

Overview of Unit 9: The Consolidation of Large Nation-States:
1859 - 1871
Chapter 13

Unit 9 lays additional groundwork for the eventual outbreak of World War I in 1914. The consolidation of these large nation-states, while completing a historical trend going back to the 1500s, will cause some significant problems as Europe continues through the 19th Century.

The issues and events in Unit 9 will add to many layers of confusion, angst, fear, and suspicion. A bad mix of dangerous ingredients.

- 1. Europe STILL has not determined its future path**
- 2. STILL not clear which “ism” would emerge, especially as the definitions of the “isms” changed over time**
 - a. Nationalism from a liberal to a conservative ideal**
 - b. Liberal economics changed from laissez-faire to more government regulation**
- 3. Not clear which nations would surge forward or fall behind, especially with the addition of a unified Italy and a unified Germany**
- 4. STILL not clear regarding the fate of smaller nations and the different nationalities not part of a larger nation**
- 5. STILL not clear how the lines on the map would reflect the ethnic, nationalistic, linguistic, and religious realities in any given region**
- 6. How could there be a reconciliation between one nation’s gain and another’s loss?**
- 7. What impact would industrialism and imperialism have on the already festering mess of national competition, vulnerabilities, frustrations, and fears?**
- 8. How could the balance of power between nations be maintained to ensure stability?**
- 9. How could increasingly “liberal” political and economic desires be incorporated into consolidated nations?**
- 10. How did each nation express national pride (even arrogance) and yet, have to deal with humiliating losses?**

The titles of Unit 8, The Re-imposition of Order, and Unit 9, The Consolidation of Large Nation-States, go hand in hand. Each condition, order and consolidation, are mutually reinforcing. One is not possible without the other. This is additional evidence as to how *internal* issues within each nation influence *external* issues between the nations.

As an explanation of the above, for example:

The unification of Italy (1860-61) and Germany (1871) marked a major, radical change to the European geopolitical landscape. Two new nations were established and consolidated where none had ever before existed. This development fundamentally altered the balance of power realities between the European nations, as well as altering the internal political, social, and economic realities inside these two nations.

HOWEVER...

These changes could not have occurred without the assertion of conservative, traditional methods including warfare, the use of pre-existing political and economic structures already in place, and the weakening, and in some cases, the abandoning of liberal ideals and policies.