



AP[®] Comparative Government & Politics 2002 Sample Student Responses

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Governments encounter threats to stability everywhere, regardless of their type. They can occur within the populace, govt., or even other nations. China and France since 1950 provide numerous examples of threats to regime stability in several ways.

In 1950, one threat to regime stability has been the rise of popular protest. In some ways the rise in protest has shown the discontent of large segments of the population who ~~are~~ ^{have} been denied legitimate channels of political influence ~~to~~ on the government. The first major protest against the govt. occurred during the Hundred Flowers Campaign, in which the Maoist regime tolerated some degree of criticism from the populace. This campaign proved short-lived and was followed immediately afterwards by the Anti-Rightist Campaign of political repression. The Democracy Movement of the 1970s produced similar results, as the government began to repress so-called "radicals," as evident in the jailing of Wei Jingsheng. Another telling example occurred in 1989, when students protested in favor of greater political freedom and democratic reforms. This protest was suppressed violently and brutally by the military, adding to the climate of political ~~re~~ repression. Thus, China's response to popular protest has generally been one of political repression, repressing political ideas which do not conform to the ideology of the Communist Party of China. Political prisoners have been persecuted and the regime's response has even been violent, as evident in the military ~~re~~ suppression of the Tianan Square protests, ~~of~~ as well as the killings of the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

Protest challenged regime stability in China by

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challenging the Communist doctrine. Maoist communism and Chinese communism has always been based on one party ideology, and the govt. has seldom allowed the people to protest this ideology ~~for~~ in favor of another ideology. Communist govt. in China is based on a top-down hierarchical system of authoritarian rule, in which power is concentrated at the top-level party structures. Everyone below the top is expected to obey the mandates from the political elites. Protest challenged the stability of this regime by undermining the doctrine of communism itself, often through protesting in favor of democracy, and by challenging Mao's doctrine by which he tolerated no political opposition whatsoever (including political apathy). The very nature of these protests, many of them having a complete change in Chinese govt. form, challenged regime stability by ~~essentially~~ advocating a complete change in the regime. The fact that these protests called for complete change in the regime (eg. Transition - democratization) challenged not only the stability but the very existence of the govt.

In France since 1950, one threat to regime stability has been civil war / rebellion and insurrection, particularly in the case of Algeria in military conflict into the 50s, leaving effects afterwards. The insurrection in Algeria was a colonial uprising which challenged French stability by openly challenging the govt. in war. The response of France was one of the military. With the help of de Gaulle, France responded to the

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~~an~~ insurrection in Algeria with military action in order to try to suppress the rebellion. The French reaction was essentially one of retaliatory warfare, in order to suppress the rebellion & try to maintain French authority over the colony.

The insurrection challenged regime stability by physically attacking the French government. Any act of warfare challenges regime stability in how armed actors attempt to eliminate the authority of the opposition regime. In this case, the armed action of the Algerian insurrection challenged the stability of the French regime in that the rebellion marked an attempt by anti-colonialists to challenge French authority in

Algeria. Stability would have comprised a great continuation of the situation as it was. But this event challenged the stability of the regime by putting it under great outside physical pressure. War in any form always exerts great pressure upon regimes, making it difficult for them to remain in power in a stable fashion. The Algerian rebellion exerted great pressure in this manner on the French govt., challenging its ability to remain stable, free from armed conflict ~~with~~ opponents.

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2) Interest groups in any nation can threaten the stability of a government. Both the authoritarian government of China, and democratic state of France have been threatened by the interest group of students.

The gathering of students in China's Tiananmen Square is an example of threatened stability in China. Many students got together in protest of governmental policies and control, hoping to change what they could. The leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping was so threatened by the protest, along with the creation of a statue named the goddess of liberty, that he sent the military to break it up. The protest of Tiananmen Square became one of the bloodiest in history when the People's Liberation Army drove in tanks to break up protesting. ~~At the time~~ This act was noticed all over the world as the legitimacy of Chinese regime was questioned. Many believed this was the end of Communism in China, but were proven wrong. The protestors realized that any threat to stability would be crushed and the Communist regime in China is still in place.

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Similar to the protest of Tiananmen Square, a student protest of the late nineteen sixties broke out in France. Since interest groups of democratic nations such as France have large amounts of influence politically, the students looked for change. The protests they held for more equality and a better standard of living severely threatened the stability of the French ~~the~~ Fifth Republic. President at the time, Charles De Gaulle negotiated with these students in order to appease them. Soon after he resigned as President and elections were held. This proves that interest groups did influence their government in this instance.

Interest groups can provide influence for any government, along with threatening their stability. The student protests of both China and France in the nineteen sixties are examples of threatened stability. These governments learned from the threats and became stronger because of them.

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It is important for countries to have stable political regimes. This stability provides for a safe place for citizens to live and work and a solid economy to grow. When political stability is threatened, governments must respond in order to ensure the safety of its citizens, in ^{whatever way} ~~however~~ they think is necessary and will help its citizens the most.

In the 1980s Chinese students at a university ~~in~~ decided that they wanted their government to be less strict and allow more learning and political opinions. They organized a march on Tianamen Square and 1000's of students assembled for this rally. The Chinese government, however, saw this assembly as a challenge to their authority. They felt that if this display ~~showed~~ was allowed there would be many others soon following and a possible revolution. Their response, then, was to take tanks and police and gas and beat, gas, shoot, run over, etc the students. While this response is certainly extreme and inhumanity, it was their authoritarian response to the students' protest.

When Charles de Gaulle and followers had a problem with the French government, the response was very different. They challenged that the National Assembly was too strong and the president too weak. De Gaulle got

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enough followers to end the 4th Republic ~~at~~ altogether, and begin the 5th Republic. While this challenged the regime's stability, the newer Republic also made it stronger by giving the president authority to do his job and help govern the country. France, unlike the People's Republic of China, had a positive response to this challenge to their stability and responded by correcting the problem and moving on, without losing much of their stability.

The challenging of political regimes in other countries is certainly different from challenges here, which are freely allowed and sometimes dealt with. Both China and France took completely different ways of responding to these challenges, and have so moved on with their daily tasks because their political stability is in check.