

CHAPTER

21

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: LOCATION

Old Empires and New Powers

Section 3

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the maps carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

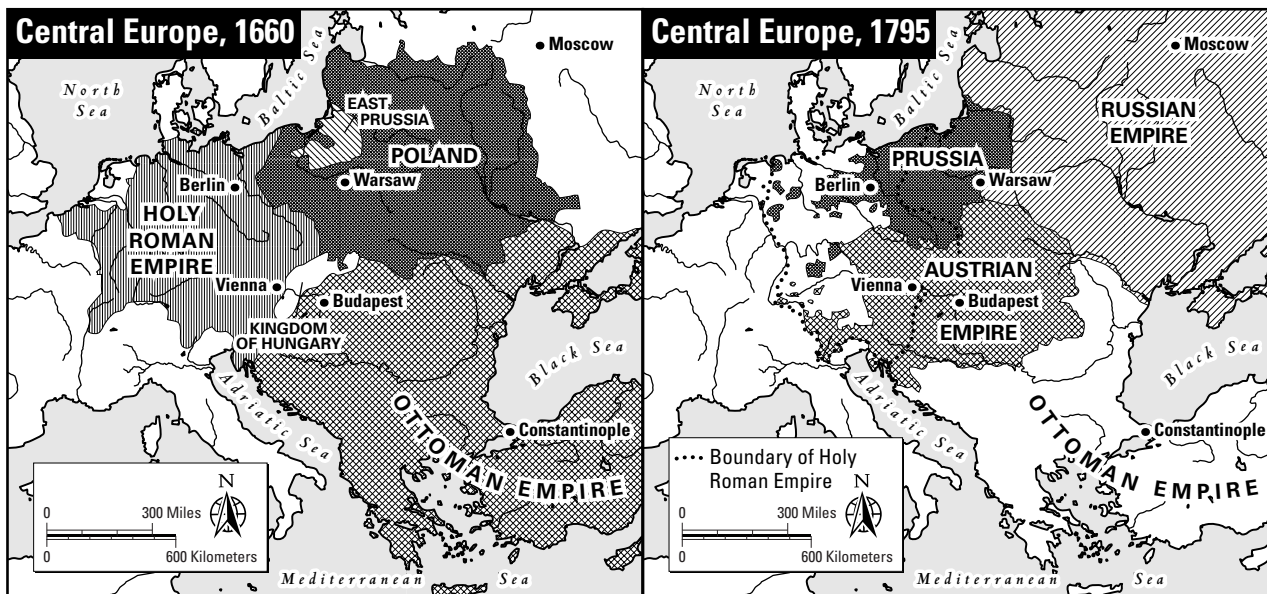
A period of political transition in central and eastern Europe followed the end of the Thirty Years' War, in 1648. The declining powers of Poland, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire faced not only a deterioration of their influence, but outright extinction from Europe. Prussia, the Russian Empire, and the Austrian Empire emerged as powerful forces on the European continent.

The three declining powers shared many characteristics. In all of them, central power became weak. They lacked efficient systems of government and administration. In addition, the people in these empires were difficult to govern because they consisted of many nationalities and spoke a variety of languages. Finally, none of the empires formed their people into a strong organization. As a result, the Polish Republic ceased to exist in 1795, while the Holy Roman Empire disappeared in 1806.

However, the Ottoman Empire, though crumbling and weak, managed to maintain itself until 1922.

The 17th century saw the emergence of a new kind of national state. These new states were built on a strong monarch, a standing army, and a professional civil service and administration. These new powers sought to fill the "political vacuum" created in central Europe by the declining empires. Leaderless populations could easily be shifted inside the political boundaries by the monarchs of newer national states. As a result, these new powers led by the Hohenzollerns of Prussia, the Romanovs of Russia, and the Hapsburgs of Austria formed or expanded their states in the void created by the "soft" rule of these aging empires.

These three new empires, in turn, would influence the course of European history for the next 200 years.



Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. What new power swallows the Kingdom of Hungary? _____

2. What empires are shown on both maps? Which increase? Which decrease? _____

3. By 1795, the lands of Poland were divided up by what other empires? _____

4. Examine again the location of the Ottoman Empire. Why do you think it was able to last the longest out of the three aging powers? _____

5. How many miles separate Moscow and the Russian border in 1660? 1795? _____

6. What problems caused the decline of Poland, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire?

7. Describe the characteristics that enabled Russia, Austria, and Prussia to rise to power. _____
