

The Thirty Years' War 1618-1648



- War of apocalyptic dimensions – lasting trauma
- Lasted a generation – devastating & depopulating
- Habsburg domination? Opposed from much of the rest of Europe
- International: “big war” “great war” – 200 states (large/small)
- Result: exhaustion – produced a major change in diplomatic/political landscape – national sovereignty

The Thirty Years War is complex. But the conflict was driven by two factors: 1 -Fear of Habsburg universalist aims and a bitter conflict between militant Catholicism and militant Calvinism...



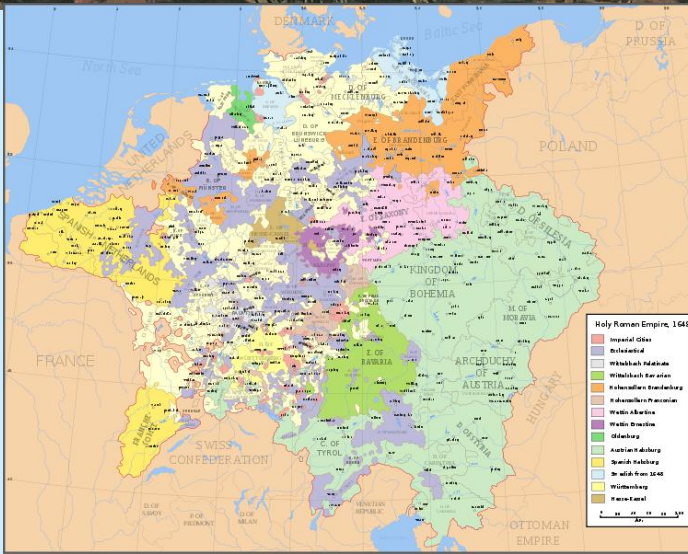
- Remember Charles V's vast empire & troubles under Philip II
- In the shadows of the **Peace of Augsburg** (1555)
- Also a continuation of the Revolt of the Netherlands
- Catholic/Protestant
- No account for Calvinism...
- (e.g., Calvinist ruler of the Palatinate, Frederick IV)

2 Armed Camps by 1609:

Free (Lutheran) City of Donauworth-revolt (1606)

Protestant Union (1608) (Frederick IV)
vs.

Catholic League (1609) (Maximilian of Bavaria)



A Catholic-Protestant War, BUT...



...ALSO, it was a series of wars between the Habsburg empire and the various German states and their anti-Habsburg allies.

Quest for Habsburg Imperial/Universalist Control
(Spain in HRE)

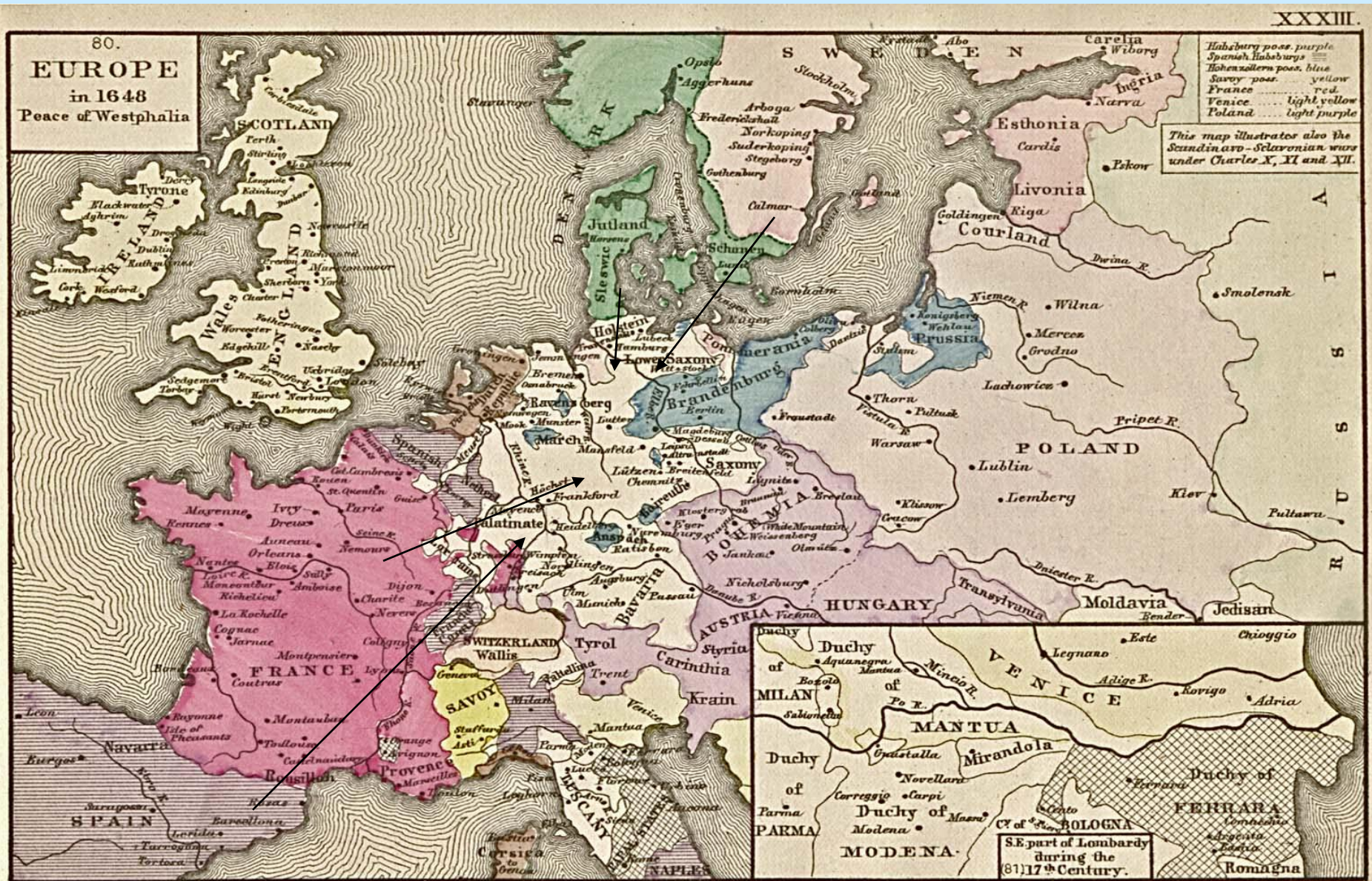
vs.

Regional Control (German states seeking autonomy)

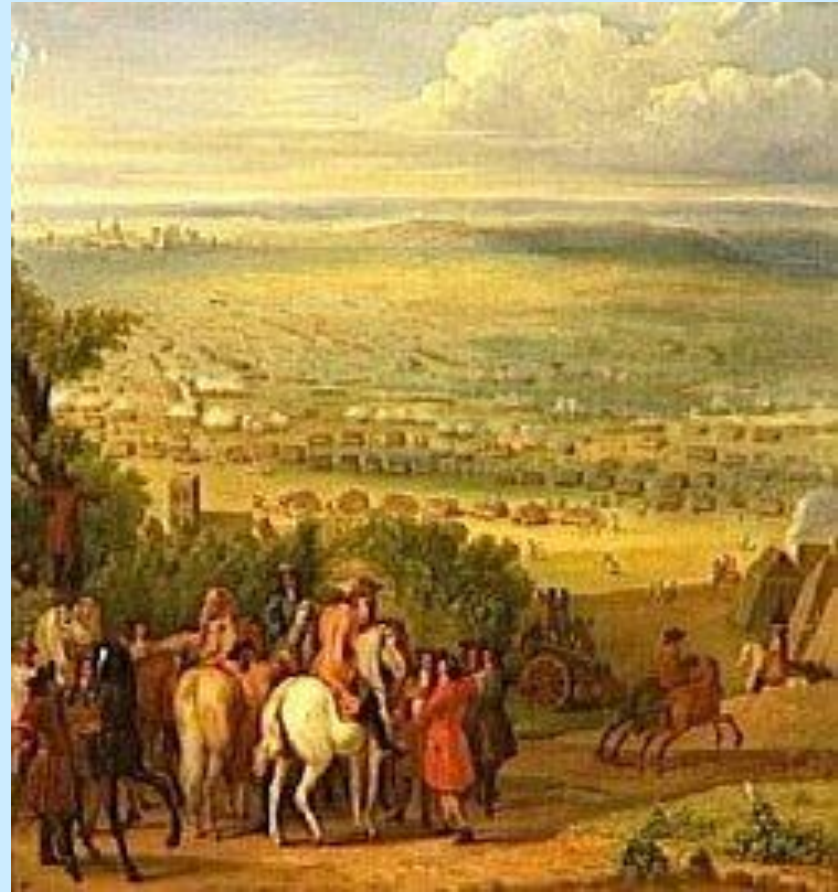
International Involvement
France, Denmark & Sweden and others seeking territorial gains and a stop to the spread of Habsburg influence



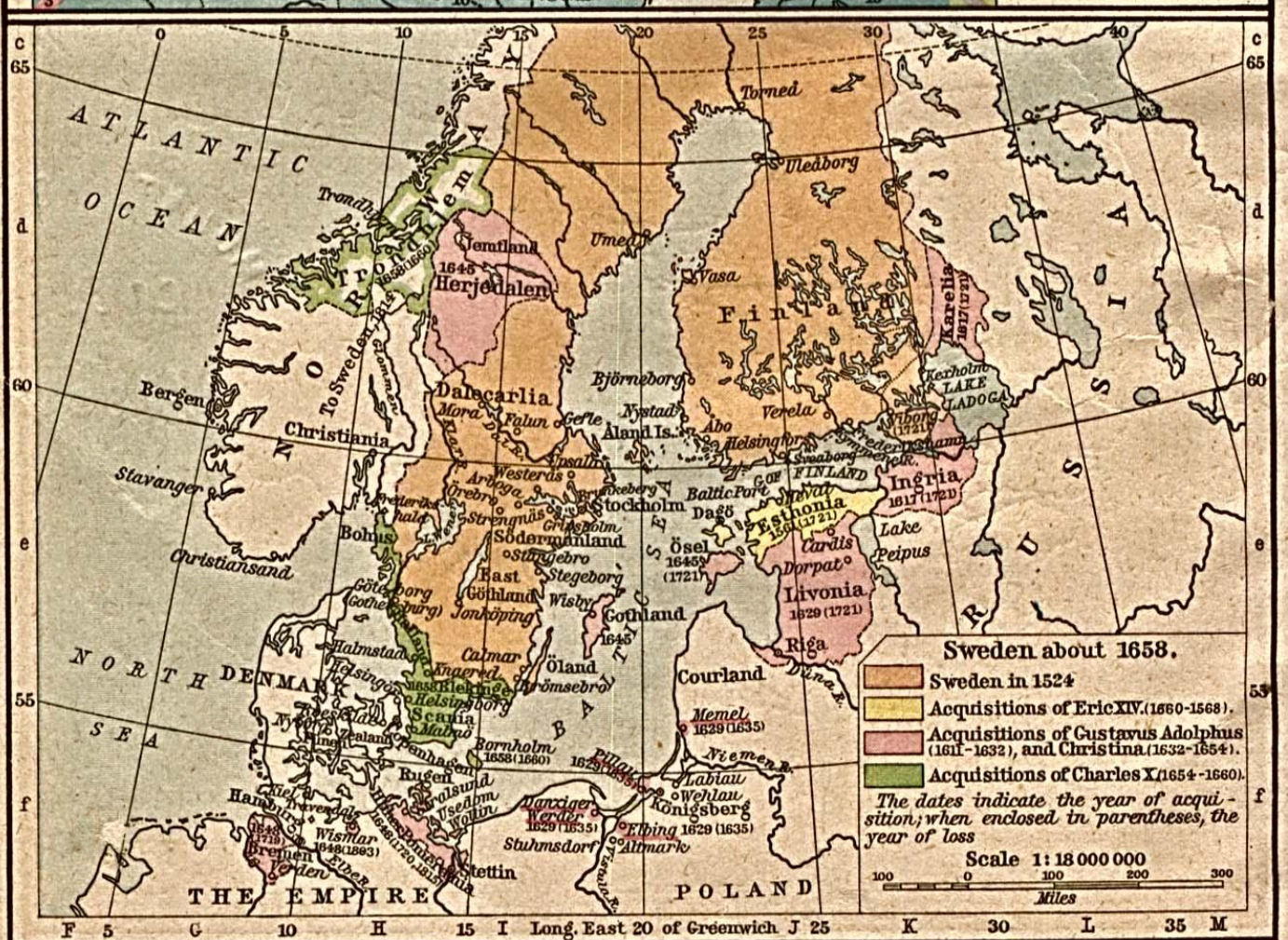
Various countries from outside the region interfered or actively fought in the war. Millions died in this war.



France supported the Protestant states in order to keep Habsburg-dominated Germany weak and disunited.



Sweden and Denmark fought to support the Protestant cause and to gain territory in Europe.

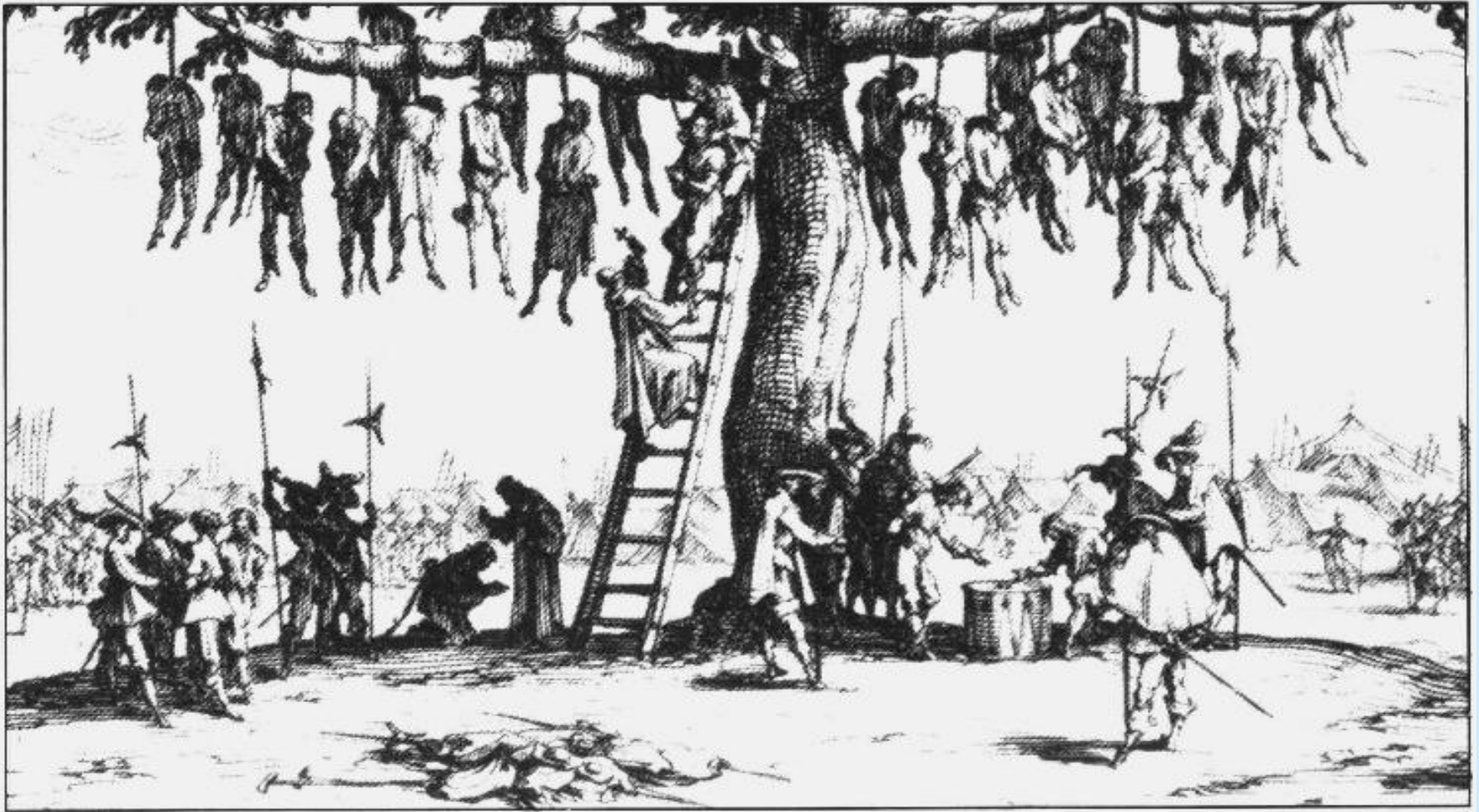


Mercenaries from all over Europe joined the different stages of the War.

- Marauding nature of unpaid mercenaries/conscripts



The result was wide spread devastation and destruction—the most destructive war prior to the Napoleonic Wars.



A priest blesses hanging victims in this famous etching from the Thirty Years War. (By Jacques Callot, 1592–1635. Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

The outbreak of violence occurs on Bohemia....

- **Remember the execution of Jan Hus in 1415?**
 - **Bohemia was a hotbed of tension between Protestants and Catholics.**
- **By 1600, Protestants outnumbered Catholics in Bohemia, BUT – Protestants fragmented**
- **Catholics forbade Protestants to build churches in towns where Protestant churches did not already exist**
- **King Matthias (King of Bohemia & HRE) prepares to secure his successor.**
- **Decides on Ferdinand II (Catholic) to be the new King of Bohemia and Protestants feared for the worst – Bohemian nobles accept, but...**

The war begins with the Defenestration of Prague, a very famous story! (1618)





Meeting was set in 1618 between Catholic and Protestant officials.

Didn't go well...

After a mock trial/conviction, the two Catholic emissaries and a secretary were thrown out the window, when the Bohemian Protestants questioned their motives.

They land in a manure pile



Or...did angels and the Virgin Mary rescue them????

Defenestration of Prague



Which side is God on? – Protestant/Catholic Propaganda

Defenster: To throw out window

“das fenster” = window (Ger.)

- First Defenestration occurred when supporters of martyred Jan Huss threw out members of the council onto barbed pikes below. Several were killed. (1417)

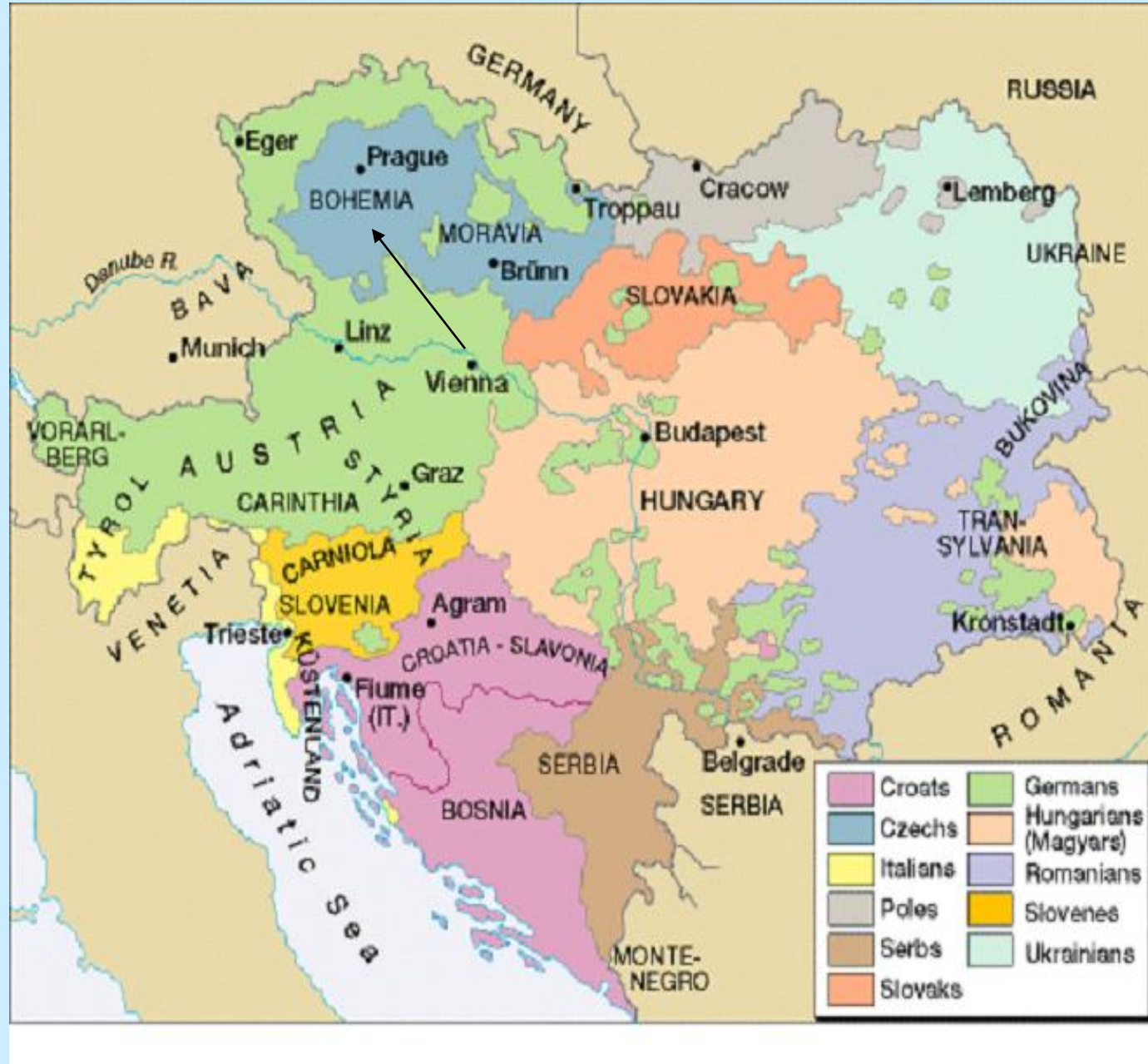


Phase 1: Bohemian Phase (1618-1625)

Ferdinand
named HRE:
too Catholic –

Calvinist
Nobles rebel
and depose
Ferdinand.

Ferdinand,
ignores and
moves on
Bohemia w/
help of Spain to
restore order.



Bohemia looks for help from the Protestant Elector Frederick V to defend their cause. Frederick takes up the fight against Emperor, Ferdinand.





Frederick leaves his home in the Palatinate (Rhineland) to help defend Bohemia!



Bavaria
(Maximilian) w/
Ferdinand
vs.
Frederick in
Bohemia

Battle of White
Mountain
(Count Tilly)
(1620)

*Catholic Victory



- After the defeat of Bohemia and Frederick V, Ferdinand:
 - declares Bohemia a Habsburg possession
 - confiscates land of Protestant nobility
 - executes rebels
 - proclaims Catholicism the sole religion of the realm and
 - re-enforces his empire with Spanish troops.
- Spaniards flood into the Catholic German States (W. Palatinate) & renew war with the Netherlands → Jesuit conversion of protestants
- International fear of Habsburgs
- Frederick V – deposed – goes on sympathy tour (seeking allies)





Stage 2: The Danish Phase (1625-1629)

- w/ Ferdinand as HRE & Catholic Spain/Jesuit Order in German states:
- Fear of Habsburg domination and opportunity to gain territory in N. German states prompts Lutheran King of Denmark, Christian IV to invade, in 1625.
- Has limited aid from the Protestant leaders of England and Holland.
(anti-Habsburg/anti-Catholic)

(It has now been seven years since the war began.)



King Ferdinand

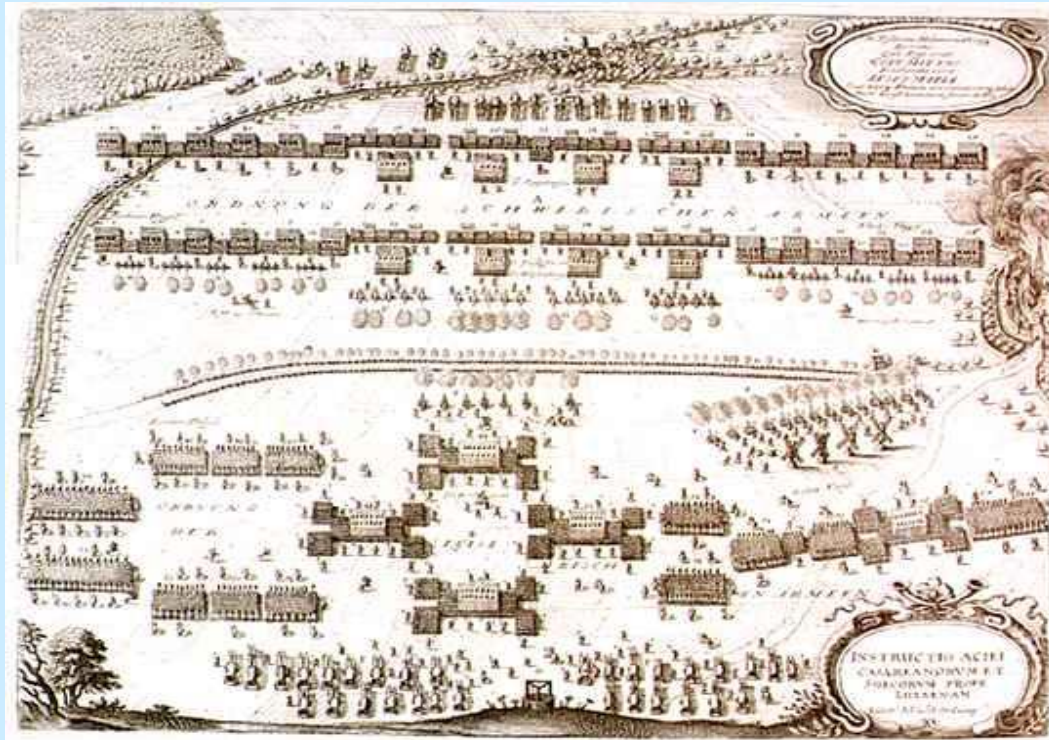


Albrecht von
Wallenstein appointed

- Convert to
Catholicism
- Military entrepreneur
- Charismatic – German
Unification...what if?



Wallenstein, a former Protestant, recruits and develops a professional army of brutal mercenaries—answerable to him, only. The Danish are defeated in 1626, 1627 and again in 1629.



- Wallenstein occupies N. Germany (Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen)
- Danes are defeated
- **Edict of Restitution (1629)** is declared.
 - Prohibition of Calvinism
 - Restoration of land confiscated from Church (75 years...)
- Imperial Free Cities, independent princes fear immense power by Habsburgs and Wallenstein
 - Leads to his dismissal



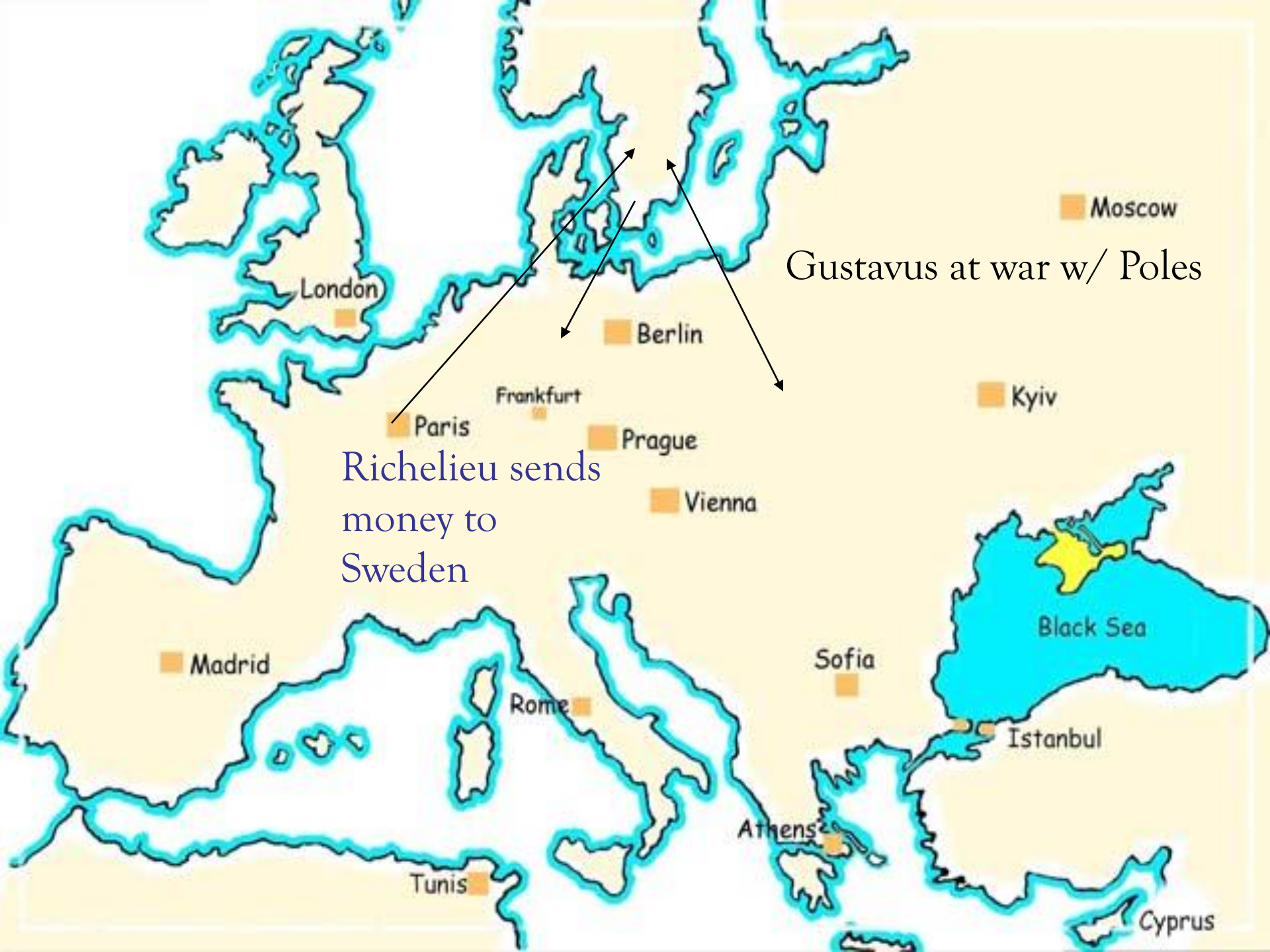
Phase 3: The Swedish Phase (1630-1635)

- After the Danish Defeat, the Catholics swarm over protestant Germany.
- The Augsburg Peace (1555) is effectively repealed
- HRE presence in Baltic threatens Sweden (France also alarmed)

Enter Gustavus Adolphus. . .

- Gustavus Adolphus was king of Sweden
- He was busy fighting Poland
- Cardinal Richelieu lures Adolphus into taking up the Protestant cause.





Richelieu sends money to Sweden

Gustavus at war w/ Poles

NOTE: Richelieu of Catholic France aids Protestants against the Catholic Holy Roman Empire

3 goals:

- Throw of Habsburg encirclement
- Improve France's position
- Expand France into C. Europe
- tried to keep France involved only indirectly



Who was Gustavus Adolphus?

- “Lion of the North”
 - Conquered Finland/Livonia
 - Wanted N. German lands
- Noted military genius BUT...trip or prayer?
- He organized the most modern army of its time



- Gustavus Adolphus leaves his fighting in Poland
- Invades, advances into S. Germany
- Wallenstein recalled (1632)...



Under his leadership, Sweden wins victories.



Adolphus is killed at the battle of Lützen in 1632

Gustavus
Adolphus
remains a
great
historical
figure and
a Swedish
National
Hero.



After the Gustavus' death, this phase weakens

- Army did not fall apart.
- Wallenstein himself refuses to fight the Swedes because he is furious about the Spanish troops in Germany.
- He actually enters into secret talks with the Protestants.
- Wallenstein is a loose cannon, and his army becomes a danger to the Habsburgs.
 - Dictatorship in German lands?

Wallenstein is assassinated on the orders of Emperor Ferdinand by one of his own men in 1634.



- Imperial army defeats the Swedes at Nördlingen in 1634 and drive them out of Bavaria – leaves it Catholic
- **Annulment of the Edict of Restitution** – in an attempt at moderation – appeasement of German princes
- Tensions high with the entry of Cardinal Richelieu and France on the side of the Swedes – fronts in Spain & German states



**Nördlingen
(1634)**

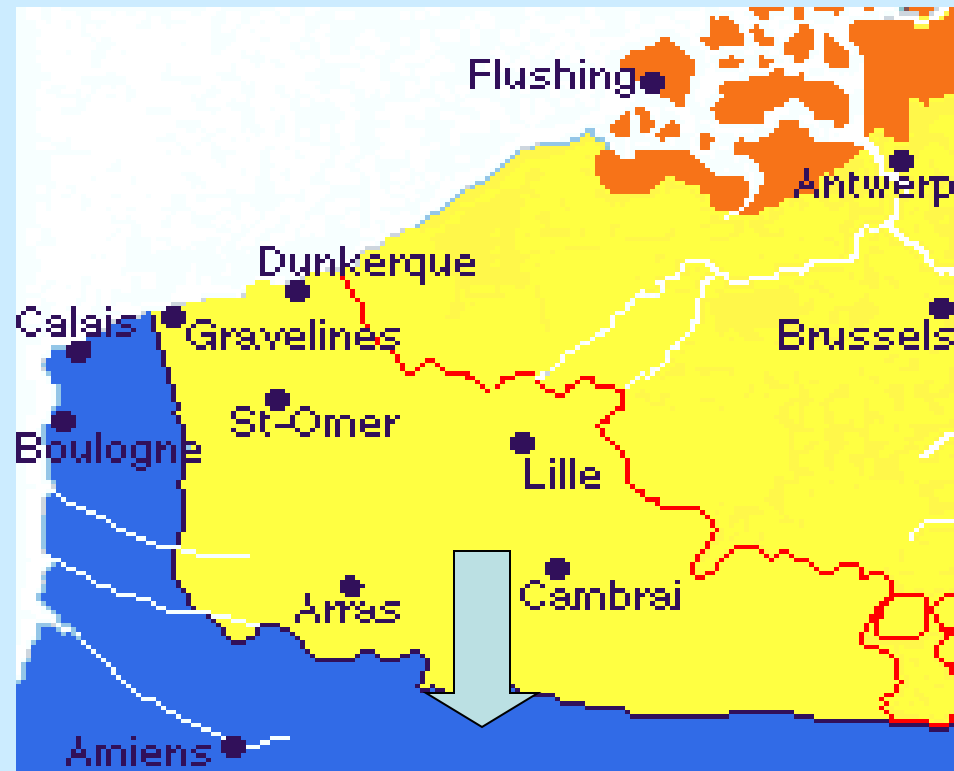
The Franco-Swedish Phase, 1635-1648

- Clear decline of religion as primary influence in conflict
- This time, Richelieu comes out clearly on the side of the Protestants and supports the Swedes/Protestant Cause.



When France joins, the Spanish retaliate! They sweep down from the Spanish Netherlands and attack France!

Eventual Spanish infantry loss at Rocroi (1643) --- the land equivalent to the defeat of the Armada



When the Spanish attack, France moves toward Spain!
French troops move into Catalonia spreading
devastation—
They also attack Habsburg forces in Bavaria...



Germans view all this interference from
Spain, Sweden, France, and think:

Get Out!

- New HRE: Ferdinand III begins to pursue
peace - 1643



Peace talks begin in Westphalia *1648*

(1643-1649)

- War raging as peace talks occur
- Exhaustion – no decisive victory – required compromise
- This becomes a huge peace conference – 200 rulers/thousands of diplomats
- Idea of sovereign states/international law (legacy today)
- Beginning of “balance of power”
- Power vacuum in Germany – Habsburg failure - end of medieval idea of universalism
- France emerges as super power
- Calvinism is added to the mix: now Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Calvinism all have legitimacy in Central Europe
- The church (pope) is not involved, nor does the pope sign the treaties
 - Condemned by the catholic church – Innocent X – “**null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane and devoid of meaning for all time**” not enough influence and too many concessions to protestants
- New states –



Principalities of Germany now have stronger individual rights: Germany remains weak and divided.

France emerges as a superpower --- gains territory (Alsace, Metz, Toul, Verdun – French/German border)
Peace of the Pyrenees (1659)

Sweden, Brandenburg and Bavarian States gain territory

Habsburg authority diminishes (no real loss of territory)

HRE in name only – Emperor's power weakened

“New” states: United Provinces, Switzerland, Brandenburg



Germany was physically & economically
devastated
(population declined by 5 million)



In total around 8 million died in the
Thirty Years' War
- Revulsion of wars for salvation



England, Holland, and France will take
the lead in European trade, culture and
politics



Power vacuum & Habsburg vulnerability

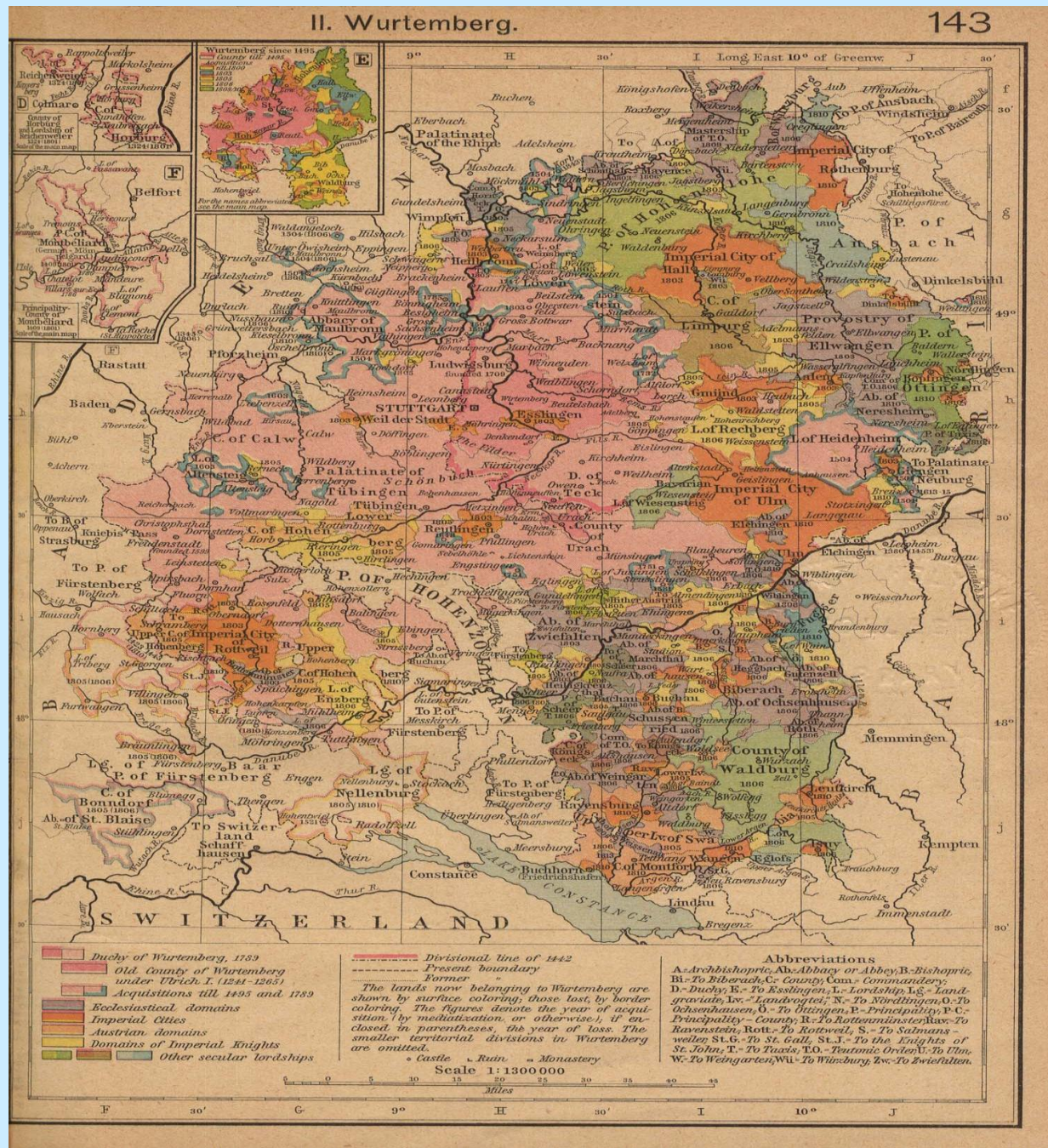
Germany's separate states will hinder trade and progress for many years. It will not fully unite until 1871.

Right to intervene -
"balance of power"

Exploited by 19th C.

German
Nationalists/ later
Hitler

*roots of French-
German rivalry



A Military Revolution?

- Increasingly – strong increasingly professional military – mercenaries/conscripts – key to political authority
- Massed wider rectangles (squadron/battalion) w/pikes/halberds
- Diminished importance of mounted calvary
- Increased use of firearms – “salvo” – (all rows of unit fires) a round to soften for pike charge
- Standing army of conscripts during peacetime (Gustavus Adolphus)
- “Ships of the line” – decks of heavy cannon
- Lighter artillery
- Increased centralization/taxation

Things You Must Remember

- Religious interests → secular / state interests
 - France's involvement
 - Wallenstein
 - Westphalia's terms
 - end of universalism
- Religious war exhaustion
- State sovereignty – German princes/nations other countries
- German state vacuum
- Westphalian system – balance of power – equality of states
- Contested Alsace region
- War torn German states (brutality – p 449)

You must remember this ...

(Continued)

- 1590-1640 – peasant/lower-class revolts – increased in frequency after 1640
 - C./S. France
 - Austria
 - Hungary
 - Portugal/Catalonia vs. Spain
 - Naples/Sicily vs. nobility
 - Nobles in France vs. royal authority
 - Scandinavia – clergy, nobles, mercantile groups
 - England