Louis's Foreign Policy: "War, War, and More War"

***By the 1660's, France was superior to any other European nation in administrative bureaucracy, armed forces, and national unity. Louis was in a position to dominate Europe.**

I. The creation of France's "War Machine": Three remarkable French ministers established and supported Louis XIV's great war machine—Colbert, Louvois, and Vauban

A. Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683): controller general of finances

1. created the economic base Louis needed to finance his wars
   a. worked to centralize the French economy
      1) improved the country's infrastructure
      2) tried to break down internal barriers to free trade (municipal tariffs, local restrictions, etc.)
   b. tried to organize much economic activity under state supervision
      1) the sugar, chocolate, and tobacco trade from the colonies
      2) the production of military goods by iron foundries and textile mills
      3) the manufacture of luxuries (furniture, tapestries, glass products, etc.
   c. through tariffs, carefully regulated the flow of imports and exports
   d. increased the *taille* (a direct tax on the peasantry and a major source of royal income)
2. this kind of close government control of the economy came to be known as **mercantilism**
   a. the aim of mercantilism was to maximize foreign exports and internal reserves of bullion
      1) mercantilists wanted to make their nation as self-sustaining as possible
      2) did not want to import goods from other countries

***Colbert encouraged reforestation in France so iron foundries could have abundant supplies of charcoal. He also promoted the planting of mulberry trees to nourish silkworms vital to textile output.**

   b. mercantilists believed that production within a nation should provide all the necessities of life for a hard-working nation and also provide the power needed to fight and win wars
      1) mercantilists believed that these goals required planning and control from above
      2) mercantilists would channel the national economic effort by protective tariffs, by government subsidies, by grants of monopolies, by industries run directly by the government, and by scientific and applied research
   c. often, colonies were used to help the mother country become self-sufficient

1) colonies provided necessities and raw materials so that the mother country need not import them from competitors
2) in return, the mother country would supply industrial or manufactured goods to the colonies

B. Louvois (1641-1691): war minister
1. improved the military
a. instituted good salaries
b. improved discipline
c. limited military commissions and introduced a system of promotion by merit
2. improved the image of the military
a. because it was well-disciplined, the new army no longer threatened lives, homes, or the well-being of the people
b. the army, now made up of French citizens, now had considerable public support

C. Vauban (1633-1707): military engineer
1. perfected the arts of fortifying and besieging towns
2. devised the system of trench warfare (used through World War I)

II. The Early Wars

A. **The War of Devolution** (1667-1668)
1. Louis's first great foreign adventure was fought over his claim to the Spanish Belgian provinces
2. in response to France's aggression, England, Sweden, and the United Provinces of Holland formed the **Triple Alliance**
3. forced Louis to agree to peace under the terms in the **Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle**
a. France gained control of certain towns bordering the Spanish Netherlands
b. Spain retained control of the territory

B. **Invasion of the Netherlands** (1672-1679)
1. Next, Louis invaded the Netherlands...
a. Louis believed that Holland was gloating after the War of Devolution
b. He was upset by the Triple Alliance
c. He did not like the economic power, the religion (Calvinism), or the type of government (representative) of the Dutch
2. Because of the leadership of William III of Orange and an alliance between Holland, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, and Brandenburg-Prussia, Louis was halted yet again
3. **Peace of Nijmwegan** (1678-1679)
a. left Holland in tact
b. Spain ceded territory to France (Free Country of Burgandy--part of the Habsburgs' Burgundian inheritance--and some towns in Belgium

III. The Later Wars

***In the last three decades of Louis's reign, most of his assets were consumed. Not content with the prestige he had won in the first two wars, Louis took on most of the**

Western world in what looked like an effort to destroy the independence of Holland and most of western Germany and to bring the Iberian Peninsula under a French ruler.

A. The Nine Years' War (1689-1697)
   1. in 1681, Louis's forces conquered the free city of Strasbourg
   2. this prompted the formation of the **League of Augsburg** (England, Spain, Sweden, the United Provinces, and the electorates of Bavaria, Saxony and the Palatinate...it also had the support of the Holy Roman Empire)
      a. the league and France battled each other between 1689 and 1697)
      b. during the same period, England and France fought for control of North America in what came to be known as **King William's War**
   3. **Peace of Ryswick** (1697)
      a. ended the war in a peace without victory
      b. maintained the status quo

***However, William III of England and Emperor Leopold did achieve their objectives: securing Holland's borders and thwarting Louis's expansion into Germany**

B. War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714)
   1. Louis attempted to place a Bourbon on the Spanish throne
   2. England, Holland, the Holy Roman Empire, and many German states formed the **Grand Alliance** to preserve a separate Spain
   3. The French were gradually worn down and were defeated by the allies in every major engagement...but they were no annihilated
   4. The last battle (Malplaquet), cost the allies twenty thousand casualties
   5. **Treaty of Utrecht** (1713): typical balance of power peace
      a. ended the hostilities with England
      b. confirmed Philip V as king of Spain, but gave England Gibraltar
      c. won Louis's recognition of the right of the House of Hanover to accede to the English throne (he maintained that the descendants of James II had a legitimate claim to the throne)
   6. **Treaty of Rastadt** (1714)
      a. ended the hostilities with Holland and the Holy Roman Empire
      b. the Austrian Habsburgs were compensated with Belgium (the Austrian Netherlands) and the former Spanish possessions of Milan and Naples
      c. the duke of Savoy was rewarded with Sardinia and the title of king
      d. the elector of Brandenburg was also rewarded with the royal title: king in (not of) Prussia, which lay outside the Holy Roman Empire

***Politically, the 18th century would belong to England as the 16th century had belonged to Spain and the 17th century to France...**

Louis's Legacy

***Louis left France with a mixed legacy...**

Negative Effects of Louis's rule:

1) His wars brought widespread death and destruction.

2) His armies had shelled civilian populations.

3) The monarchy was more feared than admired...especially by the general population.

4) France's economy was weakened by the continuous warfare of the 17th century and the government was heavily in debt.

   --On his deathbed, Louis warned his son not "to imitate his love of buildings and his liking for war."

5) The aristocracy, after its years of domestication at Versailles, would have difficulty providing the nation with effective leaders and ministers.

Positive Effects of Louis's rule:

1) Louis's reign brought majesty to France...many monarchs would try to imitate Louis's example.

2) Louis expanded trade into Asia and colonized North America, creating a new French empire.

3) Louis's rule was not so absolute as to exert oppressive control over the daily lives of his subjects as in the police states of the 19th century.

   --His absolutism functioned at the national level in the areas of making war and peace, the regulation of religion, and the oversight of economic activity.

   --Even at the height of his power, local institutions, some controlled by townspeople and others by nobles, continued to exert administrative authority at the local level.