

② New empires and civilizations form, while older systems decline in power and influence. The great winner in this era of change is Western Europe, formerly a region of minor power and importance. China also experiences a resurgence, while the Arab Empires of the Islamic World suffer a loss of economic and military influence. The West's power derives from 2 principal factors, ① Use of new technology, particularly naval and military, and ② ~~creation~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~international~~ maritime economy through effective use of this technology. In all previous eras, most commercial & economic exchange had taken place via land - now, and significantly still today, the vast majority of international commerce & trade occurs via sea. This ~~power~~ gives Western nations, firstly Portugal & Spain, & later Britain, France & Holland, a decisive advantage over all others.

③ For the first time in 15,000 years, human communities in the Americas are reincorporated into the international network. This occurs through the incorporation of the Americas into new Western European imperial and colonial systems. A number of important changes can be seen as following from this development.

① The human disease pool became fully international for the first time - those who had been isolated from the rest of the world, in particular Native Americans, suffer enormously as a result of this exposure. →