Land-Based Powers: Russia
Land-Based Powers

• Rise of sea-based powers shifted the balance of world power
  o Seen in the gradual weakening of the Muslim Empires

• Three important land based empires didn’t lose ground
  o Either on the rise or at their peak
    ▪ Russia
    ▪ Qing China
    ▪ Tokugawa Japan

• All reached their greatness through traditional land-based methods

• All addressed challenges from Europe in different, but equally successful, ways
The Russian Empire

- By 1450 Mongol control ended, Muscovy on the rise
- Not as modern as other states
  - Previously aligned with Byzantine culture and politics
  - The Muslim capture of Constantinople, the northern location, and the rise of sea-based powers should have ensured Russia’s continuing obscurity
- The concentration of political power, the actions and policies of the tsars, defied the odds and propelled Russia to the ranks of the great empires by 1750
Expansion and Centralization of Russia before 1650

- As Mongol presence weakened, Moscow princes continued to pay tribute
- Ivan III refused to pay; known as **Ivan the Great**
  - Declared himself Tsar
  - Claimed establishing “Third Rome”
  - Acquired new lands by marriage, wars, and purchase
  - Recruited cossacks (peasants) to settle in new lands in exchange for freedom (former serfs)
- After the demise of the Byzantines, Ivan saw Russia as the carrier of Roman tradition
- Distinct cultural characteristics including Eastern Orthodox Church
- Head of government and church
- Influence of the church increased as Ivan’s power grew
Expansion and Centralization of Russia before 1650

- Centralization continued under Ivan the Terrible (Ivan IV – grandson of Ivan the Great)
- Economic system based on feudalism
  - Boyars (nobles) held land worked by serfs
  - Military responsibilities similar to Western Europe and Japan
  - Boyars resisted centralization of tsars power
- Ivan IV responded by
  - Redistributing the boyars lands
  - Killing the rebels in cruel ways (cooking them and skinning alive)
  - Executed his oldest son
- “Time of Trouble” followed Ivan’s death
  - Competition among boyars for control of throne
  - Neighboring kingdoms invaded
  - Boyars selected Mikhail Romanov as heir
- Romanov’s ruled until the early 20th century when the last tsar was executed by a new regime of communist leaders
Peter the Great – The Rise of Russia

- Tsar most responsible for transforming Russia
- Saw Russia was far from cutting edge
- Looked to the West and understood the importance of controlling the oceans and seas
- Studied European methods of shipbuilding and engineering
- Pulled Russia by the bootstraps into its new role as an important player in global history
Peter the Great – The Rise of Russia

- Caught up in the intrigues of boyar competition as a young man
  - Peter eventually succeeded his father after removing his sister as regent and placing her in a monastery
- As an absolute ruler Peter never hesitated to use his power
  - Executed his son for conspiring against him
    - Threat from boyars always present
- Many of Peter’s goals met with resistance from nobility, making accomplishments even more remarkable
  - Directed expansion towards access to warm water ports (knew the importance of sea power)
  - Built St. Petersburg (Window on the West)
  - Tried to capture lands adjacent to the Black Sea, Ottomans held it and Peter was unsuccessful

The Expansion of Russia under Peter the Great: Peter added vital territory on the Baltic Sea to the vast Russian empire.
Military Reform

- Built size of army by drafting peasants to serve as professional soldiers
- Increased pay
- Encouraged western technology (including training on cannons and firearms)
- Built roads and bridges to transport troops and equipment
- Built navy bringing in European experts on ship-building, sailing, and navigation
- Built ports to accommodate ships
Peter the Great – The Rise of Russia

- **Social Reform**
  - Ordered boyars to dress like Europeans; no more bearskin capes and beards (owner could pay a fine to keep beard)
  - Russian women traditionally secluded themselves at home wearing veils when out in public; Peter insisted they appeared unveiled in his court and dress as European ladies
  - Decreed that young people (not their parents) determined who they wanted to marry
Peter the Great – The Rise of Russia

• **Bureaucratic Reform**
  - Reorganized to be more efficient gathering taxes (needed money to pay army, navy, and for the reforms)
  - Replaced boyars with government officials selected from new **Table of Ranks**; positions based on merit
  - Eliminated many titles of nobility and ensured that new bureaucrats were loyal to him
Peter the Great – The Rise of Russia

• Peter brought many changes
  o Conflict between the Slavic traditional ways and the new impetus to westernize
  o Selectively imitated western ways
    ▪ Little interest in Enlightenment ideas
• Did not aim to build an international export-oriented economy
• Saw economic development mainly as a way to support military efforts
  o Continued autocratic rule but sent messages to subjects to emulate European ways
  o Catherine the Great understood the conflict and continued the autocratic traditions of the tsars
• Russians continued their Slavic ways, including Russian Orthodox religion
  o After Peter they began to turn one ear toward the West
The "Tsar Cannon." The emperor of Russia ordered the casting of this gigantic bronze cannon in 1586. Its tube weighs 40 tons. It was intended for defense of the Kremlin in Moscow, but it was never fired.