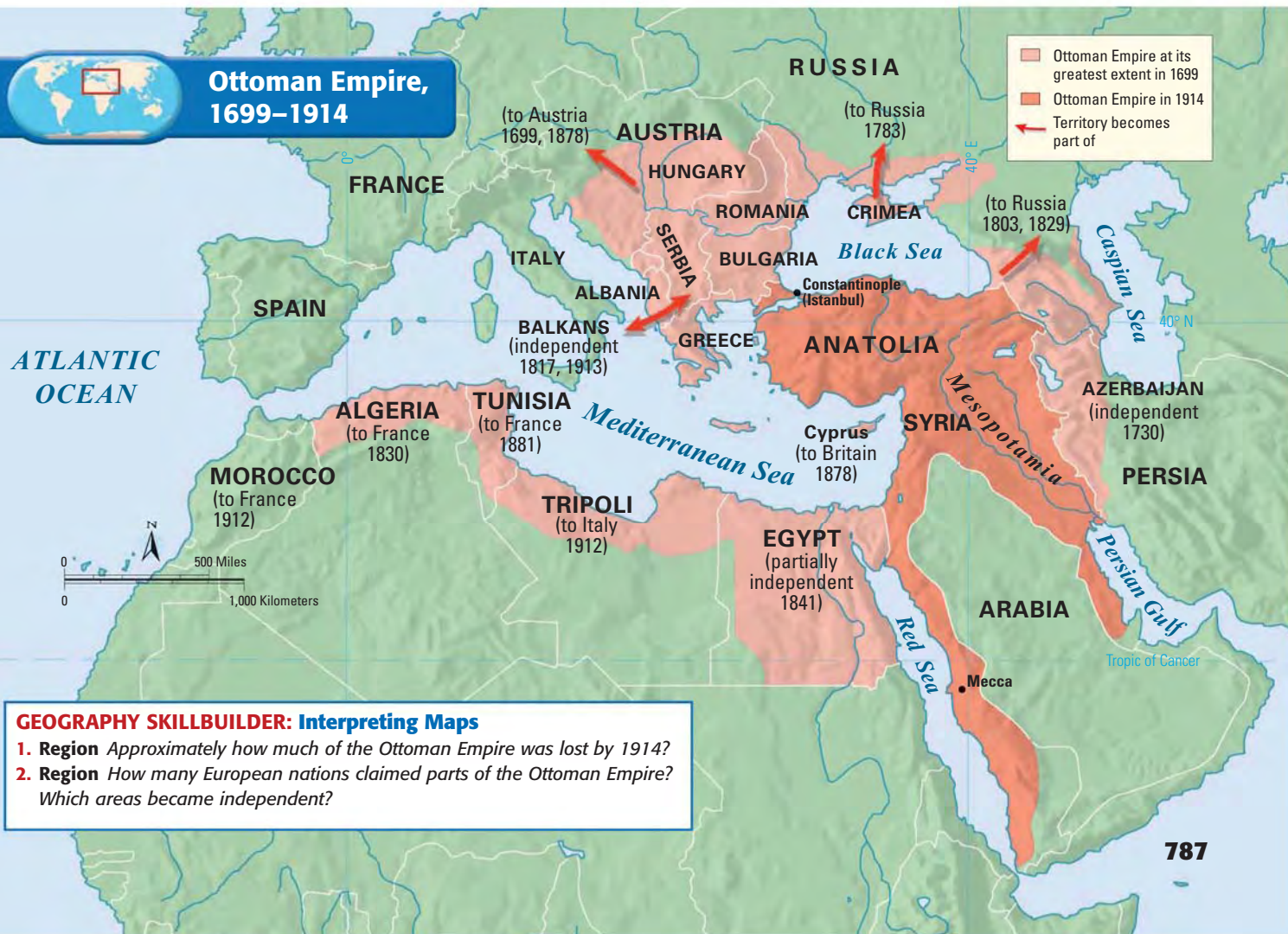
**Russia and the Crimean War** Each generation of Russian czars launched a war on the Ottomans to try to gain land on the Black Sea. The purpose was to give Russia a warm-weather port. In 1853, war broke out between the Russians and the Ottomans. The war was called the **Crimean War**, after a peninsula in the Black Sea where most of the war was fought. Britain and France wanted to prevent the Russians from gaining control of additional Ottoman lands. So they entered the war on the side of the Ottoman Empire. The combined forces of the Ottoman Empire, Britain, and France defeated Russia. The Crimean War was the first war in which women, led by Florence Nightingale, established their position as army nurses. It was also the first war to be covered by newspaper correspondents.

The Crimean War revealed the Ottoman Empire's military weakness. Despite the help of Britain and France, the Ottoman Empire continued to lose lands. The Russians came to the aid of Slavic people in the Balkans who rebelled against the Ottomans. The Ottomans lost control of Romania, Montenegro, Cyprus, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and an area that became Bulgaria. The Ottomans lost land in Africa too. By the beginning of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was reduced in size and in deep decline. **A**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Making Inferences**

**A** How did the Crimean War help lead to the decline of the Ottoman Empire?



**The Great Game** For much of the 19th century, Great Britain and Russia engaged in yet another geopolitical struggle, this time over Muslim lands in Central Asia. Known as the “Great Game,” the war was waged over India, one of Britain’s most profitable colonies. Russia sought to extend its empire and gain access to India’s riches. Britain defended its colony and also attempted to spread its empire beyond India’s borders. Afghanistan, which lay between the Russian and British empires, became the center of their struggle. (See the map on page 771.)

In the 1800s, Afghanistan was an independent Muslim kingdom. Its dry, mountainous terrain and determined people continually frustrated the invading imperial powers. After decades of fighting, Great Britain finally withdrew from Afghanistan in 1881. In 1921, Britain formally agreed that its empire would not extend beyond the Khyber Pass, which borders eastern Afghanistan. The newly formed Soviet Union, meanwhile, signed a nonaggression pact with Afghanistan. That agreement was honored until 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

## Egypt Initiates Reforms

Observing the slow decline of the Ottoman Empire, some Muslim leaders decided that their countries would either have to adjust to the modern world or be consumed by it. Egypt initiated political and social reforms, in part to block European domination of its land.

▼ Muhammad Ali was a common soldier who rose to leadership as a result of his military skill and political shrewdness.

**Military and Economic Reforms** Modernization came to Egypt as a result of the interest in the area created by the French occupation. Egypt’s strategic location at the head of the Red Sea appeared valuable to France and Britain. After Napoleon failed to win Egypt, a new leader emerged: Muhammad Ali. The Ottomans sent him as part of an expeditionary force to govern Egypt, but he soon broke away

from Ottoman control. Beginning in 1831, he fought a series of battles in which he gained control of Syria and Arabia. Through the combined efforts of European powers, Muhammad Ali and his heirs were recognized as the hereditary rulers of Egypt.

Muhammad Ali began a series of reforms in the military and in the economy. Without foreign assistance, he personally directed a shift of Egyptian agriculture to a plantation cash crop—cotton. This brought Egypt into the international marketplace but at a cost to the peasants. They lost the use of lands they traditionally farmed and were forced to grow cash crops in place of food crops. **B**

**The Suez Canal** Muhammad Ali’s efforts to modernize Egypt were continued by his grandson, Isma’il. Isma’il supported the construction of the **Suez Canal**. The canal was a human-made waterway that cut



### MAIN IDEA

#### Recognizing Effects

**B** What two effects did raising cotton have on Egyptian agriculture?

## Suez Canal

The Suez Canal was viewed as the “Lifeline of the Empire” because it allowed Britain quicker access to its colonies in Asia and Africa. In a speech to Parliament, Joseph Chamberlain explained that he believed Britain should continue its occupation of Egypt because of “the necessity for using every legitimate opportunity to extend our influence and control in that great African continent which is now being opened up to civilization and to commerce.”

This painting represents the opening celebration of the canal on November 17, 1869.



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER:

#### Interpreting Maps

**Place** *Approximately how long is the Suez Canal?*



through the Isthmus of Suez. It connected the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. It was built mainly with French money from private interest groups, using Egyptian labor. The Suez Canal opened in 1869 with a huge international celebration. However, Isma'il's modernization efforts, such as irrigation projects and communication networks, were enormously expensive. Egypt soon found that it could not pay its European bankers even the interest on its \$450 million debt. The British insisted on overseeing financial control of the canal, and in 1882 the British occupied Egypt.

## Persia Pressured to Change

Elsewhere in southwest Asia, Russia and Britain competed to exploit Persia commercially and to bring that country under their own spheres of influence. (See map on page 787.) Russia was especially interested in gaining access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Twice Persia gave up territories to Russia, after military defeats in 1813 and 1828. Britain was interested in using Afghanistan as a buffer between India and Russia. In 1857, Persia resisted British demands but was forced to give up all claims to Afghanistan. Britain's interest in Persia increased greatly after the discovery of oil there in 1908.

Persia lacked the capital to develop its own resources. To raise money and to gain economic prestige, the Persian ruler began granting concessions to Western businesses. These concessions allowed businesses to buy the right to operate in a certain area or develop a certain product. For example, a British corporation, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, began to develop Persia's rich oil fields in the early 1900s.



▲ Nasir al-Din was killed by one of al-Afghani's followers a few years after the boycott.

**Battle over Tobacco** Tension arose between the often corrupt rulers, who wanted to sell concessions to Europeans, and the people. The people were often backed by religious leaders who feared change or disliked Western influence in their nation. In 1890, Persian ruler Nasir al-Din sold a concession to a British company to export Persian tobacco. This action outraged Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a leader who supported the modernization of Persia. He helped set up a tobacco boycott by the heavy-smoking Persians. In the following quote, he expresses his contempt for the Persian ruler:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

He has sold to the foes of our Faith the greater part of the Persian lands and the profits derived from them, for example . . . tobacco, with the chief centers of its cultivation, the lands on which it is grown and the warehouses, carriers, and sellers, wherever these are found. . . .

In short, this criminal has offered the provinces of Persia to auction among the Powers, and is selling the realms of Islam and the abodes of Muhammad and his household to foreigners.

**JAMAL AL-DIN AL-AFGHANI**, in a letter to Hasan Shirazi, April 1891

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Primary Sources**

Why did al-Afghani condemn the actions of the Persian ruler?

The tobacco boycott worked. Riots broke out, and the ruler was forced to cancel the concession. As unrest continued in Persia, however, the government was unable to control the situation. In 1906, a group of revolutionaries forced the ruler to establish a constitution. In 1907, Russia and Britain took over the country and divided it into spheres of influence. They exercised economic control over Persia.

In the Muslim lands, many European imperialists gained control by using economic imperialism and creating spheres of influence. Although some governments made attempts to modernize their nations, in most cases it was too little too late. In other areas of the globe, imperialists provided the modernization. India, for example, became a colony that experienced enormous change as a result of the occupation of the imperialist British. You will learn about India in Section 4.

**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- geopolitics
- Crimean War
- Suez Canal

**USING YOUR NOTES**

2. What imperialistic forms of control did the Europeans use to govern these lands?

*Muslim states failed to keep European imperialists out of their lands.*

detail detail detail

**MAIN IDEAS**

3. What is geopolitics?
4. Why did Great Britain want to control the Suez Canal?
5. Why did the Persian people oppose their ruler's policy of selling business concessions to Europeans?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

6. **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING** How were the reactions of African and Muslim rulers to imperialism similar? How were they different?
7. **MAKING PREDICTIONS** What do you think happened as a result of Muhammad Ali's agriculture reform?
8. **ANALYZING BIAS** What does the quotation in the History in Depth on page 789 suggest about Joseph Chamberlain's view of British imperialism in Africa?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **EMPIRE BUILDING** Write a **cause-and-effect paragraph** about reform efforts undertaken in Muslim lands.

**CONNECT TO TODAY** CREATING A TIME LINE

Iran (formerly Persia) has undergone many changes since the late 1800s. Create a **time line** of important events in Iran's modern history. Include photographs that illustrate the events.