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Date: _____

Sepoys, Cotton, and the British in India



During the 1700s, the Mughal Empire in India began to weaken. European trading companies competed to extend their control over the subcontinent. By the 1750s, the British East India Company began to wage war on land beyond their coastal ports. The Company also fought against the French East India Company for control of the subcontinent. Eventually, the British East India Company emerged victorious and established a trade monopoly over the subcontinent while simultaneously establishing its rule over the majority of the subcontinent.

Cotton was India's valued export. Cotton cloth woven by Indian weavers was sent to Britain to supply a global demand for fabrics. To maintain its profitable control of cotton and the subcontinent, the British East India Company created huge armies of Indian soldiers or sepoy. These armies defended the company's territory and crushed any resistance. However, it would also be these armies that led to the transfer of the subcontinent from the Company to the British Crown.

Questions:

1. What was happening to the Mughal Empire's control in India? (Be specific and use prior information from earlier this year)
2. Who took control of India after the Mughals? Why?
3. What was the valued Indian export? What happened to it once it left India?
4. What did the British East India Company do to keep control in India?