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Summary

CHAPTERS IN BRIEF

The Colonies Become New Nations, 1945–Present

CHAPTER OVERVIEW *India and its neighbors won independence from Great Britain, but their histories have been spoiled by conflict. Many new nations arose in Southeast Asia and in Africa after World War II as colonial empires collapsed. In the late 1940s, Jewish people were given their own country in the Middle East, where fighting between Jews and Arabs has erupted many times.*

1 The Indian Subcontinent Achieves Freedom

KEY IDEA *A number of new nations emerged from the British colony of India.*

Many Asians served in the armies of the colonial powers during World War II. The fight for freedom from Nazi tyranny deepened their desire for independence from colonial control. Also, the Japanese victories over European powers made Asian nationalists realize that the colonial rulers could be defeated. At the same time, people in Europe began to wonder if it was right for one nation to have another as a colony.

After World War II, Britain was prepared to grant independence to India—home to a large Hindu and smaller Muslim population. The British Parliament passed a law granting independence in July 1947. It created the separate Hindu and Muslim nations of India and Pakistan. The law gave people only one month to decide which country they wanted to live in and to move there. As millions of people began to move, violence broke out. Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs—another religious group—killed each other. Leader Mohandas Gandhi pleaded to end all violence. A Hindu extremist assassinated him for protecting Muslims.

Jawaharlal Nehru became the first prime minister of India, and he led the country for 17 years. His new nation and Pakistan, however, quickly fell to war over the state of Kashmir. It bordered both countries, with a Hindu ruler and large Muslim population. Conflict over this state continues today.

Nehru tried to reform Indian society. He hoped to improve the status of the lower castes and of women. Shortly after he died in 1964, his daughter, Indira Gandhi, became prime minister. She took steps to increase food production. In 1984, she ordered an attack on Sikh rebels. A few months later, she was killed by Sikhs. She was followed by her son Rajiv Gandhi, but he, too, was assassinated

as a political protest. Separatist movements continue to disrupt Indian society.

Pakistan, too, has been marked by violence. When first formed, the nation had east and west parts that were separated by India. In a bloody fight in 1971, the eastern part won independence as the new nation of Bangladesh. Power struggles have caused turmoil in the western part since then.

Ceylon, an island on the southeastern coast of India, won its independence in 1947 as well. In 1972 it was renamed Sri Lanka. Since 1983, a Hindu minority on the island—the Tamils—have led a bloody fight to form a separate nation.

2 Southeast Asian Nations Gain Independence

KEY IDEA *The European colonies in Southeast Asia became independent countries in the postwar period.*

In 1946, the United States gave the Philippines independence. From 1966 to 1986, Ferdinand Marcos led the country. He was elected president but after a few years ruled as a dictator. He then harshly put down dissent and stole millions of dollars from the country. When he lost an election in 1986, he refused to leave office. A large public outcry forced him to step down.

Burma was the first British colony in Southeast Asia to become independent. It changed its name to Myanmar in 1989. Since 1962, generals have ruled the country, which has often been torn by conflict.

After World War II, the British moved back into the Malay peninsula. They tried to form a country, but ethnic conflict between Malays and Chinese who lived in the area doomed the effort. In 1957, independence was given to Malaya, Singapore, and parts of two distant islands. Some years later, Singapore declared independence as a city-state.

After World War II, Indonesia became independent. The nation is spread out. It has 13,600

islands and includes people from 300 different groups speaking 250 different languages. Bringing these different people into one unified country has been difficult. In 1967, a general named Suharto took control. Many criticized him for taking over the island of East Timor and for corruption in his government. He resigned in 1998 under intense public pressure.

3 New Nations in Africa

KEY IDEA *After World War II, African leaders threw off colonial rule and created independent countries.*

During World War II, Africans fought as soldiers along with Europeans. As a result, Africans were unwilling to suffer further domination by colonial European powers after the war.

Soon the British began letting Africans take a greater part in the colonial government of its Gold Coast colony. Kwame Nkrumah headed a movement to push for Britain to act more quickly. The effort succeeded, and in 1957 the colony became independent—the first former colony in sub-Saharan Africa. The new nation took the name Ghana.

Nkrumah had ambitious plans for building the economy of Ghana. These plans were very expensive, though, and opposition grew. Some people in Ghana criticized him, too, for the time he spent trying to form a group of African leaders. Though the Organization of African Unity was formed in 1963, Nkrumah remained in trouble at home. Finally, the army seized power in 1966 and ruled for many years.

The strong leadership of nationalist Jomo Kenyatta helped Kenya achieve independence in 1963. So, too, did an uprising of Africans called Mau Mau. This protest aimed at frightening the British settlers to leave. Kenyatta became president of the new nation. He tried to unite the many different peoples in his country. His successor, Daniel Arap Moi, had little success in governing the country. He stepped down in 2002, and a new party gained power through free elections.

Belgium granted independence to the Congo in 1960. In 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko took control. He renamed the country Zaire and ruled until 1997. Though Zaire had rich mineral resources, Mobutu's harsh and corrupt rule made it a poor country. He was overthrown in a coup in 1997, when the country's name was changed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A bloody conflict for independence took place in Algeria. About 1 million French settlers lived there. They were unwilling to give up their control of the colonial government. Violence broke out in 1945 and continued for many years. In 1962, the French finally granted independence to Algeria. From 1965 until 1988, Algerians tried to modernize their country and give it an industrial economy. These efforts failed, and an Islamic party won elections in 1991. However, the government rejected the vote. Today, a deadly civil war between Islamic militants and the government rages on.

The colonies of Portugal were the last to gain their independence. In the 1970s, Portuguese troops left Angola—without putting any group in charge. Rebel groups fought a long civil war. The war stopped in 1989, but soon started again. A peace agreement in 2002 finally ended the conflict.

4 Conflicts in the Middle East

KEY IDEA *Postwar division of Palestine made the Middle East a hotbed of nationalist movements.*

The movement to settle Jews in Palestine began in the late 1800s. These Jews believed that Palestine belonged to them because it was their home 5,000 years ago. Muslims had lived there for 1,300 years, however.

At the end of World War II, the United Nations divided Palestine in two. It left part for the Palestinian people and set aside part for Jews. Islamic countries voted against the plan, and the Palestinians opposed it. Many countries, seeing the suffering Jews had experienced in World War II, backed the idea of a separate Jewish state. On May 14, 1948, Jews declared the existence of the Jewish nation of Israel.

The next day, six Islamic neighbors invaded Israel. With strong support from the United States, Israel won the war in a few months. It also won three later wars and seized much Palestinian land.

In 1977, Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat signed a peace agreement with Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin. Egypt thus became the first Islamic country to recognize Israel. This enraged many Arabs, and Sadat was assassinated in 1981. His successor, though, kept peace with Israel.

Despite many efforts, though, Israel and the Palestinian people have not made peace. Palestinians living in Israel dislike Israeli rule. They want a nation of their own. The Palestinian Liberation

Organization (PLO), led by Yasir Arafat, became a leading group in the struggle for self-rule. During the 1970s and 1980s, the military arm of the PLO made many attacks on Israel. That nation responded by invading Lebanon to attack bases of the PLO. In the late 1980s, many Palestinian people in Israel began a revolt called the intifada, or “uprising.” It lasted for years.

In the early 1990s, the two sides made some progress toward peace. Israel agreed to give Palestinians control of an area called the Gaza Strip and of the town of Jericho. The Israeli leader who signed this agreement, Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated by a Jewish extremist who opposed giving in to Palestinians. In 2003, the two sides renewed their peace efforts with a commitment to a U.S. sponsored plan known as the “road map.”

3 Central Asia Struggles

KEY IDEA *The former lands of the Soviet Union in Central Asia struggled to become thriving nations.*

In 1991 the Soviet Union broke apart. As a result, the republics that it had conquered became fifteen independent states. These states include nine countries in Central Asia. Geographers often group these nations into two geographic areas. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia make up the Transcaucasian Republics. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan comprise the Central Asian Republics.

Since independence, the countries of Central Asia have faced a number of challenges. Many of these countries were economically dependent on the Soviet Union. Thus, they have had a hard time standing on their own. In addition, hostility has arisen among some of the different ethnic groups that inhabit the area. This in turn has led to the outbreak of several regional wars.

Located just below the countries that comprise Central Asia is Afghanistan. This nation endured a long history of struggle for independence. However, it is the nation’s more recent battles that have brought it much international attention.

During the 1970s, a Communist group supported by the Soviet Union sought to take control of Afghanistan. A rebel group known as the mujahideen fought the communists. The Soviets soon invaded and attempted to make Afghanistan part of their empire. Despite their superior military might,

Soviet forces could not defeat the determined Afghan guerrilla fighters. After nearly 10 years of bloody fighting, the Soviet Union withdrew.

After the Soviets left, various Afghan rebel troops fought each other for control of the country. By 1998, an Islamic group known as the Taliban controlled most of Afghanistan. The Taliban practiced an extreme version of the Islamic religion—one that many other Muslims opposed. Taliban leaders forbade women to attend school or hold jobs. They also prohibited citizens from watching television and movies or listening to modern music. Punishment for disobeying their rules included beatings and even execution.

What’s more, the Taliban allowed terrorist groups to train in Afghanistan. One such group was al-Qaeda, whose leader was Osama bin Laden. Many believe this group to be responsible for the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001.

In the wake of those attacks, the U.S. government demanded that the Taliban turn over bin Laden. The Taliban refused. Beginning in October 2001, the United States took military action against Afghanistan. By December, the United States had driven the Taliban from power. In the months that followed, Afghans created a new government and began working to rebuild their country after decades of war.

Review

Analyzing Issues

1. What difficulties face anyone trying to make a unified country out of Indonesia?
2. Which change to self-rule do you think went the smoothest in Africa? Why?
3. **Determining Main Ideas** What type of struggle dominates the history of independence in Southeast Asia?
4. **Analyzing Causes and Recognizing Effects** Why were Sadat and Rabin assassinated?