

Country-based Summaries

Ottoman Empire: With the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman Empire secures its formidable position in Eastern Europe, defeating the Byzantine Empire. With the Battle of Varna in 1444, Sultan Murad II asserted his influence, not to mention his superiority, over the Eastern European Kingdoms of Hungary-Poland and Wallachia. Wallachia eventually acquiesced to become a suzerain of the Ottomans, and the Ottoman Empire cemented its threat to the greater European powers, such as the Habsburgs. Sultan Mehmed II now rules these vast Ottoman lands, and has engaged in conflict with the Venetian city-state. The Ottomans have also now established a suzerainty over the Crimean Khanate, posing a significant strategic threat to the Kingdom of Poland in specific, and the Eastern European kingdoms in general. While much power lies in the hands of the Ottoman Sultan, he must also recognise the power that resides within the heartlands of the European continent. While his actions have made his intentions more than clear, he must also recognise that an entire European continent may threaten to mobilise against him.

Kingdom of Hungary/Bohemia: Under Matthias Corvinus, also known as Matthias the Just. In 1468, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III appealed to the King in assisting against a Bohemian invasion of Austria. Matthias, a man who was reputed to engage in conflict only after diplomatic measures had failed, took up arms against the Bohemians as Frederick had hinted at his election as King of Romans, thereby beginning the Bohemian War. Matthias Corvinus conflicted with Vladislaus II for the Bohemian Crown. While his initial cause was the return Catholicism to Bohemia, his true intentions were revealed when he started focusing on gaining more territory. The war seems to be going in favour Matthias in 1477. Could a Union of the once united crowns be possible again?

Poland - Lithuania (Jagiellonian Dynasty): The Union of Krewo, and its surrounding events in 1385, marked the beginning of a strong alliance between the Kingdoms of Poland and Lithuania, under the Jagiellonian Dynasty. In the present year, 1477, the Jagiellonian Dynasty has under it the kingdoms of Bohemia, Lithuania, and Poland. A serious threat facing this power conglomerate in Eastern Europe is the Ottoman Turks. Having captured Constantinople, Eastern Europe has clearly been put on the defensive by the Ottomans. It is the imperative of the Jagiellonian Dynasty to form a counter to these threatening forces, or a fate similar to that of the Byzantine Empire awaits them too.

Muscovy: Under the Ivan the Great, The Grand Duchy of Muscovy has almost wrestled out of the control of the Golden Horde's and is even coming up as a rival to its neighbor Lithuania. Showing intentions of gaining in terms of pure territorial capacity, the Grand Duchy of Muscovy look ready to threaten not simply Lithuanian, but now also Ottoman rule. With this expansionist policy of Ivan, the threat to Muscovy's neighbors seems very real.

England: It was seven years ago, in the March of 1470, that the House of York defeated the House of Lancaster at the Battle of Losecoat Field in the Wars of the Roses, following which a rebellion was orchestrated by King Edward IV's former ally, Richard Neville. The King had to seek support from his brother, Charles de Bold of Burgundy. A year following that, at the Battle of Barnet, the King defeats the Lancastrians and Queen Margaret returns to England. By 1474, England has allied with Burgundy against France under the Treaty of London. His Majesty lands in Calais in Burgundian support against France in July of '75. Although Burgundy fails to provide any significant military assistance by 1475, France has agreed to pay England compensations in return for peace. Back in England, William Caxton has set up the first printing press at Westminster and we have the first ever translation of Earl Rivers' Dictes or Sayengis of

the Philosophes. The King's younger brother, George the Duke of Clarence, has spurred a dispute laying to the inheritances of their wives, who are sisters and rival heirs to the considerable inheritance of their mother. But it is not just personal disputes that undermine the King's capable military command and the age of innovation in England. The still ongoing and bitter civil conflict, Wars of the Roses, has put England in a rather weary position.

France: At the beginning of Louis XI's reign in France, the King had come to exchange a number of Burgundian territories, including Picardy and Amiens, for four hundred thousand gold crowns to Philip III, the then Duke of Burgundy, in name of initiating a crusade to the Holy Lands. Philip's son, the future Charles de Bold, joined a rebellion which King Louis XI had to fight rather indecisively and grant an unfavourable peace as a matter of political expediency. Needless to say, after Charles I succeeded his father, the relationship of France and Burgundy has been bitter and plagued with constant conflicts. Things only turned for the worse when England joined Burgundy against France. France has already, in the past, granted refuge to various Earls, such as that of Warwick, after their falling out with Edward IV. Through French diplomacy, Warwick later went on to form an alliance with Margaret of Anjou in order to restore Henry VI to the throne. Even though Edward was forced into exile, he had returned to the throne by 1471, initiating the English invasion of France in 1475. January this year (1477), has marked the end of the conflict ongoing since. France, however, continues to be vexed with bitter relations and the Italian question. Marriage between the King and Charlotte of Savoy was only the beginning of French involvement in Italian affairs. The King continues to quote a strong relationship with Francesco, Duke of Milan, a traditional enemy of Savoy. Things have only seemed to complicate themselves further when we have received a marriage alliance from Ferdinand I of Naples and the King is also deliberating upon a favourable treaty with the

Republic of Venice. A friendly France to all of Italy seems a beautiful sight and it would be, if only Italy was not divided so sharply. Has the King invited himself into the Italian ballet of chaos?

The Papal State: His Holiness Pope Sixtus IV has been pope for the past six years now (from 1471) and continues to be in a disputed relationship with King Louis XI of France who has upheld the pragmatic sanction of Bourges (1438). According to which, all papal decrees must have a royal approval before they can be promulgated in France. In another ecclesiastical affair, Sixtus has promoted the cult of Immaculate Conception and is in the process of formally annulling the decrees of Council of Constance. Problematically, His Holiness has also been subjected to nepotism and to raise further objections, Palazzo della Cancelleria is nearing its completion. It is said that the aforementioned construction is for his niece's son, Cardinal Raffaele Riario. His Holiness is also recorded to have been in conversation with the Venetians for a potential attack on Ferrera, which (according to prevalent word) He is seeking to obtain for another nephew. Rumours regarding the recent appointments of some young "good looking" men as Cardinals have also added to the muddle, bringing further damage to the Papacy. On another hem, the Papacy is also deliberating upon issuing the Papal Bull, allowing local Bishops to give bodies of executed criminals to physicians and artists for dissection. The controversiality surrounding this decision cannot be overlooked.

Venice: By 1471, Venice has consolidated its control of Cyprus and reduced its quarrels with the Turks by forming an alliance with the Persian Ussan Hassan Beg. Venice enjoyed a period of freedom but its policies of building up the military have sharply increased Venice's public debt. Venice has also gone on to reform its monetary system to introduce a new coin, the Tron, after it's then Doge. Soon after his death, the coin was stopped from circulation by Marcelo, who

introduced one in his own name. By 1474, Venice had come under the command of one its greatest admirals, Mocenigo, who revived the country's navy and captured Smyrna. He also defeated the Turks in one of the most remarkable Christian-Ottoman confrontations. By 1478, Venice was at the height of its power and Andrea Vendramin had been elected as the Doge of Venice, his reign was largely concerned with the end of the second Turkish-Venetian war. The second war, however, was no end to the conflict. It was as if Mocenigo had opened the already soiled crevices of the Ottoman-Venetian relation. By around this time, the Venetians are already considering to go to war again under Mocenigo Jr. There are considerations for fighting Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II at sea and the Duke of Ferrara on land.

Castile & Aragon: The Iberian peninsula comprised of the Catholic Kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Portugal and Navarra along with the Islamic Emirate of Granada. The House of Trastámara had ruled over Aragon and Castile separately for centuries that came together to form a unified monarchy under Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of the Aragon after their marriage in 1469. The marriage between the two cousins that had to be approved by the Pope which arranged by the then cardinal Borgia (who would go on to become Pope Alexander VI) brought together under a personal union the Kingdom of Castile, the rich provinces of the crown of Aragon and its newly conquered Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. France opposed this union, not only because of strategic constraints but also because as it claimed the north-Eastern Catalan territories that included Roussillon, Cerdagne and Navarre, which were a part of France before Aragon reclaimed them under crown prince, Ferdinand's leadership. These provinces also have a history of internal dynastic conflicts and have from time to time for their personal freedoms swung between French and Spanish over-lordship. While John II of Aragon and Navarre and Isabella of Castile will represent the Iberian crowns in 1477, Ferdinand is expected to succeed

his aged and once blind father. Isabella and Ferdinand's motto for their prenuptial agreement is said to have reflected their urling style: Tanto monta, monta tanto, Isabel como Fernando. [Ferdinand and Isabella, they amount to the same.]

Austria: The home of the House of Habsburg and the Holy Roman Empire, the Archduchy of Austria was co-ruled by Frederick III and his heir Maximilian. By marrying off his son to the Duchess of Burgundy, Frederick III ensured, in a sense the rise of the Habsburg Dynasty to the status of a Great Power. While, the hereditary land had be claimed been disputed amongst the Habsburgs up until the ending of Frederick's reign, he outlived most of his rivals and inherited all that he had lost in severely damaging warfare. Matthias Corvinus of Hungary once spoke, "Let others wage war, but thou, O happy Austria, marry; for those kingdoms which Mars gives to others, Venus gives to thee." While war had not been as successful a tool for the Austrians, marriage had been the right opposite. From being in every bed of Europe, as the saying went, they landed up on almost every throne. Nonetheless, their control over the Empire and the corresponding religious forces make up strongly for what they lack in military might, in comparison to their French counterparts. The authority of the Holy Roman Emperor is strong but to keep it that way, the foreign policy of the Habsburgs must be balanced between expanding their own land and centralizing the Holy Roman Empire.

Saxony: The Electorate of Saxony was co-ruled by brothers Albert III and Ernest. As an Elector, Saxony enjoyed various economic and political privileges within the Holy Roman Empire. While Albert tried to claim the Bohemian crown, through marriage, he could not succeed in his endeavors due to other differing claims, such as those from Hungary. Saxony, ruled by the Wettin dynasty for decades, has been at odds with the other strong Germanic electorate

Brandenburg since the early decades on the 15th century. Their rivalry would not only shape the future of the German lands but also of the Holy Roman Empire itself.

Brandenburg: Ruled by Albrecht III and his son John Cicero, Brandenburg, bought under its influence Pomeria (in 1472), among other North-Eastern German principalities such as Bayreuth and Uckermark. The ruling House of Hohenzollern was known for its rivalry with the Wettin Dynasty of Saxony, often conflicting regarding control over control in their respective (adjoining) Imperial circles. Brandenburg was among the richer Electors of the Empire, while maintaining a strong martial tradition. The Margraviate of Brandenburg also squared off with Poland on some occasions due to conflicting claims in bordering territories. A possible increase of political influence within the Empire could also further their territorial ambitions but whether Brandenburg wants a centralized Germanic state or a loose confederation is the question to answer.

We hope this will suffice for now. You are recommended to further your research by reading more about the time period that you will be debating in and the countries/families you will be debating as. I along with Nara and Ishan, both of whom have worked extensively for this simulation and guide, welcome you to the European Great Powers. We will also be joined by Kartik Ashta, who will be serving as Crisis Director. Please feel free to contact us on war.politics.2016@gmail.com or +919818303780 for any queries regarding research for the simulation.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.