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## Unit 2: History of world affairs since 1789

### Senior 6

#### Term 1

### Topic 8: The Eastern Question 1815–1913

**Competency:** The learner demonstrates an understanding of the interests of major powers in the Balkans by analysing the conflicts in Eastern Europe to appreciate how foreign interests can result in conflicts.

#### 8.1 The Ottoman (Turkey) Empire

##### Factors for the rise of Ottoman Empire

The rise of the **Ottoman Empire** can be attributed to several key factors:

1. **Strategic Location:** The Ottomans were located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, which facilitated control over key trade routes and economic prosperity. The capture of Constantinople in 1453 further cemented their strategic advantage.
2. **Military Innovation:** The Ottomans were pioneers in the use of gunpowder weapons, such as cannons and muskets, which gave them a significant edge in battles and sieges.
3. **Effective Leadership:** Strong and visionary leaders like Osman I, Orhan, and Suleiman the Magnificent provided stability, military prowess, and administrative efficiency, which contributed to the empire's expansion.
4. **Religious and Cultural Tolerance:** The Ottoman policy of relative religious tolerance and the incorporation of diverse cultures within their empire helped to maintain internal stability and loyalty among conquered peoples.
5. **Efficient Administration:** The Ottomans developed an effective administrative system, including the **millet system**, which allowed different religious communities to govern themselves under their own laws while paying taxes to the Ottoman state.
6. **Economic Prosperity:** Control over key trade routes and the development of a strong agricultural base ensured economic prosperity and the accumulation of wealth, which funded further military campaigns and administrative efficiency.
7. **Diplomatic Alliances:** The Ottomans formed strategic alliances and maintained vassal states, which helped to consolidate their power and expand their influence.

8. **Adoption of Superior Technologies and Practices:** The Ottomans were adept at adopting and integrating superior technologies and administrative practices from other cultures, which enhanced their military and bureaucratic effectiveness.

### Achievements of Ottoman Empire

The **Ottoman Empire** achieved numerous accomplishments across various fields, showcasing its military might, architectural marvels, legal system, and cultural contributions. Here are some key achievements:

1. **Territorial Expansion:** The Empire expanded from a small state in Anatolia to control vast territories across Southeast Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.
2. **Military Innovations:** The Ottomans were pioneers in the use of gunpowder weapons, such as cannons and muskets, which played a significant role in their successful sieges.
3. **Magnificent Architecture:** The Empire left a remarkable architectural legacy, including iconic structures like the Hagia Sophia Mosque and the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.



4. **Comprehensive Legal System:** The Ottomans developed a comprehensive legal system known as the Kanun-i Osmani, which governed various aspects of life within the empire.
5. **Religious and Cultural Tolerance:** The empire practiced relative religious tolerance, allowing diverse cultures and religions to coexist under its rule.
6. **Thriving Trade and Economy:** Control over key trade routes and a strong agricultural base ensured economic prosperity and the accumulation of wealth.
7. **Promotion of Education and Scholarship:** The Ottomans supported education and scholarship, establishing schools, libraries, and centers of learning.

8. **Naval Power:** The Empire maintained a powerful navy, which played a crucial role in its military and trade endeavors.

### Reasons for decline of Ottoman Empire

The decline of the **Ottoman Empire** was a gradual process influenced by several key factors:

1. **Military Defeats:** Significant military defeats, such as the **Battle of Lepanto** in 1571 and the **Siege of Vienna** in 1683, weakened the empire's military dominance.
2. **Huge size of the Empire.** The Empire was very big with diverse culture, historical, religious and linguistic making hard to manage.
3. **Economic Challenges:** the Empire's economy remained largely agrarian while Europe industrialized, leading to economic stagnation and dependency on European loans.
4. **Corruption and embezzlement of public fund. Corruption caused significant financial constrain leading to its collapse.**
5. **Discrimination:** Nepotism within the administration hindered effective governance and weakened the central authority.
6. **Social Unrest:** Internal social unrest and uprisings, often due to economic hardships and ethnic tensions, further destabilized the empire.
7. **Failure of Reforms:** Attempts at modernization, such as the **Nizam-ı Cedid** and **Tanzimat** reforms, were often too little, too late, and faced resistance from conservative elements within the empire.
8. **External Pressures:** The Empire faced increasing pressure from European powers and nationalist movements within its territories, leading to territorial losses and weakening control.
9. **Religious strife (tensions).** Tension between Christians and Muslims and the segregation of each other in administration, politics and education weakened the Empire.
10. **Incompetent leadership.** Some leaders like Mohammed and Abdul Majid were generally weak and unable to rule such a big Empire.
11. **The spread of the 1789 French principles of equality, liberty and fraternity.** These inspired nationalities like Greeks, Bulgarians, Bosnians and others to seek independence.

### 8.2 The Syrian Question of 1831–1841

The **Syrian Question (1831–1841)** refers to a decade-long geopolitical crisis involving the **Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and European powers**, centered around control of **Syria and parts of the Levant**. It was a major episode in the broader **Eastern Question**, which concerned the fate of the weakening Ottoman Empire and the strategic interests of European powers in the region.

#### Background

- **Muhammad Ali of Egypt**, the ambitious Ottoman governor, sought to expand his territory and influence.

- In **1831**, he invaded **Syria**, claiming it as compensation for his support in suppressing the Greek revolt.
- This challenged the authority of the **Ottoman Sultan**, leading to a series of military and diplomatic confrontations.

## □ Key Events

### 1. Egyptian Invasion of Syria (1831–1833)

- Muhammad Ali's forces, led by his son **Ibrahim Pasha**, quickly occupied Syria and parts of Anatolia.
- The Ottoman army was defeated, and the Sultan was forced to sign the **Treaty of Küтахya (1833)**, granting Muhammad Ali control over Syria.

### 2. Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833)

- In response to Ottoman weakness, the empire signed a secret treaty with **Russia**, alarming Britain and France.
- This treaty gave Russia influence over the **Dardanelles**, threatening European access to the Eastern Mediterranean.

### 3. Second Ottoman-Egyptian War (1839–1841)

- The Ottomans attempted to reclaim Syria but were again defeated.
- The crisis escalated into a broader European concern over the balance of power in the Middle East.

### 4. Convention of London (1840)

- Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia intervened diplomatically and militarily.
- Muhammad Ali was forced to **withdraw from Syria**, retaining only **Egypt and Sudan**.
- The **Straits Convention (1841)** followed, closing the Turkish Straits to warships, limiting Russian naval access.

## Causes

1. **Egyptian Ambitions under Muhammad Ali:** **Muhammad Ali**, the powerful governor of Egypt, sought to expand his territory and influence. After helping the Ottoman Empire suppress the Greek revolt, he expected to be rewarded with control over **Syria**. When the Sultan refused, Muhammad Ali **invaded Syria in 1831**, claiming it as compensation.
2. **Ottoman Weakness and Decline:** The **Ottoman Empire** was struggling to maintain control over its vast territories. Military defeats, internal revolts, and administrative inefficiency made it vulnerable to external threats. The empire's inability to resist Muhammad Ali's invasion exposed its **fragile authority**.

3. **European Strategic Interests: Britain and France** had competing interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. France supported Muhammad Ali's ambitions, while Britain backed the Ottoman Empire to maintain regional stability. The crisis threatened the **balance of power**, drawing in Austria, Prussia, and Russia.
4. **Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833)**: After the Ottoman defeat, the Sultan signed a **secret treaty with Russia**, granting it influence over the **Dardanelles**. This alarmed Britain and France, who feared **Russian expansion** and dominance in the region.
5. **Collapse of the Congress System**: The **Congress System**, designed to maintain peace in post-Napoleonic Europe, failed to resolve the crisis diplomatically. European powers were divided, and **France's support for Egypt** further complicated negotiations.
6. **Second Ottoman-Egyptian War (1839–1841)**: The Ottomans attempted to reclaim Syria in 1839 but were defeated again. This escalated the crisis, prompting European intervention and leading to the **Convention of London (1840)**, which forced Muhammad Ali to withdraw from Syria

## 📌 Consequences

- **Restoration of Ottoman control over Syria.**
- **Rise of European influence** in Ottoman affairs, especially Britain.
- **Limitation of Russian expansion** through the Straits Convention.
- **Egypt's autonomy** was preserved, but its imperial ambitions were curtailed.
- The crisis exposed the **fragility of the Ottoman Empire** and set the stage for future interventions in the Middle East.

## The impact of The Syrian Question of 1831–1841

The **Syrian Question of 1831–1841** had profound and lasting impacts on the **Ottoman Empire, Egypt**, and the broader **European balance of power**. It was not just a regional dispute—it was a turning point in 19th-century diplomacy, imperial politics, and the fate of the Eastern Mediterranean.

1. **Ottoman Empire's Decline Exposed**: The crisis revealed the **military and administrative weakness** of the Ottoman Empire. After repeated defeats by Muhammad Ali's forces, the Sultan had to rely on **European intervention** to restore control over Syria. This marked a shift from **imperial autonomy to dependency**, accelerating the empire's decline.

2. **Egypt's Imperial Ambitions Curtailed:** Muhammad Ali of Egypt had hoped to build a **hereditary empire** stretching from Egypt to Syria and Anatolia. Although he initially succeeded, the **Convention of London (1840)** forced him to **withdraw from Syria**, limiting his rule to Egypt and Sudan. Egypt retained **autonomy**, but its expansionist vision was blocked by European powers.
3. **European Powers Assert Control Over the Eastern Question:** Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia intervened to **preserve the Ottoman Empire** and prevent unilateral expansion by Egypt or France. The crisis reinforced the **Concert of Europe's role** in managing international disputes. France's support for Egypt isolated it diplomatically, while Britain emerged as the dominant power in the region.
4. **Straits Convention of 1841:** The war led to the **Straits Convention**, which closed the **Turkish Straits** (Bosporus and Dardanelles) to all warships in peacetime. This limited **Russian naval access** to the Mediterranean and helped maintain the **European balance of power**.
5. **Shift in Middle Eastern Geopolitics:** The crisis marked the beginning of **European dominance** in Middle Eastern affairs. It set a precedent for future interventions and laid the groundwork for **colonial influence** in the region.

**Final Reflection:** The Syrian Question was more than a territorial dispute—it was a **geopolitical turning point**. It exposed the fragility of empires, reshaped alliances, and signaled the rise of **European imperialism** in the Middle East.

### The challenges posed by the 1831–1841 Syrian Question on Europe

The **Syrian Question of 1831–1841** posed significant challenges to Europe, particularly in the context of the **Eastern Question**—the diplomatic and strategic dilemma surrounding the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The crisis tested European alliances, exposed rivalries, and forced a recalibration of foreign policy across the continent.

1. **Threat to the Balance of Power:** Muhammad Ali's expansion into Syria threatened to **destabilize the Ottoman Empire**, which was seen as a buffer against Russian and French ambitions. European powers feared that the collapse of Ottoman control would allow **Russia or France** to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. Maintaining the **status quo** became a priority, but it required delicate diplomacy and military intervention.
2. **Anglo-French Rivalry: Britain and France were deeply divided:** **France supported Muhammad Ali**, viewing him as a modernizing force and a counterweight to Ottoman stagnation. While **Britain backed the Ottoman Sultan**, aiming to preserve imperial stability and protect trade routes to India. This rivalry strained the **Concert of Europe**, the post-Napoleonic alliance system designed to maintain peace.

3. **Risk of War among Great Powers:** The crisis nearly escalated into a **European war**, especially when France refused to join the 1840 **Convention of London**, which demanded Muhammad Ali's withdrawal from Syria. Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia acted without France, raising fears of **diplomatic isolation** and military confrontation.
4. **Control of Strategic Waterways:** The **Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833)** between the Ottoman Empire and Russia gave Russia influence over the **Dardanelles**, alarming Britain and Austria. The subsequent **Straits Convention (1841)** closed the Turkish Straits to warships in peacetime, limiting Russian naval access and restoring a fragile equilibrium.
5. **Collapse of the Congress System:** The Syrian Question exposed the **limits of collective diplomacy**. The **Congress System**, which had successfully managed European affairs since 1815, failed to prevent unilateral actions and resolve the crisis peacefully. The breakdown of unity among European powers foreshadowed future diplomatic fragmentation.

**Final Reflection:** The Syrian Question was more than a regional conflict—it was a **stress test for European diplomacy**. It revealed how fragile the balance of power was, how deep rivalries ran, and how vulnerable the Ottoman Empire had become. The crisis forced Europe to rethink its approach to imperial decline, regional stability, and global strategy.

### 8.3 The Crimean War 1854 – 1856

#### Summary of the Armed conflicts in the Crimean War 1854 – 1856

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) was a significant conflict fought between the Russian Empire and an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, the United Kingdom, and Sardinia-Piedmont. Here are some key points:

1. **Causes:** The war was sparked by religious tensions over the rights of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Palestine. Russia demanded protection rights for Orthodox Christians, while France supported Roman Catholics. The broader geopolitical context included the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the expansionist ambitions of Russia.
2. **Major Battles:** Notable battles included the **Battle of Alma**, the **Battle of Balaclava** (famous for the **Charge of the Light Brigade**), and the **Siege of Sevastopol**.
3. **Outcome:** The war ended with the **Treaty of Paris** in 1856, which required Russia to surrender southern Bessarabia and recognize the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The war also led to significant reforms in military medicine and nursing, largely due to the efforts of figures like **Florence Nightingale**.
4. **Casualties:** The war resulted in approximately **500,000 casualties**, with a significant number of deaths caused by disease rather than combat.

## Causes of Crimean war 1854 – 1856

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) was caused by a combination of religious, geopolitical, and strategic factors:

### Genuine Causes of Crimean war 1854 – 1856

Causes due to the weakness of the Turkish Empire

- (i) **Political Instability:** The empire was plagued by ineffective governance and administrative inefficiency, which weakened its ability to manage its vast territories.
- (ii) **Military Decline:** The Ottoman military was outdated and lacked the strength to defend against external threats, making the empire vulnerable to Russian expansion.
- (iii) **Economic Challenges:** Financial instability and poor economic management further eroded the empire's capacity to sustain itself.
- (iv) **Religious Tensions:** Disputes between Orthodox Christians and Catholics within the empire created internal divisions and provided Russia with a pretext to intervene.
- (v) **Geopolitical Vulnerability:** The strategic importance of the Black Sea and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits made the empire a target for European powers seeking control over these critical regions

Apart from the weakness of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire, several other factors contributed to the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854–1856):

- (vi) **Religious Disputes:** Tensions arose over the rights of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Palestine. Russia claimed to protect Orthodox Christians, while France supported Roman Catholics, leading to a clash of interests.
- (vii) **Russian Expansionism:** Russia's desire to expand its influence in the Balkans and gain control of the Black Sea straits alarmed other European powers, especially Britain and France.
- (viii) **Balance of Power:** Britain and France were determined to prevent Russia from becoming too powerful, as they feared it would disrupt the balance of power in Europe.
- (ix) **Napoleon III's Ambitions:** The French Emperor sought to assert France's dominance on the global stage and saw the conflict as an opportunity to enhance his country's prestige.
- (x) **Geopolitical Rivalries:** The broader struggle for influence in the declining Ottoman territories, known as the "Eastern Question," created tensions among European powers.

### Trivial causes of the Crimean war 1854 – 1856

1. The desire by Napoleon III to revenge the 1812 Moscow campaign in which his Uncle Napoleon I was defeated.
2. The scramble for the holy places of Jerusalem and Bethlehem by Russia and France was so trivial on the side of France since she had failed to play her role of guardianship. On the other hand, Russia had a point to defend since she had used a

lot of resources to repair the holy places and had a bigger number of pilgrims than France.

3. The exaggeration made by men on the spot who mainly included Prince Menshikoff (Russian ambassador in turkey) and Stratford De-Radcliff (The British Ambassador to Constantinople-Turkey)
4. The ambition of Napoleon III to fight Nicholas I for the sake of title and recognition was trivial and uncalled for.
5. The shifting of the war from Walachia and Moldavia to the Crimean Island within the Russian peninsular was also trivial.
6. Russia's false confidence to win any war claiming that she had not experienced any revolution like other European powers like France and Austria was trivial cause for the Crimean war.

### Positive effects of Crimean War.

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) had several positive effects:

1. **Advancements in Medicine:** The war led to significant improvements in battlefield medicine and nursing practices, largely due to the efforts of **Florence Nightingale** and other medical professionals. Their work laid the foundation for modern nursing and medical care.
2. **Military Reforms:** The war exposed flaws in military logistics and leadership, prompting reforms in military organization and strategy.
3. **Napoleon III's popularity and credibility increased in Europe.** He managed to convince European diplomats to organize an international conference in France at Paris in 1856.
4. **Public Awareness:** The extensive coverage of the war in newspapers, particularly by correspondents like **William Howard Russell**, raised public awareness about the realities of war and the need for humanitarian reforms.
5. **Balance of Power:** The **Treaty of Paris** (1856) helped maintain the balance of power in Europe by limiting Russian expansion and recognizing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.
6. **Social Change:** The war catalyzed social changes, including shifts in public attitudes and national identity, as well as the emergence of new roles within society.
7. Free navigation on big waters like Black Sea, Mediterranean seas were granted
8. Nicholas I of Russia was forced to resort to fundamental reforms mainly in agriculture and industrial sectors.
9. The sultan of turkey was forced to promise fair treatment of the Orthodox Christians in Balkans.
10. Crimean was contributed to unification of Germany and Italy. Cavour used the opportunity of the Austrian absence and forwarded the Italian unification cause.

### Effects that indicate the Crimean war was wasteful

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) is often considered wasteful due to several negative effects:

1. **High Casualties:** The war resulted in approximately **500,000 casualties**, with a significant number of deaths caused by disease rather than combat.
2. **Economic Cost:** The conflict placed a heavy financial burden on the participating nations, draining resources that could have been used for other purposes.
3. **Military Mismanagement:** The war exposed significant issues in military logistics and leadership, including poor planning and coordination.
4. **Human Suffering:** The deplorable conditions faced by soldiers, particularly in terms of medical care, led to widespread suffering and highlighted the need for reforms in battlefield medicine.
5. **Limited Strategic Gain:** Despite the high cost, the war did not result in substantial territorial or strategic gains for the victors, making the human and economic costs seem disproportionate to the outcomes.
6. **Continued persecution Christian in Ottoman's Empire despite the 1856 Paris Treaty.**
7. **Grant freedom to Moldavia, Walachia and Serbia promoted further decline of Ottoman's Empire.**

### The significance of the 1856 Paris Peace Treaty that concluded the Crimean War.

The **Treaty of Paris (1856)**, signed on **March 30, 1856**, was a landmark diplomatic agreement that formally ended the **Crimean War (1853–1856)**, a conflict between **Russia** and an alliance of **Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia-Piedmont**. Its significance lies not only in ending hostilities but in reshaping the **European balance of power**, redefining **Ottoman sovereignty**, and curbing **Russian expansionism**.

### Key Significance of the 1856 Paris Peace Treaty

1. **Preservation of the Ottoman Empire:** The treaty guaranteed the **independence and territorial integrity** of the Ottoman Empire. It marked the **formal inclusion of the Ottomans into the Concert of Europe**, recognizing them as a legitimate player in European diplomacy.
2. **Demilitarization of the Black Sea:** The Black Sea was declared **neutral territory**, closed to all warships and fortifications. This was a major blow to Russia, which lost its **naval dominance** in the region and its ability to project power southward.
3. **Territorial Adjustments:** Russia was forced to **cede southern Bessarabia** (at the mouth of the Danube) to **Moldavia**, weakening its strategic position. Moldavia and Wallachia were reorganized as **autonomous principalities under Ottoman suzerainty**, laying the groundwork for the future creation of **Romania**.
4. **Limitation of Russian Influence:** Russia lost its **exclusive right to protect Orthodox Christians** in the Ottoman Empire, a key pretext for its earlier intervention. This curtailed Russia's **religious and political leverage** in the Balkans.
5. **Strengthening of Western European Powers:** Britain and France emerged as **dominant forces** in shaping post-war diplomacy. Sardinia-Piedmont's participation elevated its international status, helping pave the way for **Italian unification**.
6. **Diplomatic Precedent:** The treaty reinforced the principle of **collective diplomacy** through multilateral negotiations. It was seen as a success of the **Tanzimat reforms** in the Ottoman Empire, which aimed to modernize and align with European norms.

**Final Reflection:** The Treaty of Paris (1856) was more than a peace agreement—it was a **strategic recalibration** of European power dynamics. It temporarily stabilized the Eastern Question, weakened Russian ambitions, and elevated the Ottoman Empire’s diplomatic standing. However, many of its provisions—especially the demilitarization of the Black Sea—were later reversed, showing the **fragility of peace built on uneasy alliances**.

## 8.4 The Berlin Congress of 1878

### Summary of the Berlin congress 1878

The **Congress of Berlin** (June 13 – July 13, 1878) was a diplomatic meeting aimed at reorganizing the states in the Balkan Peninsula following the **Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878**. Here are some key points:

1. **Participants:** The congress included representatives from the **major European powers** (Russia, Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany), the **Ottoman Empire**, and the **Balkan states** (Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro).
2. **Leadership:** The congress was led by **German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck**, who sought to stabilize the Balkans and balance the interests of the major powers.
3. **Treaty of Berlin:** The congress resulted in the **Treaty of Berlin**, which replaced the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano. The treaty revised the borders and territories in the Balkans, granting independence or autonomy to several states.
4. **Key Outcomes:** Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro were recognized as independent states, while Bulgaria was made a semi-independent principality. The Ottoman Empire retained control over Macedonia but was required to implement reforms.
5. **Impact:** The congress aimed to reduce the role of the Ottoman Empire in the region and prevent Russian dominance, but it also left many issues unresolved, leading to future conflicts in the Balkans.

### Aims of the Berlin congress of 1878

The **Congress of Berlin** (1878) had several key aims:

1. **Stabilize the Balkans:** The primary goal was to stabilize the Balkan region following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.
2. **Balance of Power:** To maintain the balance of power in Europe by preventing any single nation from gaining too much influence in the region.
3. **Reduce Ottoman Influence:** To reduce the role of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and address the "Eastern Question" regarding the decline of Ottoman power.
4. **Address Russian Expansion:** To limit Russian expansion and influence in the Balkans, ensuring that no single power dominated the region.
5. **Protect Christian Minorities:** To address the rights and protection of Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire.
6. To settle territorial disputes among European powers
7. To settle economical disputes among European powers like Russia and Britain.
8. Bismarck’s desire to promote German supremacy.

### Positive effects of the Berlin congress of 1878

1. **Stabilization of the Balkans:** The congress aimed to stabilize the Balkan region by reorganizing its territories and reducing tensions among the various ethnic groups.
2. **Recognition of Independence:** It granted independence or autonomy to several Balkan states, including Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro, which helped to establish their national identities.
3. **Reduction of Russian Expansion:** The treaty limited Russian territorial gains, preventing it from dominating the region and maintaining a balance of power in Europe.
4. **Ottoman Reforms:** The congress required the Ottoman Empire to implement reforms, which aimed to modernize the empire and improve the conditions for its subjects.
5. **Diplomatic Cooperation:** The congress fostered diplomatic cooperation among the major European powers, which helped to maintain peace and stability in the region for a time.
6. France was given Tunisia in Northern Africa to compensate for her for losing Alsace and Lorraine during 1870-1871 Franco-Russian war.
7. Berlin Congress forced the Turkish Sultan to promise treatment of his Christian subjects
8. Bismarck was seen as a peace maker when Britain and Russia wanted to fight, and German status was elevated by the Berlin congress in Europe.

### Negative effects of the Berlin congress of 1878

1. **Humiliation of Russia:** The treaty significantly reduced the territorial gains Russia had made under the Treaty of San Stefano, leading to a sense of humiliation and resentment.
2. **Berlin congress humiliated Italy by losing her territory of Tunisia in North Africa.**
3. **Unresolved Balkan Aspirations:** The congress failed to adequately address the aspirations of the Balkan peoples, laying the groundwork for future conflicts and instability in the region.
4. **Strained Relations:** The congress created a split in relations between Germany and Russia, which eventually contributed to the tensions leading up to World War I.
5. **Ottoman Vulnerability:** While the treaty aimed to maintain the Ottoman Empire, it left the empire weakened and vulnerable to future internal and external pressures.
6. **Austrian Expansion:** The treaty allowed Austria-Hungary to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, increasing its influence in the Balkans and contributing to regional tensions.

### 8.5 The Balkan Crisis of 1908–1913

The **Balkan Crisis of 1908–1913** refers to a series of escalating political and military tensions in Southeast Europe that destabilized the region and played a major role in the lead-up to **World War I**. It includes two major episodes: the **Bosnian Crisis (1908–1909)** and the **Balkan Wars (1912–1913)**. These events exposed the fragility of the Ottoman Empire, intensified nationalist rivalries, and strained relations among the Great Powers of Europe.

## 1. Bosnian Crisis (1908–1909)

### What Happened:

- In **October 1908, Austria-Hungary unilaterally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina**, territories it had administered since 1878 but which were still officially under Ottoman sovereignty.
- This move outraged **Serbia**, which had ethnic and territorial claims to Bosnia, and **Russia**, which saw itself as the protector of Slavic nations.

### Key Impacts:

- Serbia demanded the return of Bosnia, but Austria-Hungary refused.
- Russia, weakened after the Russo-Japanese War, backed down, leading to a **diplomatic victory for Austria-Hungary**.
- The crisis **deepened Austro-Serbian hostility**, setting the stage for future conflict.

## □ 2. First Balkan War (1912–1913)

### What Happened:

- The **Balkan League**—comprising **Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Montenegro**—launched a coordinated attack on the **Ottoman Empire** to seize its remaining European territories.
- The war was swift and successful; the Ottomans lost almost all their Balkan holdings.

### Key Impacts:

- The **Treaty of London (1913)** ended the war, redrawing borders and significantly shrinking Ottoman influence in Europe.
- Serbia emerged stronger, alarming Austria-Hungary.
- Bulgaria felt shortchanged, sowing seeds for the next conflict.

## 3. Second Balkan War (June–August 1913)

### What Happened:

- Bulgaria, dissatisfied with its share of the spoils, attacked its former allies **Serbia and Greece**.
- Romania and the Ottoman Empire joined the fight against Bulgaria.

### Key Impacts:

- Bulgaria was defeated and lost territory in the **Treaty of Bucharest (1913)**.
- Serbia gained more land, further antagonizing Austria-Hungary.
- The war **fractured the Balkan League**, weakening regional unity.

## Broader Significance

- The Balkan Crisis **destabilized Southeast Europe**, creating a volatile environment ripe for conflict.
- It **intensified nationalist tensions**, especially between **Serbia and Austria-Hungary**.
- The crisis **exposed the weakness of the Ottoman Empire** and the failure of European diplomacy to contain regional ambitions.
- It directly contributed to the **July Crisis of 1914**, following the assassination of **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** in Sarajevo by a Bosnian Serb nationalist.

**Final Reflection:** The Balkan Crisis of 1908–1913 was a **powder keg of nationalism, imperial rivalry, and diplomatic failure**. It reshaped borders, emboldened aggressive states, and eroded trust among the Great Powers—making World War I not just possible, but inevitable.

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Dr. Bbosa Science