**Prompt**:

The surest indicator of a great nation is represented not by the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists, but by the general welfare of its people.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.

**Essay**: 9 30 – 10 03 (33 min)

There are been many nations throughout history with exceptional rulers that have been defeated or destroyed either by its people or other nations. What ultimately determines the well-being of a nation is the state of its subjects. Therefore, I agree that the general welfare of the citizens is the surest indicator of a nation’s prosperity rather that the actions or achievement of a few for two reasons.

To begin, history has shown us what becomes of nations with its people not cared for. Take, for example, the Nazi regime where only the ‘pure’ elite were allowed to live as normal citizens while the rest were viewed as society’s vermin. There can be no question to the achievements of Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi party. Although unethical, he systematically persecuted over 6 million Jews during the holocaust, conquered most of Europe and is noted as one of the most strategic dictators throughout history. Even with all these merits, the fall of the Nazi empire was inevitable as most of the citizens were not happy with its regime. The Nazi party also had many adept scientist who created many devastating weapons and technology that gave Germany an upper hand during World War II, but, eventually, it all amounted to nothing as Germany was defeated.

Another example of a nation’s downfall due to an indignant population is the French Revolution. With no shortage in wealth, culture or artists, the French empire was overthrown by its people in a rebellion against the spendthrift and apathetic nobility which started the Reign of Terror, a period in where many aristocrats and nobles were executed for their crimes against the people and the nation. This was because the French government and its opulent rulers lived an extravagant life while the normal public fought just to survive. The famous “Let them eat cake” story of is an example of the ignorance of the French nation to the suffering of its citizens. A government such as this with no care for its people was prone to downfall.

Some may argue that, while the people’s satisfaction is a factor, a great nation is one with a great ruler or artisans and scientists that contribute to its growth. However, as seen in the examples above, history has proven this to be invalid. A nation is just as strong as its people. If the people are not supported, it is bound to fall, no matter how great of a ruler or scientists it has. Currently, nations such as North Korea with rulers that govern with an iron first and with no regard to its people are ephemeral.