Nicholas II (1868-1918)

Introduction:
Nicholas II was the last Tsar of Russia from 1894-1917. He believed he had the divine right to rule and a religious obligation to preserve the autocracy. Furthermore, he believed he was “Chosen by God” to rule the Russian empire, this view he upheld throughout his reign. Leading to him ignoring the advice of his trusted ministers, thus, making his role of running the country much more difficult than it needed to be.

Strengths:
- The secret police during the reign of all Tsars was effective, and brutally put down any political opposition in the second half of the 19th century.
- He could be obstinate when he had decided on a course of action.
- The nobles supported him and he had full authority over the Russian Empire.
- As a husband he was clearly a passionate man whose wife adored him and at the same time, he was a man with great moral strength.

Weaknesses of Nicholas II:
- He was indecisive, easily influenced and very anti-semetic.
- Whilst being away seeing family, Rasputin had too much influence over vital appointments.
- His government was inefficient; he lost his armies support in 1917, he didn’t even have a secretary!
- He was sensitive; he hated unpleasant disagreements and wasn’t commanding enough to run an organised empire.
- He himself admitted he found it hard to focus his mind, portraying himself as a fairly weak as a ruler.
- The Russian political system was very fragmented, leaving the Russian state in only partial control of the country.
- Humiliated in defeats vs Japan, Germany and the allies in WW1.