

RR2. Analyze ^zthe Diamond's essay as a reader:

- a. What problems and issues does the author raise?
- b. What is the author's purpose? To explain, complain, persuade? amuse? How do you know this, and is the author successful?
- c. How does the author appeal to readers?
- d. Where do you agree with Diamond? Where do you disagree? Why?
- e. Where/how does the piece relate to your own experience? Have you encountered something similar? If not, how does the topic engage you?
- f. What is the author's pov? What does the author assume or take for granted?
- g. Are there words or phrases that you don't understand? Look them up and explain them. Reflect on this activity

You may choose any combination of these ideas for your response or focus on one point. Whatever strategy(ies) you use, state the focus and point of your analysis in the first few sentences.

RR3. Provide a concise summary (2-3 sentences) of each section in Hardin's essay. There are a total of 10 sections. Quotes and intext citations will not be appropriate for this assignment. Note: This is a controversial piece. You are welcome to offer any reflection or opinion on the essay at the end of the summaries, but keep your analysis out of the summary work. This RR may take up to 3 pages.

Jared Diamond

“The World as Polder: What Does It Mean to Us Today”

Jared Diamond is a scientist and author of six books and numerous articles on environmental history and the development of human societies. Diamond has a B.A. from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in physiology from Cambridge University. He was a professor of physiology in the UCLA Medical School and is currently a professor of geography at UCLA. His many awards include a McArthur Foundation Fellowship, a Pulitzer Prize for *Guns, Germs and Steel*, and a National Medal of Science. In *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Succeed or Fail*, from which our selection is taken, Diamond compares the success or failure of past civilizations and what factors contributed to their endurance or decline to see what lessons we can draw from the past. Diamond opens this last chapter of his book with a list of 12 serious environmental problems facing us today—problems of resource destruction, of resource limits, of toxic and dangerous products, and of population growth. Despite this seemingly overwhelming list of problems, however, Diamond concludes that he is a “cautious optimist.” Because these problems are caused by human activity, they are also within our control to change. As with other readings in this chapter, the change Diamond hopes for will require a change in our values and how we live among others.

Are the parallels between the past and present sufficiently close that the collapses of the Easter Islanders, Henderson Islanders, Anasazi, Maya, and Greenland Norse could offer any lessons for the modern world? At first, a critic, noting the obvious differences, might be tempted to object, "It's ridiculous to suppose that the collapses of all those ancient peoples could have broad relevance today, especially to the modern U.S. Those ancients didn't enjoy the wonders of modern technology, which benefits us and which lets us solve problems by inventing new environment-friendly technologies. Those ancients had the misfortune to suffer from effects of climate change. They behaved stupidly and ruined their own environment by doing obviously dumb things, like cutting down their forests, over-harvesting wild animal sources of their protein, watching their topsoil erode away, and building cities in dry areas likely to run short of water. They had foolish leaders who didn't have books and so couldn't learn from history, and who embroiled them in expensive and destabilizing wars, cared only about staying in power, and didn't pay attention to problems at home. They got overwhelmed by desperate starving immigrants, as one society after another collapsed, sending floods of economic refugees to tax the resources of the societies that weren't collapsing. In all those respects, we moderns are fundamentally different from those primitive ancients, and there is nothing that we could learn from them. Especially we in the U.S., the richest and most powerful country in the world today, with the most productive environment and wise leaders and strong loyal allies and only weak insignificant enemies—none of those bad things could possibly apply to us."

Yes, it's true that there are big differences between the situations of those past societies and our modern situation today. The most obvious difference is that there are far more people alive today, packing far more potent technology that impacts the environment, than in the past. Today we have over 6 billion people equipped with heavy metal machinery such as bulldozers and nuclear power, whereas the Easter Islanders had at most a few tens of thousands of people with stone chisels and human muscle power. Yet the Easter Islanders still managed to devastate their environment and bring their society to the point of collapse. That difference greatly increases, rather than decreases, the risks for us today.

A second big difference stems from globalization. Leaving out of this discussion for the moment the question of environmental problems within the First World itself, let's just ask whether the lessons from past collapses

might apply anywhere in the Third World today. First ask some ivory-tower academic ecologist, who knows a lot about the environment but never reads a newspaper and has no interest in politics, to name the overseas countries facing some of the worst problems of environmental stress, overpopulation, or both. The ecologist would answer: "That's a no-brainer, it's obvious. Your list of environmentally stressed or overpopulated countries should surely include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, and Somalia, plus others".

Then go ask a First World politician, who knows nothing and cares less about the environment and population problems, to name the world's worst trouble spots: countries where state government has already been overwhelmed and has collapsed, or is now at risk of collapsing, or has been wracked by recent civil wars; and countries that, as a result of those problems of their own, are also creating problems for us rich First World countries, which may end up having to provide foreign aid for them, or may face illegal immigrants from them, or may decide to provide them with military assistance to deal with rebellions and terrorists, or may even have to send in our own troops. The politician would answer, "That's a no-brainer, it's obvious. Your list of political trouble spots should surely include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, and Somalia, plus others."

Surprise, surprise: the two lists are very similar. The connection between the two lists is transparent: it's the problems of the ancient Maya, Anasazi, and Easter Islanders playing out in the modern world. Today, just as in the past, countries that are environmentally stressed, overpopulated, or both become at risk of getting politically stressed, and of their governments collapsing. When people are desperate, undernourished, and without hope, they blame their governments, which they see as responsible for or unable to solve their problems. They try to emigrate at any cost. They fight each other over land. They kill each other. They start civil wars. They figure that they have nothing to lose, so they become terrorists, or they support or tolerate terrorism.

The results of these transparent connections are genocides such as the ones that already exploded in Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, and Rwanda; civil wars or revolutions, as in most of the countries on the lists; calls for the dispatch of First World troops, as to Afghanistan, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, the Philippines, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, and Somalia; the collapse of

central government, as has already happened in Somalia and the Solomon Islands; and overwhelming poverty, as in all of the countries on these lists. Hence the best predictors of modern “state failures”—i.e., revolutions, violent regime change, collapse of authority, and genocide—prove to be measures of environmental and population pressure, such as high infant mortality, rapid population growth, a high percentage of the population in their late teens and 20s, and hordes of unemployed young men without job prospects and ripe for recruitment into militias. Those pressures create conflicts over shortages of land (as in Rwanda), water, forests, fish, oil, and minerals. They create not only chronic internal conflict, but also emigration of political and economic refugees, and wars between countries arising when authoritarian regimes attack neighboring nations in order to divert popular attention from internal stresses.

In short, it is not a question open for debate whether the collapses of past societies have modern parallels and offer any lessons to us. That question is settled, because such collapses have actually been happening recently, and others appear to be imminent. Instead, the real question is how many more countries will undergo them.

As for terrorists, you might object that many of the political murderers, suicide bombers, and 9/11 terrorists were educated and moneyed rather than uneducated and desperate. That’s true, but they still depended on a desperate society for support and toleration. Any society has its murderous fanatics; the U.S. produced its own Timothy McVeigh and its Harvard educated Theodore Kaczinski. But well-nourished societies offering good job prospects, like the U.S., Finland, and South Korea, don’t offer broad support to their fanatics.

The problems of all these environmentally devastated, overpopulated, distant countries become our own problems because of globalization. We are accustomed to thinking of globalization in terms of us rich advanced First Worlders sending our good things, such as the Internet and Coca-Cola, to those poor backward Third Worlders. But globalization means nothing more than improved worldwide communications, which can convey many things in either direction; globalization is not restricted to good things carried only from the First to the Third World.

10 Among bad things transported from the First World to developing countries, we already mentioned the millions of tons of electronic garbage intentionally transported each year from industrialized nations to China. To grasp the worldwide scale of unintentional garbage transport, consider

the garbage collected on the beaches of tiny Oeno and Ducie Atolls in the Southeast Pacific Ocean uninhabited atolls, without freshwater, rarely visited even by yachts, and among the world's most remote bits of land, each over a hundred miles even from remote uninhabited Henderson Island. Surveys there detected, for each linear yard of beach, on the average one piece of garbage, which must have drifted from ships or else from Asian and American countries on the Pacific Rim thousands of miles distant. The commonest items proved to be plastic bags, buoys, glass and plastic bottles (especially Suntory whiskey bottles from Japan), rope, shoes, and lightbulbs, along with oddities such as footballs, toy soldiers and airplanes, bike pedals, and screwdrivers.

A more sinister example of bad things transported from the First World to developing countries is that the highest blood levels of toxic industrial chemicals and pesticides reported for any people in the world are for Eastern Greenland's and Siberia's Inuit people (Eskimos), who are also among the most remote from sites of chemical manufacture or heavy use. Their blood mercury levels are nevertheless in the range associated with acute mercury poisoning, while the levels of toxic PCBs (polychlorinated bi-phenyls) in Inuit mothers' breast milk fall in a range high enough to classify the milk as "hazardous waste." Effects on the women's babies include hearing loss, altered brain development, and suppressed immune function, hence high rates of ear and respiratory infections.

Why should levels of these poisonous chemicals from remote industrial nations of the Americas and Europe be higher in the Inuit than even in urban Americans and Europeans? It's because staples of the Inuit diet are whales, seals, and seabirds that eat fish, molluscs, and shrimp, and the chemicals become concentrated at each step as they pass up this food chain. All of us in the First World who occasionally consume seafood are also ingesting these chemicals, but in smaller amounts. (However, that doesn't mean that you will be safe if you stop eating seafood, because you now can't avoid ingesting such chemicals no matter what you eat.)

Still other bad impacts of the First World on the Third World include deforestation, Japan's imports of wood products currently being a leading cause of deforestation in the tropical Third World; and overfishing, due to fishing fleets of Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the heavily subsidized fleets of the European Union scouring the world's oceans. Conversely, people in the Third World can now, intentionally or unintentionally, send us their own bad things: their diseases like AIDS, SARS, cholera, and West Nile fever,

carried inadvertently by passengers on transcontinental airplanes; unstoppable numbers of legal and illegal immigrants arriving by boat, truck, train, plane, and on foot; terrorists; and other consequences of their Third World problems. We in the U.S. are no longer the isolated Fortress America to which some of us aspired in the 1930s; instead, we are tightly and irreversibly connected to overseas countries. The U.S. is the world's leading importer nation: we import many necessities (especially oil and some rare metals) and many consumer products (cars and consumer electronics), as well as being the world's leading importer of investment capital. We are also the world's leading exporter, particularly of food and of our own manufactured products. Our own society opted long ago to become interlocked with the rest of the world.

That's why political instability anywhere in the world now affects us, our trade routes, and our overseas markets and suppliers. We are so dependent on the rest of the world that if, 30 years ago, you had asked a politician to name the countries most geopolitically irrelevant to our interests because of their being so remote, poor, and weak, the list would surely have begun with Afghanistan and Somalia, yet they subsequently became recognized as important enough to warrant our dispatching U.S. troops. Today the world no longer faces just the circumscribed risk of an Easter Island society or Maya homeland collapsing in isolation, without affecting the rest of the world. Instead, societies today are so interconnected that the risk we face is of a worldwide decline. That conclusion is familiar to any investor in stock markets: instability of the U.S. stock market, or the post-9/11 economic downturn in the U.S., affects overseas stock markets and economies as well, and vice versa. We in the U.S. (or else just affluent people in the U.S.) can no longer get away with advancing our own self-interests, at the expense of the interests of others.

- 15 A good example of a society minimizing such clashes of interest is the Netherlands, whose citizens have perhaps the world's highest level of environmental awareness and of membership in environmental organizations. I never understood why, until on a recent trip to the Netherlands I posed the question to three of my Dutch friends while driving through their countryside (Plates 39,40). Their answer was one that I shall never forget:

"Just look around you here. All of this farmland that you see lies below sea level. One-fifth of the total area of the Netherlands is below sea level, as much as 22 feet below, because it used to be shallow bays,

and we reclaimed it from the sea by surrounding the bays with dikes and then gradually pumping out the water. We have a saying, 'God created the Earth, but we Dutch created the Netherlands.' These reclaimed lands are called 'polders.' We began draining them nearly a thousand years ago. Today, we still have to keep pumping out the water that gradually seeps in. That's what our windmills used to be for, to drive the pumps to pump out the polders. Now we use steam, diesel, and electric pumps instead. In each polder there are lines of pumps, starting with those farthest from the sea, pumping the water in sequence until the last pump finally pumps it out into a river or the ocean. In the Netherlands, we have another expression, 'You have to be able to get along with your enemy, because he may be the person operating the neighboring pump in your polder.' And we're all down in the polders together. It's not the case that rich people live safely up on tops of the dikes while poor people live down in the polder bottoms below sea level. If the dikes and pumps fail, we'll all drown together. When a big storm and high tides swept inland over Zeeland Province on February 1, 1953, nearly 2,000 Dutch people, both rich and poor, drowned. We swore that we would never let that happen again, and the whole country paid for an extremely expensive set of tide barriers. If global warming causes polar ice melting and a world rise in sea level, the consequences will be more severe for the Netherlands than for any other country in the world, because so much of our land is already under sea level. That's why we Dutch are so aware of our environment. We've learned through our history that we're all living in the same polder, and that our survival depends on each other's survival."

That acknowledged interdependence of all segments of Dutch society contrasts with current trends in the United States, where wealthy people increasingly seek to insulate themselves from the rest of society, aspire to create their own separate virtual polders, use their own money to buy services for themselves privately, and vote against taxes that would extend those amenities as public services to everyone else. Those private amenities include living inside gated walled communities, relying on private security guards rather than on the police, sending one's children to well-funded private schools with small classes rather than to the underfunded crowded public schools, purchasing private health insurance or medical care, drinking

bottled water instead of municipal water, and (in Southern California) paying to drive on toll roads competing with the jammed public freeways. Underlying such privatization is a misguided belief that the elite can remain unaffected by the problems of society around them: the attitude of those Greenland Norse chiefs who found that they had merely bought themselves the privilege of being the last to starve.

Throughout human history, most peoples have been connected to some other peoples, living together in small virtual polders. The Easter Islanders comprised a dozen clans, dividing their island polder into a dozen territories, and isolated from all other islands, but sharing among clans the Rano Raraku statue quarry, the Puna Pau pukao quarry, and a few obsidian quarries. As Easter Island society disintegrated, all the clans disintegrated together, but nobody else in the world knew about it, nor was anybody else affected. Southeast Polynesia's polder consisted of three interdependent islands, such that the decline of Mangareva's society was disastrous also for the Pitcairn and Henderson Islanders but for no one else. To the ancient Maya, their polder consisted at most of the Yucatan Peninsula and neighboring areas. When the Classic Maya cities collapsed in the southern Yucatan, refugees may have reached the northern Yucatan, but certainly not Florida. In contrast today our whole world has become one polder, such that events anywhere affect Americans. When distant Somalia collapsed, in went American troops; when the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union collapsed, out went streams of refugees over all of Europe and the rest of the world; and when changed conditions of society, settlement, and lifestyle spread new diseases in Africa and Asia, those diseases moved over the globe. The whole world today is a self-contained and isolated unit, as Tikopia Island and Tokugawa Japan used to be. We need to realize, as did the Tikopians and Japanese, that there is no other island/other planet to which we can turn for help, or to which we can export our problems. Instead, we need to learn, as they did, to live within our means.

I introduced this section by acknowledging that there are important differences between the ancient world and the modern world. The differences that I then went on to mention—today's larger population and more potent destructive technology, and today's interconnectedness posing the risk of a global rather than a local collapse—may seem to suggest a pessimistic outlook. If the Easter Islanders couldn't solve their milder local problems in the past, how can the modern world hope to solve its big global problems?

People who get depressed at such thoughts often then ask me, "Jared, are you optimistic or pessimistic about the world's future?" I answer, "I'm a cautious optimist." By that, I mean that, on the one hand, I acknowledge the seriousness of the problems facing us. If we don't make a determined effort to solve them, and if we don't succeed at that effort, the world as a whole within the next few decades will face a declining standard of living, or perhaps something worse. That's the reason why I decided to devote most of my career efforts at this stage of my life to convincing people that our problems have to be taken seriously and won't go away otherwise. On the other hand, we shall be able to solve our problems—if we choose to do so. That's why my wife and I did decide to have children 17 years ago: because we did see grounds for hope.

One basis for hope is that, realistically, we are not beset by insoluble 20 problems. While we do face big risks, the most serious ones are not ones beyond our control, like a possible collision with an asteroid of a size that hits the Earth every hundred million years or so. Instead, they are ones that we are generating ourselves. Because we are the cause of our environmental problems, we are the ones in control of them, and we can choose or not choose to stop causing them and start solving them. The future is up for grabs, lying in our own hands. We don't need new technologies to solve our problems; while new technologies can make some contribution, for the most part we "just" need the political will to apply solutions already available. Of course, that's a big "just." But many societies did find the necessary political will in the past. Our modern societies have already found the will to solve some of our problems, and to achieve partial solutions to others.

Another basis for hope is the increasing diffusion of environmental thinking among the public around the world. While such thinking has been with us for a long time, its spread has accelerated, especially since the 1962 publication of *Silent Spring*. The environmental movement has been gaining adherents at an increasing rate, and they act through a growing diversity of increasingly effective organizations, not only in the United States and Europe but also in the Dominican Republic and other developing countries. At the same time as the environmental movement is gaining strength at an increasing rate, so too are the threats to our environment. That's why I referred earlier in this book to our situation as that of being in an exponentially accelerating horse race of unknown outcome. It's neither impossible, nor is it assured, that our preferred horse will win the race.

What are the choices that we must make if we are now to succeed, and not to fail? There are many specific choices, of which I discuss examples in the Further Readings section, that any of us can make as individuals. For our society as a whole, the past societies that we have examined in this book suggest broader lessons. Two types of choices seem to me to have been crucial in tipping their outcomes towards success or failure: long-term planning, and willingness to reconsider core values. On reflection, we can also recognize the crucial role of these same two choices for the outcomes of our individual lives.

One of those choices has depended on the courage to practice long-term thinking, and to make bold, courageous, anticipatory decisions at a time when problems have become perceptible but before they have reached crisis proportions. This type of decision-making is the opposite of the short-term reactive decision-making that too often characterizes our elected politicians—the thinking that my politically well-connected friend decried as “90-day thinking,” i.e., focusing only on issues likely to blow up in a crisis within the next 90 days. Set against the many depressing bad examples of such short-term decision-making are the encouraging examples of courageous long-term thinking in the past, and in the contemporary world of NGOs, business, and government. Among past societies faced with the prospect of ruinous deforestation, Easter Island and Mangareva chiefs succumbed to their immediate concerns, but Tokugawa shoguns, Inca emperors, New Guinea highlanders, and 16th-century German landowners adopted a long view and reafforested. China’s leaders similarly promoted reafforestation in recent decades and banned logging of native forests in 1998. Today, many NGOs exist specifically for the purpose of promoting sane long-term environmental policies. In the business world the American corporations that remain successful for long times (e.g., Procter and Gamble) are ones that don’t wait for a crisis to force them to reexamine their policies, but that instead look for problems on the horizon and act before there is a crisis. I already mentioned Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company as having an office devoted just to envisioning scenarios decades off in the future.

Courageous, successful, long-term planning also characterizes some governments and some political leaders, some of the time. Over the last 30 years a sustained effort by the U.S. government has reduced levels of the six major air pollutants nationally by 25%, even though our energy consumption and population increased by 40% and our vehicle miles driven increased by 150% during those same decades. The governments of

Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Mauritius all recognized that their long-term economic well-being required big investments in public health to prevent tropical diseases from sapping their economies; those investments proved to be a key to those countries' spectacular recent economic growth. Of the former two halves of the overpopulated nation of Pakistan, the eastern half (independent since 1971 as Bangladesh) adopted effective family planning measures to reduce its rate of population growth, while the western half (still known as Pakistan) did not and is now the world's sixth most populous country. Indonesia's former environmental minister Emil Salim, and the Dominican Republic's former president Joaquin Balaguer, exemplify government leaders whose concern about chronic environmental dangers made a big impact on their countries. All of these examples of courageous long-term thinking in both the public sector and the private sector contribute to my hope.

The other crucial choice illuminated by the past involves the courage to make painful decisions about values. Which of the values that formerly served a society well can continue to be maintained under new changed circumstances? Which of those treasured values must instead be jettisoned and replaced with different approaches? The Greenland Norse refused to jettison part of their identity as a European, Christian, pastoral society, and they died as a result. In contrast, Tikopia Islanders did have the courage to eliminate their ecologically destructive pigs, even though pigs are the sole large domestic animal and a principal status symbol of Melanesian societies. Australia is now in the process of reappraising its identity as a British agricultural society. The Icelanders and many traditional caste societies of India in the past, and Montana ranchers dependent on irrigation in recent times, did reach agreement to subordinate their individual rights to group interests. They thereby succeeded in managing shared resources and avoiding the tragedy of the commons that has befallen so many other groups. The government of China restricted the traditional freedom of individual reproductive choice, rather than let population problems spiral out of control. The people of Finland, faced with an ultimatum by their vastly more powerful Russian neighbor in 1939, chose to value their freedom over their lives, fought with a courage that astonished the world, and won their gamble, even while losing the war. While I was living in Britain from 1958 to 1962, the British people were coming to terms with the outdatedness of cherished long-held values based on Britain's former role as the world's dominant political, economic, and naval power. The French, Germans, and other European countries have

advanced even further in subordinating to the European Union their national sovereignties for which they used to fight so dearly.

All of these past and recent reappraisals of values that I have just mentioned were achieved despite being agonizingly difficult. Hence they also contribute to my hope. They may inspire modern First World citizens with the courage to make the most fundamental reappraisal now facing us: how much of our traditional consumer values and First World living standard we afford to retain? I already mentioned the seeming political impossibility of inducing First World citizens to lower their impact on the world. But the alternative, of continuing our current impact, is more impossible. This dilemma reminds me of Winston Churchill's response to criticisms of democracy: "It has been said that Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." In that spirit, a lower-impact society is the most impossible scenario for our future—except for all other conceivable scenarios.

Actually, while it won't be easier to reduce our impact, it won't be impossible either. Remember that impact is the product of two factors: population, multiplied times impact per person. As for the first of those two factors, population growth has recently declined drastically in all First World countries, and in many Third World countries as well—including China, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, with the world's largest, fourth largest, and ninth largest populations respectively. Intrinsic population growth in Japan and Italy is already below the replacement rate, such that their existing populations (i.e., not counting immigrants) will soon begin shrinking. As for impact per person, the world would not even have to decrease its current consumption rates of timber products or of seafood: those rates could be sustained or even increased, if the world's forests and fisheries were properly managed.

My remaining cause for hope is another consequence of the globalized modern world's interconnectedness. Past societies lacked archaeologists and television. While the Easter Islanders were busy deforesting the highlands of their overpopulated island for agricultural plantations in the 1400s, they had no way of knowing that, thousands of miles to the east and west at the same time, Greenland Norse society and the Khmer Empire were simultaneously in terminal decline, while the Anasazi had collapsed a few centuries earlier, Classic Maya society a few more centuries before that, and Mycenaean Greece 2,000 years before that. Today, though, we turn on our television sets or radios or pick up our newspapers, and we see, hear, or read about what happened in Somalia or Afghanistan a few hours earlier.

Our television documentaries and books show us in graphic detail why the Easter Islanders, Classic Maya, and other past societies collapsed. Thus, we have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of distant peoples and past peoples. That's an opportunity that no past society enjoyed to such a degree. My hope in writing this book has been that enough people will choose to profit from that opportunity to make a difference.

Analyze

1. According to Diamond, how does population size affect a society's risk of collapse?
2. Briefly summarize why Diamond suggests the world's most environmentally devastated areas are also the world's most politically unstable areas.
3. How does the concept of globalization as Diamond uses it here relate to the concept of "living downstream" described in the introduction to this chapter? Put another way, how might the environmental problems of one country affect another?

Explore

1. Do you think that people commonly associate the environment with politics? Alternatively, what connotations do you think are more commonly associated with words like "sustainability"? Do you think that Diamond makes a strong argument for the connection between sustainability and social and political unrest? In a group, discuss ways that the public at large might begin to think about sustainability as a means not just of protecting the environment but also of protecting societal stability.
2. Diamond does not use the word "sustainability" in this selection, and yet issues of sustainability are discussed throughout his writing. While it may be unusual to attribute governmental collapse, civil war, or genocide to issues of sustainability, strong connections between them can be made. Using a search engine, research the conditions that brought about a major recent humanitarian crisis (e.g., a massive drought) and compose a short list that links that crisis to issues of sustainability.
3. Using your school's library databases in addition to online search engines, research one of the collapsed civilizations discussed in this selection to determine how the issue of sustainability contributed to its

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collapse. Use your findings to craft a “Did You Know” editorial for your school’s newspaper that educates readers on the historical importance of sustainability (using your research to provide examples) and how it relates to us today.