

## Key Changes in the Twentieth Century

-The violence and carnage of the First World War ushered in a dramatic new phase of world history. While these changes were not all obvious or clear to contemporaries, in hindsight we can discern several key themes that mark off the last 100 years from earlier eras.

① The virtually unopposed rise of the West, which forms the central foundation of world history for the previous 400 years, comes to an end. 3 trends merged to bring about this development.

① The West's clear military supremacy, initially established through naval weaponry and then enhanced by industrial armaments, began to fade. Not only the military strength of new powers like Japan and the Soviet Union revealed this but also new and innovative methods of warfare practiced by opponents, particularly guerilla tactics ~~the~~ developed in places such as Vietnam and Algeria. These tactics effectively neutralized superior Western firepower. Additionally, the formation and distribution of new wealth allowed many nations both old and new, to acquire modern armaments sufficient to deter <sup>easy</sup> Western ~~the~~ invasions. The spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons technology demonstrates the continued evolution of this trend.

② The West's domination of global trade weakens. Several areas, particularly Asia after 1945, generated more rapid economic growth rates, allowing them to close the gap with the West and acquire larger shares of global economic activity. Many poorer regions developed dynamic industrial sectors (Mexico, China) that made

②

them competitive in the global economy and also reduced or removed their dependence on the West for manufactured goods.

③ Decolonization reversed the trend of growing Western territorial control. Growing Western weakness and a shift in priority toward internal reform combined with growing colonial desire for independence. Between 1946 and 1970 these forces would lead to the rapid establishment of dozens of new nation-states.

Issues of power were not the only transformations:

- This was a period of unprecedented and massive population growth. By 1970 there were more people alive than had ever reached adulthood in the history of the entire human species. World population tripled between 1900-1970. This was possible due to several factors

(a) Improved border controls by more efficient governments and new international organizations help control plagues & diseases

(b) Agricultural improvements such as swamp drainage combined with improved knowledge of sanitation to allow greater numbers of people to be fed adequately, although dire hunger persisted in many areas.

- Massive population growth also triggered a parallel development: unprecedented global urbanization. By 1990, cities outside the West such as Mexico City, Cairo and Tokyo far exceeded their Western counterparts in population. New demographic movements also began, as tens of millions of non-Westerners moved to the West in a form of reverse migration.

\* These processes are part of a larger & international trend - the advent of global industrialization.

→ manifests itself in many ways, including ① new more lethal form of warfare ② advent of international diplomacy ③ more rapid pace of <sup>life</sup>