Section Six: Russian Enters the European Political Arena

- **Section Overview**
  - Russia did not emerge as a power in Europe until the late seventeenth century.
  - Politically and geographically, it lay on the periphery and never emerged as a major commercial power because it lacked consistent access to warm-water ports.

- **The Romanov Dynasty**
  - **Background**
    - Ivan IV (1533-1584)—later known as Ivan the terrible—underwent a personality change that transformed him from a sensible political leader into a tyrant who ruled through violence and oppression.
    - A period known as the “Time of Troubles” followed the death of Ivan.
  - **Romanov Dynasty**
    - Michael Romanov
      - In an effort to end the “Time of Troubles”, in 1613 a group of Russian nobles elected as tsar a seventeen-year-old boy named Michael Romanov whose dynasty would rule Russia until 1917.
      - Michael Romanov and his two successors—Aleksei and Theodore—brought some centralization to Russia but the boyars, the old nobility, still retained a lot of bureaucratic power and the streltsy, or guards of the Moscow garrison remained a threat to mutiny against the tsar.
    - Peter the Great
      - Problems with succession
        - He and his half brother, Ivan V, were appointed co-rulers of Russia and there rise to leadership was supported by the streltsy who expected to be rewarded for their support.
        - Violence and bloodshed surrounded their succession.
        - Sophia, sister of Ivan and Peter, was named regent temporarily as Peter’s followers overthrew her power.
      - Peter took personal control of Russia in 1689 and established two goals.
        - First, to rid the tsar of the threat of the jealousy of the boyars and the greed of the streltsy.
        - Second, increase Russian military power.
      - Peter traveled to northwestern Europe in 1697.
        - He inspected shipyards, docks, and warehouses where weapons were produced.
      - Peter returned to Russia to find that the streltsy had rebelled.
        - Peter surpressed the rebellion by murdering and torturing an estimated one thousand conspirators.
      - Building a powerful military
        - He drafted about 130,000 men into the Russian army during the first half of the eighteenth century and nearly 300,000 by the end of his reign.