**Theme:** Change—Collapse of Government (January 2013)

The sudden death of a ruler, a defeat in war, or a successful revolution has often led to the collapse of a government. Political, social, and economic changes have occurred as a result of the collapse of a government.

**Task:** Select two situations where the collapse of a government has led to significant changes in a country or region, and for each

* Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government
* Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government

You may use any situation from your study of global history and geography in which the collapse of a government led to significant changes in a country or region. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include collapse of the Roman Empire**, collapse of Louis XVI’s government**, collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate, **collapse of Czar Nicholas II’s government**, collapse of the Ottoman Empire, collapse of the Nationalist government in China [Guomindang], collapse of Batista’s government in Cuba, fall of Reza Pahlavi’s government in Iran, breakup of Yugoslavia, and collapse of the Soviet Union.

**Collapse of Louis XVI**

* *Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government* 
  + Economic
    - Unequal tax structure
      * Only 3rd estate paid taxes
      * Louis could not order changes to the tax code, needed the Estates General to approve them
    - France was bankrupt
      * Louis XIV built Versailles which bankrupted the French treasury
      * Not enough tax revenue
    - American Revolution
      * Louis XVI got France involved in the American Revolution which cost a substantial amount of money
  + Social
    - Estate System
      * France was divided into 3 estates (social classes)
        + Based on birth
        + No mobility
      * 1st estate – clergy
      * 2nd estate – nobles
      * 3rd estate – peasants
        + Bourgeoisie – wealthy peasants who were oppressed because they were members of the 3rd estate – wanted more influence
    - Shortage of food
      * Due to poor harvests and inflation the majority of peasants in France were starving
  + Political
    - Absolute government
      * Louis XVI did not have to consult advisors before making a decision
        + Could spend money in any matter he saw fit
    - Estates General
      * Legislative branch in the French government that only met at the will of the king – had not met for 175 years.
      * Louis XVI called them to change the tax code to have the 1st and 2nd estates pay taxes as well
        + He did not give them an agenda
        + Fighting began over voting processes

3rd estate wanted voting by head not estate

They were constantly outvoted by the 1st and 2nd estates with voting by estate

* *Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government* 
  + 3rd estate refused to participate in the Estates General until the voting changes were made
    - Took the Tennis Court Oath – stay on king’s tennis court until he agrees tot heir demands
  + King was forced to sign the Declaration of the Rights of Man and a new constitution – guaranteeing rights to citizens – ended the absolute monarchy
  + People were not satisfied by the king’s changes and demanded more severe changes
    - Led to Reign of Terror
  + Robespierre wanted to create a Republic of Virtue and killed all enemies of the revolution – including King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette
  + After Robespierre – the Directory (5 man council) came into power, sought Napoleon’s help to rule
  + Napoleon
    - Created the Napoleonic Code
    - A Meritocracy
    - Allowed peasants to keep lands taken when the nobility fled
    - Eventually became a dictator –and crowned himself emperor
      * Did not support legislative assemblies

**Collapse of Czar Nicholas II’s government**

* *Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government* 
  + Economic
    - Russia did not go through the Renaissance due to the Mongolian occupation
    - Peter the Great’s attempts at gradual modernization failed
      * Russia was forced to modernize quickly
        + Led to many problems – poor working conditions, unfair working hours and wages
  + Social
    - Russia ended feudalism in the late 1800s but did not give the peasants land
      * Majority were homeless and starving
    - Poor harvests led to increasing unhappiness
    - Bloody Sunday – peaceful protest on the Tsar’s winter palace led to the death’s of many people – bond with the Tsar was broken
      * Peasants felt abandoned by their Little Father
    - People resented not having a say in their government
  + Political
    - Poor leadership of Tsar Nicholas II
      * Inept ruler – make poor decisions
      * Repeatedly dismissed the Duma (legislature) without making any changes
      * Russo-Japanese War – 1st time an Asian nation beat a European nation
      * Left his wife in charge of Russia while he visited the frontlines of WWI
        + She was influenced by Rasputin (medical man) to put his supporters into power – weakened the monarchy
* *Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government* 
  + 1917 – Tsar was overthrown by Marxist revolutionaries who supported adopting communism
    - Led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks
      * Lenin campaigned on the idea of peace, land, and bread
        + Would end WWI
        + Redistribute land
        + Provide food to people
      * Small group of people ruled Russia with absolute power
        + Called Soviets
      * Began the New Economic Policy – included capitalist ideas to try to jump start the Russian economy
    - Stalin takes over after Lenin’s death
      * Command economy – government controls all means of production
      * Great Purge – eliminated all opposition
      * No political rights.