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RUSSIA

January 2023



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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
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Russian folk dance
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Map of Russia
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Chapter 1 | Geography



Aniva Lighthouse, Sakhalin
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Introduction

Russia is the world's largest country by landmass, encompassing about one-eighth of the planet's inhabited land area. At 17,098,242 sq km (6,601,668 sq mi), it is nearly twice the size of the United States. In 2021, Russia's population was 142.3 million, making it the world's ninth-most populous country. Russia sits at the north of the Eurasian landmass in both Europe and Asia. It extends almost halfway around the Northern Hemisphere, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. At its most distant points, it measures about 9,000 km (5,592 mi) from east to west and 3,800 km (2,361 mi) from north to south. Russia has the world's longest border, at 57,792 km (35,910 mi), of which 20,139 km (12,594 mi) is on land. To the north the country is bounded by several outlying portions of the Arctic Ocean, including the Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, and East Siberian Sea. To the east is the North Pacific Ocean, including the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk. To the south are North Korea, China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as well as the Caspian and Black seas. To the southwest

and west are Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and the Baltic Sea. West of the mainland, the small, detached region of Kaliningrad is wedged between Lithuania and Poland on the Baltic Sea coast.^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Geographic Regions and Topographic Features

Kola Peninsula

In the northwestern corner of Russia, adjacent to Finland and Norway, lies the Kola Peninsula. The Barents Sea, a part of the Arctic Ocean, lies to the north of the peninsula, and the White Sea, a bay of the Barents Sea, surrounds it to the south and southeast. The glacier-scoured surface of this region is rich in natural ores and minerals. Mosses, lichens, small Arctic birches, and other tundra vegetation are the only flora that can survive in the peninsula's severe climate. The primary city on the peninsula is Murmansk, an ice-free port on the Kola Bay inlet that leads into the Barents Sea and eventually the North Atlantic.^{5, 6} Murmansk is the largest city in the world north of the Arctic Circle and is the administrative base of the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet.^{7, 8}

Russian Plain

The Russian Plain (also known as the East European Plain) is the European region of Russia. It extends from the western border east to the Ural Mountains and from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Caspian Sea and Black Sea in the south. Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the nation's two largest cities, are located in the northwestern and central regions of the plain, as are the Volga, Oka, and Don rivers, which have served as important riverine transportation corridors throughout Russia's history. Glacial- and fault-created features interrupt the plain's otherwise uniform flatness. These features include the Valdai Hills, which lie between Moscow and Saint Petersburg; the Smolensk Upland; the Volga Uplands; and the Central Russian Upland.^{9, 10, 11} In the southern region of the Russian Plain, near where the Volga River drains into the Caspian Sea, is the Caspian Depression, a below-sea-level area marked by sparse rainfall and the largest natural gas deposits in Europe.^{12, 13}

- 1 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>
- 2 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.
- 3 CultureGrams World Edition 2022, "Russia," 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, https://online.culturegrams.com/world/world_country.php?cid=132&cn=Russia.
- 4 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.
- 5 A.V. Litvinenko, N.N. Filatov, and V.A. Volkov, "Chapter 1: Geography of the White Sea and Its Watershed," in *White Sea: Its Marine Environment and Ecosystem Dynamics Influenced by Global Change*, eds. Nikolai Filatov et al. (New York: Springer, 2005), 10
- 6 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Kola Peninsula," 19 March 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kola-Peninsula>.
- 7 Pavel K. Baev, "Chapter One: Troublemaking and Risk-Taking: The North in Russian Military Activities," in *Russia and the North*, ed. Elana Wilson Rowe (University of Ottawa Press, 2009), 25–27.
- 8 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Murmansk," 23 July 2013, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Murmansk-Russia>.
- 9 Robert Clifford Ostergren and John G. Rice, *The Europeans: A Geography of People, Culture, and Environment* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 48.
- 10 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Smolensk Upland," 29 January 1999, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Smolensk-Upland>.
- 11 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.
- 12 Robert W. Orttung, ed., *The Republics and Regions of the Russian Federation: A Guide to Politics, Policies, and Leaders* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 37.
- 13 Natural Gas Europe, "Caspian Sea Littoral States' Perspectives on the Southern Gas Corridor, EU Cooperation and Chinese Dominance," 25 September 2014, <http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/azerbaijan-turkmenistan-kazakhstan-southern-corridor-eu-cooperation-china> (insecure site blocked on Firefox and Chrome)

Caucasus Mountains

Between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea on Russia's southwestern border with Georgia and Azerbaijan are the Greater Caucasus Mountains, an impressive range whose ridgeline forms much of Russia's southern border in this region.¹⁴ Mount Elbrus, a 5,642-m (18,510-ft) high extinct volcanic peak, lies just north of Georgia; it is the tallest peak in Russia and in Europe as a whole.^{15, 16} The largest cities in this region, most notably Nalchik and Vladikavkaz, are located at much lower altitudes in the northern foothills.^{17, 18}

Ural Mountains

Running in a general north-south direction, the Ural Mountains have traditionally marked the boundary between Europe and Asia. To the north, the range bends northwest along the Pay-Khoy Ridge and extends into the Arctic Ocean as the Novaya Zemlya archipelago. Although the Urals have long marked a boundary within Russia, their relatively low elevation has kept them from representing a formidable barrier to east-west movement of armies or commerce. Most of the ethnic Russian population in the region lives in the southern portion of the Urals in the large cities of Perm, Ufa, Yekaterinburg, and Chelyabinsk.^{19, 20}

West Siberian Plain

East of the Ural Mountains lies one of the world's largest regions of uninterrupted flatland. Known as the West Siberian Plain, this region borders the Yenisey River Valley to the east, the Kara Sea (part of the Arctic Ocean) to the north, and the Kazakhstan border to the south. Much of the plain consists of poorly drained coniferous forestlands, which cover extensive oil and gas deposits. The best soils for agriculture, as well as the large cities of Omsk and Novosibirsk, are located in the far southern part of the plain. The Northern Siberian Lowland, an eastward extension of the West Siberian Plain, separates the Taymyr Peninsula on the Arctic Ocean from the Central Siberia Plateau.^{21, 22}

Central Siberian Plateau

Beginning east of the Yenisey River, the West Siberian Plain gives way to the Central Siberian Plateau, an up-land region with an average elevation of 500–700 m (1,650–2,300 ft). The Central Siberian Plateau borders the Lena River to the east, the Northern Siberian Lowland and Taymyr Peninsula to the north, and the Eastern Sayan Mountains and Lake Baikal region to the south.²³ On the northwestern edge of the plateau, the volcanic Putoran Mountains rise as high as 1,701 m (5,581 ft), while the eastern edge of the plateau descends to the Central Yakut

14 Chris R. Stokes, "Caucasus Mountains," in *Encyclopedia of Snow, Ice and Glaciers*, eds. Vijay P. Singh, Pratap Singh, and Umesh K. Haritashya (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2011), 127–28.

15 Mike Hamill, "Chapter 8: Mount Elbrus: Europe's Highest Summit," in *Climbing the Seven Summits: A Comprehensive Guide to the Continents' Highest Peaks* (Seattle: The Mountaineers Books, 2012), 219–37.

16 Solomon Ilich Bruk et al., "Caucasus," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 4 March 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Caucasus>.

17 RussiaTrek, "North Caucasus Federal District, Russia (North Caucasian)," 2012, http://russiatrek.org/north_caucasus-district

18 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Russia," City Population, 8 August 2015, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Russia-Cities.html>

19 Thomas M. Poulsen et al., "Ural Mountains," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 27 March 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ural-Mountains>.

20 Any Latitude, "Facts about the Ural Mountains, Boundary between Europe and Asia," n.d., <http://www.anylatitude.com/resourcepages/facts-about-the-ural-mountains-boundary-between-europe-and-asia/>

21 Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher and Alex Pulsipher, *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives*, 5th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2011), 260.

22 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

23 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Central Siberian Plateau," 19 March 2013, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Central-Siberian-Plateau>.

Lowland.^{24, 25} Major cities are rare on the plateau; the largest is Krasnoyarsk, an industrial city on the southern reaches of the Yenisey River.^{26, 27}

Taymyr Peninsula

The Taymyr Peninsula lies between the Kara and Laptev seas, two arms of the Arctic Ocean. It is the most northern region in mainland Eurasia. Its central feature is the Byrranga Mountains, whose highest peaks reach 1,150 m (3,772 ft). To the south and north of the Byrranga Mountains lie tundra lowlands. Human habitation on the peninsula is sparse because of extreme climatic conditions.²⁸ In spite of the harsh climate, however, the peninsula is home to a variety of wildlife including the musk ox, caribou, polar bears, and geese.²⁹

Mountains of the South and East

Along Russia's southern borders with northeastern Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and northeastern China, there is an extensive and complex geographic region consisting primarily of mountain ranges. These mountains span northward into eastern Siberia and then jut southward along the Kamchatka Peninsula toward Japan.³⁰

The Altai Mountains are located at the west end of this region, along Russia's borders with eastern Kazakhstan, a small section of northwestern China, and western Mongolia. Within this range, Mount Belukha rises to 4,506 m (14,783 ft), making it one of the highest points in the Asian region of Russia.^{31, 32, 33} Immediately to the east of the Altai Mountains are the Western Tannu-Ola Mountains. A narrow valley formed by the upper reaches of the Yenisey River separates them from the Western Sayan Mountains to their north.³⁴

Near Lake Baikal, the mountain ranges broaden and begin to trend toward the northeast. The dominant ranges of this region are Yablonovy and Stanovoy, which serve as a drainage divide between the basins of the Lena and Amur rivers, the two longest rivers in eastern Siberia. Extending northeastward from the eastern end of the Stanovoy Range, the Dzhugdzhur Range parallels the coast along the Sea of Okhotsk. Several ranges from the north merge toward the northeastern end of the Dzhugdzhur Range, most notably the Verkhoyansk Mountains and the Chersky Range. East of these ranges and to the north of the Sea of Okhotsk, the Kolyma Mountains continue the general trend of the Dzhugdzhur Range as they extend toward the far northeast. Other mountains beyond the Kolyma

24 Ray Sumner, *World Geography, Volume 6: Asia* (Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2001), 1545.

25 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

26 A.J. Haywood, *Siberia: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 207.

27 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Russia," City Population, 8 August 2015, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Russia-Cities.html>

28 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Taymyr Peninsula," 28 February 2011, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taymyr-Peninsula>.

29 BBC News, "Russia's Arctic: Taimyr Peninsula," 26 August 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23799682>

30 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

31 Paul Brummell, *Kazakhstan* (Chalfont St. Peter, England: Bradt Travel Guides, 2008), 221–22.

32 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Mount Belukha," 30 September 2010, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Belukha>.

33 Nikolay Ivanovich Mikhaylov et al., "Altai Mountains," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 March 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Altai-Mountains>.

34 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

include the Koryak and Sredinny mountains of the Kamchatka Peninsula, whose myriad volcanic peaks compose the northwestern section of the Pacific Ocean's "ring of fire."^{35, 36, 37}

The largest cities in Russia's southern and eastern mountain regions lie along the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which has long served as the sole land transport connection between Russia's Pacific coast and the rest of the nation. Among them are Vladivostok (Russia's largest Pacific port), Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Ulan Ude, and Chita.^{38, 39, 40}

Climate

With the exception of the Caucasus region, the adjoining lower Don and Volga river basins, a few areas in southern Siberia, and the southeast maritime region along the Pacific Ocean, all of Russia lies north of 50°N latitude.^{41, 42} By comparison, Alaska is the only portion of the United States that lies north of this latitude.^{43, 44} As a result, most of Russia experiences long and cold winters and short cool summers. A long strip of Russia lying along the country's Arctic Ocean coast exhibits a "tundra" climate in which the ground is permanently frozen and little vegetation is capable of surviving the extremely cold temperatures.^{45, 46}

During winter, a large high-pressure cell forms along Russia's southern border, directing wind to flow from the southwest in European Russia, from the south in Siberia, and from the northwest along the Russian Pacific coast. As a result, average winter temperatures in Russia tend to show more variation from west to east (warmer in the west, colder in the east) than from north to south. In the far northeast, winter temperatures reach extreme lows in a region between the Verkhoyansk Mountains and the Chersky Range.⁴⁷ Oymyakon and Verkhoyansk, two villages in this so-called "pole of cold," have both claimed the title for lowest temperature ever recorded outside Antarctica, with figures of -68°C (-90°F) and -71°C (-96°F), respectively.⁴⁸

In the southern areas of the Russian Plain, as well as in scattered portions of southern Siberia, meteorologists classify the climate as "mid-latitude steppe," which is comparable to that of the Great Plains of the United States and southern Canada. This climatic region corresponds closely with Russia's grain belt.⁴⁹

35 Maria Shahgedanova et al., "The Mountains of Southern Siberia," in *The Physical Geography of Northern Eurasia*, ed. Maria Shahgedanova (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 341.

36 John F. Hoffecker and Scott A. Elias, *Human Ecology of Beringia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 22–23.

37 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

38 Simon Richmond et al., "Eastern Siberia," in *Lonely Planet: Russia* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2009), 584–642.

39 Charles T. Evans, "Pacific Coast," Northern Virginia Community College Online, 2007, <http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/evans/HIS241/Notes/Geography/Pacific.html>

40 Thomas Brinkhoff, "Russia," City Population, 8 August 2015, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Russia-Cities.html>

41 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

42 Maps of World, "Russia Latitude and Longitude Map," n.d., http://www.mapsofworld.com/lat_long/russian-federation-lat-long.html

43 Maps of World, "USA Latitude and Longitude Map," n.d., http://www.mapsofworld.com/lat_long/usa-lat-long.html

44 Maps of World, "Alaska Latitude and Longitude Map," n.d., <http://www.mapsofworld.com/usa/states/alaska/lat-long.html>

45 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

46 Herón Márquez, *Russia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group, 2004), 15.

47 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

48 James F. Petersen, Dorothy Sack, and Robert E. Gabler, *Fundamentals of Physical Geography* (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, 2011), 189.

49 Les Rowntree et al., *Diversity Amid Globalization: World Regions, Environment, Development*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 376, 378.

Annual precipitation is modest throughout Russia and mostly confined to the summer season. In the Russian and West Siberian plains, annual precipitation is highest in the northwest and generally declines as one moves toward the southeast part of this region, with the exception of the higher elevations of the Ural Mountains. Mountain elevations and regions along the Pacific coast are the wettest areas in the Russian Far East.⁵⁰

Bodies of Water

Russia has some of the longest rivers and largest river basins in the world. Specifically, the four largest river drainage basins in Asia (the Ob, Yenisey, Lena, and Amur) all lie mostly within Russia, and the largest European river drainage basin (the Volga) is completely within Russia. The large Russian rivers are classified by the bodies of water into which they drain.^{51, 52}

Caspian Sea/Black Sea

The Volga River is the primary source of water for the Caspian Sea. It drains a large portion of the central and southern Russian Plain, and it has long been the country's most important inland waterway, carrying two-thirds of all river traffic. The Volga's source lies in the Valdai Hills northwest of Moscow, and it receives the water of more than 200 tributaries along its path to the Caspian. The Volga is a heavily engineered river system. A series of canals connect it to Moscow, the White Sea (in the Arctic Ocean), and the Black Sea. Furthermore, numerous large reservoirs on the Volga and its tributaries produce a hydroelectric generating capacity of about 11 million kilowatts.^{53, 54, 55}

West of the Volga River Basin, the Don River flows into the Sea of Azov, an arm of the Black Sea, which makes it the only navigable Russian river naturally accessible to the Mediterranean Sea (via the Bosphorus Strait). Near Volgograd, the Volga River links to the huge Tsimlyansk Reservoir on the Don River via the 80-km (49-mi) Volga-Don Ship Canal.^{56, 57} Halfway between the Don's mouth (near the city of Rostov) and the Tsimlyansk Reservoir, the Donets River tributary feeds the Don on its right bank.⁵⁸

North Siberian Rivers

Most of the major rivers of Siberia flow generally south to north, emptying into various arms of the Arctic Ocean. The largest of these rivers are the Ob, Yenisey, and Lena, all of which are among the longest rivers in the world. The Ob is the principal river of the West Siberian Plain, and it has the world's sixth-largest drainage basin. On its upstream stretch, it supplies the power for a large hydroelectric plant at Novosibirsk, Russia's third-largest city and a major

50 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

51 Herón Márquez, *Russia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group, 2004), 13–14.

52 V. Bogatov, S. Sirotsky, and D. Yuriev, "Chapter 19: The Ecosystem of the Amur River," in *River and Stream Ecosystems of the World*, eds. Colbert E. Cushing, Kenneth W. Cummins, and G. Wayne Minshall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 601–14.

53 Pavel Sergeyevich Kuzin et al., "Volga River," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 26 December 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Volga-River>.

54 Center for Global Education, "Rivers of Life: The Volga River," n.d., http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river_profiles/Volga.html

55 World Wildlife Fund, "Volga: Russia's National River," n.d., http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/about_freshwater/rivers/volga/ bad link

56 Philip P. Micklin et al., "Don River," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 16 December 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Don-River>.

57 World Port Source, "Waterways: Don River; Port Map," n.d., http://www.worldportsource.com/waterways/Don_River_235.php

58 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Donets River," 28 December 2011, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Donets-River>.

industrial center. Tributaries flowing from the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains feed the Ob. The Ob's source is located in the Altai Mountains, near the western Mongolian border.^{59, 60, 61}

On the eastern edge of the West Siberian Plain lies the Yenisey River, whose major tributaries flow into it from the Central Siberian Plateau to the east. One of these tributaries is the Angara River, which drains Lake Baikal, the largest lake entirely within Russia and the oldest and deepest freshwater body on earth. Lake Baikal's tremendous depth of 1,620 m (5,315 ft) makes it the world's most voluminous freshwater body—its waters represent roughly one-fifth of all fresh water on the earth's surface.^{62, 63} The largest city on the Yenisey River is Krasnoyarsk, which, like Novosibirsk on the Ob River, sits near a large hydroelectric plant at a Trans-Siberian Railroad river crossing.^{64, 65}

The Lena River separates the Central Siberian Plateau to the west from the various mountain ranges to its east and south. The Lena's headwaters begin near Lake Baikal, from where the river sweeps northeast for much of its course before bending back toward the northwest near Yakutsk.^{66, 67} Ust-Kut, where the Baikal-Amur Mainline railroad crosses the Lena, and Lensk, a river hub for the diamond mines to its north, are the only other cities of any size along the river's 4,400-km (2,734-mi) path to the Laptev Sea.^{68, 69, 70}

Far-Eastern Siberian Rivers

The high mountains that run along much of Russia's Pacific coast severely limit the number of significant rivers flowing to the world's largest ocean. The only major river that flows into the Pacific is the Amur River, which forms the Russian-Chinese border for almost 1,610 km (1,000 mi) from the point where the left-bank Shilka River and the right-bank Argun River meet to form the Amur proper. The Argun itself forms the Russian-Chinese border for 965 km (600 mi) before its confluence with the Shilka. Near Khabarovsk, the largest city on the Amur, the river bends toward the northeast before eventually flowing into the Tatar Strait near Sakhalin Island. Khabarovsk is also the point at which the Trans-Siberian Railroad crosses the Amur River before turning southward toward the Pacific port city of Vladivostok.^{71, 72, 73, 74}

59 John P. Rafferty, ed., *The Living Earth: Rivers and Streams* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2011), 215–22.

60 Lewis Owen et al., "Ob River," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 June 2018, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ob-River>.

61 World Population Review, "Major Cities in Russia Population 2015," 2015, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/russia-population/major-cities-in-russia/>.

62 John P. Rafferty, ed., *The Living Earth: Lakes and Wetlands* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2011), 113–16.

63 Grigory Ivanovich Galazy et al., "Lake Baikal," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 30 December 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Baikal>.

64 A.J. Haywood, *Siberia: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 207.

65 World Population Review, "Major Cities in Russia Population 2015," 2015, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/russia-population/major-cities-in-russia/>.

66 Shaun Walker, "Yakutsk: Journey to the Coldest City on Earth," *Independent*, 21 January 2008, <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/yakutsk-journey-to-the-coldest-city-on-earth-6182231.html>.

67 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Lena River," n.d., retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lena-River>.

68 Athol Yates and Nicholas Zvegintzov, *Siberian BAM Guide: Rail, Rivers & Road*, 2nd ed. (Hindhead, Surrey, U.K: Trailblazer Publications, 2001), 256.

69 François Costard and Emmanuèle Gautier, "Chapter 11: The Lena River: Hydromorphodynamic Features in a Deep Permafrost Zone," in *Large Rivers: Geomorphology and Management*, ed. Avijit Gupta (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2007), 225–34.

70 Athol Yates and Nicholas Zvegintzov, *Siberian BAM Guide: Rail, Rivers & Road*, 2nd ed. (Hindhead, Surrey, U.K: Trailblazer Publications, 2001), 77, 78.

71 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Argun River," 8 December 2017, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Argun-River>.

72 Brahma Chellaney, *Water: Asia's New Battleground* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 256–60.

73 Lewis Owen et al., "Amur River," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2016, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Amur-River>.

74 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Shilka River," 31 January 2011, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Shilka-River>.

Major Cities

City	Population ⁷⁵
Moscow	12,455,682
Saint Petersburg	5,384,342
Novosibirsk	1,620,162
Yekaterinburg	1,495,066
Kazan	1,257,341
Nizhny Novgorod	1,244,254
Chelyabinsk	1,187,960
Samara	1,144,759
Omsk	1,138,897
Rostov-on-Don	1,137,704
Ufa	1,125,933

Moscow

From its modest beginning as a trading post on the Moscow River, Moscow has grown over the centuries to become one of the world's best-known cities. First mentioned as a village in 1147, it went on to become the capital of the Muscovy principality. In the 15th century Moscow became the capital of the Russian empire, and would remain so until 1712, when the seat of state transferred to Saint Petersburg. Moscow was almost completely destroyed by fire during the 1812 French invasion of Russia. With the advent of the Soviet Union in 1918, Moscow regained its status as the capital city. Today, it is the political, educational, business, religious, and transportation center of Russia.⁷⁶

The architectural centerpiece of Moscow is the Kremlin, a triangular fortress complex built starting in the 15th century on a bend of the Moscow River. Its red brick walls and distinctive towers came to symbolize Soviet power in the 20th century and a resurgent Russia in the 21st. The complex contains heavily guarded government buildings, including the president's residence, as well as beautiful palaces and churches that are open to the public. Adjacent to the Kremlin is Red Square, the heart of the city and site of Soviet and Russian holiday parades. The square contains the Lenin Mausoleum and the iconic Saint Basil's Cathedral with its 10 unique and colorful onion domes.⁷⁷

Despite the growing importance of the services sector, manufacturing and engineering dominate Moscow's economy, and the city is Russia's largest industrial center. Many of the city's factories produce highly specialized items such as ball bearings, machine tools, precision measuring tools, and aerospace components. Chemical production, food processing, and furniture making are other important components of the city's economy. Moscow

⁷⁵ City Population, "Ukraine: Provinces and Major Cities," 2022, retrieved on 5 May 2022, <http://www.citypopulation.de/en/ukraine/cities/>

⁷⁶ Kathleen Berton Murrell et al., "Moscow," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 October 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Moscow>.

⁷⁷ Kathleen Berton Murrell et al., "Moscow," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 October 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Moscow>.

is also Russia's primary financial and commercial center; most incoming foreign investment passes through the city's financial institutions.⁷⁸

Saint Petersburg

In terms of size, economic power, and historical and cultural importance, the only Russian city that remotely rivals Moscow is Saint Petersburg. The site of several battles between Russia and Sweden in the 13th–18th centuries, Saint Petersburg came into being after Tsar Peter the Great recaptured the area in 1703; it became the Russian capital in 1712.^{79, 80} During World War I, the city's name was changed to Petrograd and in 1924 Soviet officials changed it to Leningrad. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the city's residents elected to restore the traditional name of Saint Petersburg.⁸¹

Saint Petersburg's position at the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland gives it access to the Baltic Sea, and it is Russia's largest port. The city lacks a distinctive center, which would traditionally be a fortress, or kremlin. Its famed historical buildings are more Western European in design than those of similar or older age in other Russian cities, such as Moscow.^{82, 83}

During the post-Soviet period, Saint Petersburg's economy has grown faster than the nation's economy as a whole, fueled by an industrial sector that is second only to Moscow in output. Tourism has also become an increasing source of income for the city, and much of its industry has moved away from the city center in order to preserve the uniqueness of its historical districts.^{84, 85}

Novosibirsk

Novosibirsk is the main city in western Siberia and Russia's third-largest city.^{86, 87} The city came into being in 1893 with the advance of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.^{88, 89, 90} During the 1920s, Novosibirsk became a major transportation center for the Kuznetsk coalfields to the city's east. Its importance as a transportation hub increased during the 1930s when railways linked it to the city of Almaty, in Kazakhstan.⁹¹ Rapid industrialization occurred during World War II, when many industries in European Russia moved to the Novosibirsk area for security purposes. In the 1960s, Soviet officials developed the town of Akademgorodok just south of Novosibirsk to house a number of scientific research institutions. This development made Novosibirsk, for a time, one of the premier scientific research centers in the

78 Kathleen Berton Murrell et al., "Moscow," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 October 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Moscow>.

79 Robert K. Massie, "Chapter 27: The Founding of St. Petersburg," in *Peter the Great: His Life and World* (New York: Random House, 1980), 355–66.

80 Lonely Planet, "St. Petersburg: History," 2015, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/russia/st-petersburg/history>

81 Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 23.

82 Mary McAuley et al., "Saint Petersburg," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14 September 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/St-Petersburg-Russia>.

83 Lonely Planet, "St. Petersburg: History," 2015, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/russia/st-petersburg/history>

84 Mary McAuley et al., "Saint Petersburg," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14 September 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/St-Petersburg-Russia>.

85 Lonely Planet, "St. Petersburg: History," 2015, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/russia/st-petersburg/history>

86 World Population Review, "Major Cities in Russia Population 2015," 2015, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/russia-population/major-cities-in-russia/>

87 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Novosibirsk," 4 February 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Novosibirsk-Russia>.

88 Simon Richmond and Mara Vorhees, *Lonely Planet: Trans-Siberian Railway* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2002), 182.

89 Bryn Thomas, *Trans-Siberian Handbook*, 8th ed. (Hindhead, Surrey, UK: Trailblazer Publications, 2011), 213.

90 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Novosibirsk," 4 February 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Novosibirsk-Russia>.

91 Simon Richmond and Mara Vorhees, *Lonely Planet: Trans-Siberian Railway* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2002), 183.

Soviet Union. The region has attracted investment from international firms such as IBM, Intel, and Schlumberger and has seen the establishment of several local software development companies.^{92, 93, 94}

Novosibirsk remains economically reliant on its industrial and manufacturing base. The local Novosibirsk Steel Works of Kuzmin is a key provider of alloyed steel products for all of Russia. Tin-smelting and gold-refining plants also operate in the region. Chemical products, processed food products, electrical equipment, machinery, textiles, and various consumer products are components of the city's manufacturing sector. In addition, the city is the major cultural and educational center in Siberia. It is home to theater, ballet, opera, museums, and an orchestra. Approximately 24 institutions of higher education call the city home.⁹⁵

Yekaterinburg

Yekaterinburg is the largest city in Russia's Ural region and the gateway to Siberia on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Its history dates back to 1723, when Peter the Great founded it as part of his campaign to develop the mineral riches of the Urals. He named the city after his second wife, who became Empress Catherine I upon his death. In 1918, the Bolsheviks executed Tsar Nicholas II and his family in the cellar of a house in Yekaterinburg.^{96, 97, 98, 99} The location has since become a site of pilgrimage.^{100, 101}

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviets developed the city as a major industrial center. One of the most well known of the numerous industrial facilities built in this era is the Uralmash, which over its long history has produced everything from mining and metallurgical industry equipment to armored tanks and drilling rigs. At its peak, the Uralmash employed 50,000 people; although only a small percentage of that number now work there, the plant remains the city's largest commercial operation. Food processing, gem cutting, and manufacturing of engineering products are other important industries carried out in the city.¹⁰²

From 1924 to 1991, Yekaterinburg was named Sverdlovsk, after a Bolshevik leader. During the Cold War, Sverdlovsk was a Soviet center for chemical and biological warfare research. In one infamous episode in 1979, which only came to light in the 1990s, a biological weapons facility on the outskirts of the city accidentally released an aerosol of anthrax spores, leading to 64 deaths.^{103, 104}

92 Brett Forrest, "The Next Silicon Valley: Siberia," CNN Money, 26 March 2007,

http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2007/04/02/8403482/index.htm?postversion=2007032605

93 Ashok Deo Bardhan, Dwight M. Jaffee, and Cynthia A. Kroll, *Globalization and a High-Tech Economy: California, the United States and Beyond* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 81.

94 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Novosibirsk," 4 February 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Novosibirsk-Russia>.

95 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Novosibirsk," 4 February 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Novosibirsk-Russia>.

96 Wendy Slater, *The Many Deaths of Tsar Nicholas II: Relics, Remains and the Romanovs* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 49–51.

97 A.J. Haywood, *Siberia: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32.

98 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 438–39.

99 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Yekaterinburg," 22 February 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yekaterinburg>.

100 Jarrett Zigon, ed., *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 146.

101 Paul Gilbert, "60,000 Mark Royal Days in Ekaterinburg," 17 July 2015, http://www.angelfire.com/pa/ImperialRussian/blog/index.blog?entry_id=1468919

102 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Yekaterinburg," 22 February 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yekaterinburg>.

103 PBS Frontline, "Plague War: The 1979 Anthrax Leak in Sverdlovsk," October 1998, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/plague/sverdlovsk/>

104 PBS Frontline, "Interview: Dr. Kanatjan Alibekov," October 1998, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/plague/sverdlovsk/alibekov.html>

Kazan

Kazan is located in western Russia just north of the confluence of the Volga and Kazanka rivers. The city was founded in the 13th century by the Mongols of the Golden Horde. It developed as a trading center and in 1552 came under Russian control. Starting in the 18th century it became a trading gateway to Siberia and by the 20th century it was one of Russia's main manufacturing centers. Today, traditional industries such as soap making and leatherworking have been joined by newer ones such as oil refining and electrical engineering. The city is also a center for learning, with renowned institutions of higher learning such as Kazan State University and a branch of Russia's Academy of Sciences.¹⁰⁵

Environmental Concerns

Water Pollution

Russia continues to suffer from a Soviet legacy of industrial, agricultural, and energy development practices that largely ignored environmental ramifications. Approximately one-third of drinking water samples have high levels of chemical contaminants.^{106, 107, 108, 109} Numerous bodies of water within or on the borders of Russia are severely polluted.¹¹⁰ The Volga River, for example, accumulates upstream contaminants from industrial and agricultural runoff due to the large dams built along the river's course. At Astrakhan, near the Volga's delta on the Caspian Sea, runoff from farms and factories has caused algae blooms to flourish, depriving the river and wetland wildlife of necessary oxygen and greatly affecting the river's ecosystem.^{111, 112, 113} The Techa River runs along one of the most contaminated nuclear dumping sites in the world. Officials banned drinking, bathing, or irrigating with water from the river in 1953.^{114, 115} In Lake Baikal, pollution levels are so high that the world's deepest lake is turning into a swamp.^{116, 117, 118}

¹⁰⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Kazan," 10 September 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kazan-Russia>.

¹⁰⁶ *Le Monde Diplomatique*, "Environmental Disaster in Eastern Europe," 2000, <https://mondediplo.com/2000/07/19envidisaster>

¹⁰⁷ Simon Adams, *Changing World: Russia*, eBook, (London, UK: Encyclopædia, Inc., 2015),

¹⁰⁸ Greenpeace, "Russia's Battle with Water Pollution Continues," 5 September 2014, http://rbth.com/science_and_tech/2014/09/05/russias_battle_with_water_pollution_continues_39577.html

¹⁰⁹ Alexey A. Dudarev et al., "Food and Water Security Issues in Russia II: Water Security in General Population of Russian Arctic, Siberia and Far East, 200-2011," *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 72 (December 2013), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3860331/>

¹¹⁰ Greenpeace, "Greenpeace Launched Water Patrol on the Moskva River," 17 June 2013, <http://m.greenpeace.org/russia/en/base/news/17-05-2013-Greenpeace-launched-Water-Patrol-on-the-Moskva-River/>

¹¹¹ Alex Rodriguez, "Russia's Toxic Rivers Running Out of Time," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 July 2008, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-russia-rivers-09-jul09.0.1995108.story>

¹¹² Voice of Russia, "Russia to Improve Water Quality in Rivers," 17 August 2011, <http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/08/17/54786633.html>

¹¹³ Paul Goble, "Window on Eurasia: Polluted Volga an Ecological Disaster for 60 Million Russians," 24 June 2103, <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2013/06/window-on-eurasia-polluted-volga.html>

¹¹⁴ Brian Handwerk, "Russia's Radioactive River," *National Geographic Daily News*, 20 December 2010, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/12/photogalleries/101221-radioactive-river-russia-pictures/russian-radioactive-river-sign_29452_600x450.jpg

¹¹⁵ Kate Brown, "Life in a Real Nuclear Wasteland," *Slate*, 18 April 2013, http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/medical_examiner/2013/04/nuclear_contamination_in_former_ussr_radioactivity_in_muslomovo_on_techa.html

¹¹⁶ *Science Daily*, "Water Pollution Continues at Famous Russian Lake," 25 March 2008, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080324103026.htm>

¹¹⁷ *Russia Today*, "Lake Baikal, World's Deepest Body of Freshwater, Turning into Swamp—Ecologists," 8 September 2014, <https://www.rt.com/news/186088-lake-baikal-pollution-swamp/>

¹¹⁸ World Wildlife Fund, "Lake Baikal, Russia," n.d., http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/lake_baikal/

Nuclear Environmental Threats

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union built several secret military and civilian nuclear facilities. Safety standards for the handling and disposal of radioactive materials at these sites were often lax; today, there is continuing concern about how officials handle nuclear materials at the country's remaining nuclear facilities. Russia also continues to operate 10 RMBK nuclear reactors near Saint Petersburg, Smolensk, and Kursk. This type of reactor, in which graphite rods are used to control the nuclear chain reaction, is considered less safe than other reactor designs. The reactor that led to the nuclear accident at Chernobyl was an RMBK reactor.^{119, 120, 121}

The greatest source of environmental concern in Russia is the Mayak nuclear waste processing plant, located in the eastern Urals between Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk, two major cities.¹²² The site once produced plutonium for the Soviet nuclear weapons program and is considered "the most radioactively contaminated area in the world."^{123, 124} A 1957 explosion at the site's waste-storage facility produced the second-worst nuclear disaster of all time, behind the Chernobyl nuclear accident nearly 30 years later.^{125, 126, 127} Storage reservoirs near the plant have now accumulated 1.2 billion curies of radioactive waste, the equivalent of 22 Chernobyls.¹²⁸ One of these storage sites is Lake Karachai, where Mayak's wastes were first stored in 1951. The lake has been covered with concrete in order to prevent its deadly sediments from eroding and blowing away in the wind. The lake is said to be so radioactive that an hour-long exposure along its shoreline delivers enough radiation to ensure acute radiation sickness resulting in death.^{129, 130}

Deforestation

Deforestation from illegal logging is a major problem in Russia. Between 2001 and 2019, the country lost 64 million hectares (158 million acres) of its tree cover.¹³¹ The rapid cutting of trees has raised levels of carbon dioxide and

119 World Nuclear Association, "RBMK Reactors," June 2010, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/inf31.html>

120 World Nuclear Association, "Early Soviet Reactors and EU Accession," July 2013, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Safety-and-Security/Safety-of-Plants/Appendices/Early-Soviet-Reactors-and-EU-Accession/>

121 Aria Bendix, "Russia Still Has 10 Chernobyl-Style Reactors that Scientists Say Aren't Necessarily Safe," Business Insider, 4 June 2019, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/could-chernobyl-happen-again-russia-reactors-2019-6>.

122 Leonid Ragozin, "Russia Challenged by Nuclear Woes," BBC News, 28 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4759224.stm>

123 Rob Edwards, "Russia's Toxic Shocker: Bomb Factories Created the Most Radioactive Place on Earth," *New Scientist*, 6 December 1997, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg15621112-400-russias-toxic-shocker-bomb-factories-created-the-most-radioactive-place-on-earth/>

124 Vladimir Sliviyak, trans. Maria Kaminskaya, "Russia's Infamous Reprocessing Plant Mayak Never Stopped Illegal Dumping of Radioactive Waste into Nearby River, Poisoning Residents, Newly Disclosed Court Finding Says," Bellona, 24 December 2011, <http://bellona.org/news/nuclear-issues/radwaste-storage-at-nuclear-fuel-cycle-plants-in-russia/2011-12-russias-infamous-reprocessing-plant-mayak-never-stopped-illegal-dumping-of-radioactive-waste-into-nearby-river-poisoning-residents-newly-disclosed-court-finding-says>

125 Rob Edwards, "Russia's Toxic Shocker: Bomb Factories Created the Most Radioactive Place on Earth," *New Scientist*, 6 December 1997, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg15621112-400-russias-toxic-shocker-bomb-factories-created-the-most-radioactive-place-on-earth/>

126 Greenpeace, "The Second Biggest Nuclear Disaster in History," n.d., <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/features/mayak-nuclear-disaster280907/>

127 Nuclear Heritage, "Kyshtym Disaster," 17 April 2015, http://www.nuclear-heritage.net/index.php/Kyshtym_Disaster

128 Leonid Ragozin, "Russia Challenged by Nuclear Woes," BBC News, 28 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4759224.stm>

129 WISE/NIRS, "Soviet Weapons Plant Pollution," WISE News Communique, 2 November 1990, <http://www.wiseinternational.org/nuclear-monitor/341/soviet-weapons-plant-pollution>

130 Jess Zimmerman, "Meet the Lake so Polluted that Spending an Hour there would Kill You," *Grist*, 3 October 2012, <http://grist.org/list/meet-the-lake-so-polluted-that-spending-an-hour-there-would-kill-you/>

131 Oliver Yorke, "Deforestation in Russia: Depleting the Lungs of the World," *Earth.org*, 19 November 2020, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://earth.org/deforestation-in-russia/>.

raised erosion levels, especially in the country's far eastern region.^{132, 133, 134} Erosion and loss of topsoil have resulted in major drops in soil fertility and a reduction in the quality and quantity of arable land.^{135, 136}

Natural Hazards

Approximately 8,000 earthquakes are detected annually in Russia. More than half of these occur in the mountainous coastal regions of eastern Russia, particularly the Kuril Islands and the Kamchatka Peninsula, which are susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic activity.¹³⁷ In March 2013, a magnitude 8.3 earthquake struck along the Kamchatka Peninsula in the far eastern region of the country. Scientists believe it is the deepest earthquake ever recorded.¹³⁸ Russian scientists are predicting that more powerful earthquakes will wrack the far eastern region in the near term.¹³⁹

Heavy rains and flooding rivers create costly natural disasters in Russia nearly every year.¹⁴⁰ In the summer of 2021, heavy rains in the south of the country led to the flooding of 1,400 houses and the evacuation of 1,500 people.¹⁴¹ In 2013, one of the most devastating floods to strike the nation occurred in the far east of the country. As many as 100,000 people were evacuated and flood waters did not fully recede for weeks.^{142, 143} The Siberian rivers, in particular, are notorious for spring ice jams that can induce river flooding.^{144, 145, 146} If the jams grow too large or occur close to population centers, officials sometimes use explosives to break the ice and free up the river's flow.^{147, 148} In the spring of 2001, for example, authorities called upon a squadron of Russian bombers to eliminate an ice jam on the Lena River that threatened to flood Yakutsk, a city of 200,000 people.^{149, 150, 151}

¹³² Brett Smith, "Russia: Environmental Issues, Policies and Clean Technology," AZO Clean Tech, 17 June 2015, <http://www.azocleantech.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=542>

¹³³ Climate Change News, "Russia Tops 2000–2012 Deforestation Charts," 15 November 2013, <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2013/11/15/russia-lost-more-forest-cover-in-2012-than-any-other-country/>

¹³⁴ Andrew Freedman, "Canada and Russia Beat Tropical Countries to Top Global Deforestation List," Mashable, 9 April 2015, <http://mashable.com/2015/04/09/canada-russia-top-deforestation-list/#U.mXVNHslkq9>

¹³⁵ Greenpack Online, "Soil: Degradation of Soil," n.d., <http://www.greenpackonline.org/english/environmental-components.php?id=03-04-07-03>

¹³⁶ Naturvernforbundet, "Environmental Issues in Russia," n.d., <http://naturvernforbundet.no/international/environmental-issues-in-russia/category930.html>

¹³⁷ Svetlana Arkhangelskaya, "Russia's Far East Faces Future of Powerful Earthquakes," Russia beyond the Headlines, 17 September 2015, http://rbth.com/science_and_tech/2015/09/17/russias_far_east_faces_future_of_powerful_earthquakes_49335.html

¹³⁸ Becky Oskin, "Russian Earthquake could be Deepest Ever," Live Science, 24 May 2013, <http://www.livescience.com/34671-russian-earthquake-deepest-ever.html>

¹³⁹ Svetlana Arkhangelskaya, "Russia's Far East Faces Future of Powerful Earthquakes," Russia beyond the Headlines, 17 September 2015, http://rbth.com/science_and_tech/2015/09/17/russias_far_east_faces_future_of_powerful_earthquakes_49335.html

¹⁴⁰ Disaster Center, "The 100 Most Expensive Natural Disasters of the 20th Century," n.d., <http://www.disastercenter.com/disaster/TOP100C.html>

¹⁴¹ Associated Press, "Over 1,500 Evacuated in Southern Russia after Heavy Rains," 14 August 2021, retrieved on 9 February 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-russia-environment-and-nature-4d1e62fc9541614f94ab24c46ec20659>

¹⁴² BBC News, "Russia Battles Huge Far East Flood—20,000 Evacuated," 19 August 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23753065>

¹⁴³ Russia Today, "Russia's Far East Hit by Biggest Floods in 120 Years," 19 August 2013, <http://www.rt.com/news/record-floods-russia-east-635/>

¹⁴⁴ NASA Earth Observatory, "Flooding in Siberia," 5 June 2002, <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/view.php?id=9681>

¹⁴⁵ L.M. Korytny and N.V. Kichigina, "Section 2: Floods in East Siberia: Damage and Risks," in *River Basin Management VI*, ed. C.A. Brebbia (Southampton, UK: WIT Press, 2011), 96–100.

¹⁴⁶ Ray A. Kostaschuk, Dmitriy A. Vershinin, and Valeri A. Zemtsov, "Ice-jam Floods," Hydro International, 17 July 2014, <http://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/ice-jam-floods-2>

¹⁴⁷ BBC News, "Floods Engulf Siberian Town," 18 May 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1335821.stm>

¹⁴⁸ NASA, Earth Observatory, "Flooding on Russia's Lena River," 5 June 2002, <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=2502>

¹⁴⁹ CNN, "Siberian Ice Bombed as Flood Worsens," 18 May 2001, http://articles.cnn.com/2001-05-18/weather/russia.floods_1_lena-river-ice-jam-ice-floes?_s=PM:WEATHER

¹⁵⁰ CNN, "Flood Crisis Worsens in Siberia," 21 May 2001, <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WEATHER/05/21/russia.floods/>

¹⁵¹ John Daniszewski, "Russian Planes Bomb Ice Jam," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 May 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/may/18/news/mn-65062>

Wildfires reached record-breaking levels in Russia in 2021. The carbon dioxide emissions of these burns undermine the potential for CO₂ sequestration of Russia's forests. Of particular concern are the smoldering, peat, and overwintering “zombie” fires that can burn for years in the Siberian tundra.^{152, 153, 154}

152 Andrew Roth, “Russia Forest Fire Damage Worst Since Records Began, Says Greenpeace,” *The Guardian*, 22 September 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/22/russia-forest-fire-damage-worst-since-records-began-says-greenpeace>

153 Associated Press, “What’s Fueling Russia’s ‘Unprecedented’ Fires?” *Voice of America*, 23 July 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_whats-fueling-russias-unprecedented-fires/6208642.html

154 Vera Kuklina et al, “Fires on Ice: Emerging Permafrost Peatlands Fire Regimes in Russia’s Subarctic Taiga,” *Land* **2022**, 11(3), 322; <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11030322>

Russia in Perspective

Geography Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The Russian Plain makes up the largest area of the European region of Russia. ☐ True ☐ False
2. The West Siberian Plain is devoid of energy resources. ☐ True ☐ False
3. The area around the Mayak nuclear facility is contaminated with radioactivity. ☐ True ☐ False
4. Average winter temperatures in Russia vary more from north to south rather than from west to east. ☐ True ☐ False
5. The Volga River system is a major riverine transportation network in western Russia. ☐ True ☐ False

Russia in Perspective

Geography Assessment Answers

1. True:
Extending from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Caspian and Black seas in the south, the vast Russian Plain encompasses most of European Russia.
2. False:
Much of the West Siberian Plain consists of poorly drained coniferous forestlands, which cover extensive oil and gas deposits.
3. True:
The area around Mayak, where Soviet authorities produced plutonium for their nuclear weapons program, is considered “the most radioactively contaminated area in the world.”
4. False:
Because of atmospheric pressure and wind patterns, average winter temperatures in Russia tend to be warmer in the west and colder in the east.
5. True:
Located on the Russian Plain, the Volga River and its tributaries carry roughly two-thirds of the nation’s river traffic.

Chapter 2 | History



Monument to Nicholas I on St. Isaac's Square, Saint Petersburg
Wikimedia/Andrew Shiva

Introduction

Millenia ago, Slavic tribes settled between the Dnieper and Volga rivers and began to exploit the area's abundant natural resources. Over centuries of warfare, trade, and invasions from west and east, the tribes coalesced into principalities, centered first in Kievan Rus and then in Muscovy, and adopted Christianity. Muscovy became Russia in the 16th century, and the principality grew into an empire that eventually stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Even as Russia became a major European power, most of its people remained tied to the land while its rulers were caught between tradition and modernity. After revolutionary tumult did away with the imperial order at the end of the first world war, Russia transformed into the Soviet Union, the unlikely standard-bearer of communism. The new state soon descended into brutal dictatorship and then had to defend itself against a Nazi invasion at enormous cost. After nearly five decades of postwar superpower rivalry with the United States, the Soviet Union disintegrated, and a slimmed-down Russia stumbled into the global market economy. Since coming to power at the turn of the millennium, Vladimir Putin has sought to reestablish Russia as a respected regional and global power, but his interests have increasingly clashed with those of western Europe and the United States.¹

¹ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

Early History

Origin of the Russian State

Sometime during the early centuries of the first millennium CE, Slavic tribes migrated into the northern Russian Plain, probably from a large region to the south. East Slav ethnic groups that came to inhabit this region established many trading posts along numerous rivers that lay between the Baltic and Black seas. Among the most important of these were Kyiv, the modern-day capital of Ukraine, and Novgorod, located on the Volkhov River and south of the modern-day city of Saint Petersburg.^{2, 3}

By the ninth century CE, these northern trading posts had come under the dominance of armies led by Scandinavian invaders known as Varangians. Some historians point to the Varangians as the inspiration for the word Rus (after the dominant Varangian clan name), from which Russia (meaning “land of the Rus”) derives.^{4, 5, 6}

The most influential of the Varangian princes who swept into the northern Russian Plain was Rurik, whose dynasty would rule a collection of principalities in the East Slavic territories until the very end of the 16th century. The lands under Varangian control stretched from the northeastern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains in the southwest to the upper reaches of the Dvina River in the northeast. To the southeast, in the region between the Baltic and Caspian seas, was the home of the Khazars, a Turkic-speaking tribal confederation. The Khazars’ battles against Arab invaders in the seventh and eighth centuries helped stem the expansion of Islam into Eastern Europe.^{7, 8}

Kievan Rus

The Kievan Rus state emerged and flourished in a golden age between the late 10th and mid-11th centuries.⁹ The Rurikid prince Svyatoslav and his son Vladimir I successfully consolidated power in the north. Kievan Rus also dealt the Khazars to the south a series of crushing blows beginning in 965. To the east, the forces of Vladimir I fought the Volga Bulgars, a Turkic group.¹⁰ Kievan Rus became Orthodox Christian in 988 after Vladimir I converted to the faith. This event marked the beginning of the Russian Orthodox Church, which would become a major force in Russian life and culture. Kievan Rus began to decline in 1054, when the various Rus principalities began to form alliances with bordering states.¹¹ Foremost among these principalities was Novgorod, which eventually became

2 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 5–7.

3 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

4 Thomas S. Noonan, “Chapter 19: European Russia, c. 500–c. 1050,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History III, c. 900–c. 1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 505–6.

5 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 23–28.

6 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

7 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Rurik Dynasty,” 11 April 2016, retrieved on 18 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rurik-dynasty>.

8 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

9 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

10 Thomas S. Noonan, “Chapter 19: European Russia, c. 500–c. 1050,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History III, c. 900–c. 1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 503–5.

11 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

the port for Russian trade with the Hanseatic League, a dominant trade alliance in the Baltic and North seas for several centuries.^{12, 13}

The Mongol Invasion and the Golden Horde

In 1223, a band of armies under Mongolian warlord Genghis Khan invaded the former Kievan Rus region, defeating the combined armies of the regional principalities and further accelerating the fragmentation of the former Kievan Rus territories. The western and southern principalities fell under the domination of their Polish, Hungarian, and Lithuanian neighbors to the west. Today, these regions form the heart of Belarus and Ukraine. The principalities to the east and northeast are today the heart of European Russia.^{14, 15} The Mongols retreated toward Asia, but in 1237 Genghis Khan's western and southern principalities formed into a new khanate known as the Golden Horde, with its capital on the lower Volga River near the modern city of Volgograd. The Golden Horde khans ruled the region by proxy using loyal native princes. One of these local princes was Alexander Nevsky, who became grand prince of Vladimir after defeating Swedish and German invaders in the Novgorod principality.^{16, 17, 18, 19}

The Rise of Muscovy (Moscow)

After Nevsky's death in 1263, his son Daniil ruled the principality of Muscovy (Moscow). Under Daniil and his descendants, Muscovy gained prominence. In 1328, Daniil's son, Ivan I, became grand prince of Muscovy, making Moscow the new center of East Slavic principalities.^{20, 21, 22}

During the reign of Ivan III, also known as Ivan the Great (1462–1505), the Grand Principality of Muscovy broke from Golden Horde control and established itself as the dominant power in what is today European Russia. The surrounding principalities came under Muscovite control and by 1505 Muscovy tripled in size, extending to the lower Ob River on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains.^{23, 24, 25}

The 28-year rule of Ivan the Great's son, Vasily III, was a relatively peaceful time. He consolidated territorial gains and integrated the remaining Russian principalities into Muscovy. After Vasily's death, Muscovite boyars (land-

¹² Arthur Boyd Hibbert, "Hanseatic League," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 21 October 2019, retrieved on 18 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hanseatic-League>.

¹³ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹⁴ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

¹⁵ Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 13–16.

¹⁶ Richard Hellie, "Saint Alexander Nevsky," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10 November 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Alexander-Nevsky>.

¹⁷ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 79–80.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Golden Horde," 5 May 2014, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Golden-Horde>.

²⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Ivan I," 27 March 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ivan-I>.

²¹ Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 18–20.

²² Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

²³ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

²⁴ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 103–8.

²⁵ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

owning nobles) served as regents for his young son, Ivan IV, until 1547 when he was crowned Tsar of All Russia.²⁶,
^{27, 28, 29} Ivan IV expanded his territory into the southern steppes and across the Ural Mountains. During the latter years of his rule, Ivan IV descended into madness and became known as Ivan the Terrible. In 1565, he divided Russia into two regions, one consisting of towns and cities directly under his control (the *oprichnina*) and the other administered by a council of boyars (the *zemschina*). In the *oprichnina*, Ivan executed anyone suspected of disloyalty and confiscated their lands.^{30, 31, 32}

After Ivan's death, his son Fyodor I, who was intellectually impaired, became tsar under the regency of his brother-in-law, Boris Godunov. With Fyodor I's death, Godunov became tsar.³³ Godunov's rule was challenged by False Dmitry who claimed to be Ivan IV's son. Although Godunov survived the challenge, he died shortly thereafter. Dmitry was crowned tsar but reigned less than a year amid boyar power struggles.^{34, 35, 36} The next eight years were a tumultuous period, known as the Time of Troubles. Battles for power among groups of boyars and their candidates for tsar left the country in a state of anarchy. This period did not cease until a *zemsky sobor* (assembly of the land), consisting of boyars, church officials, and urban freemen, elected young Mikhail Romanov the new tsar in 1613.³⁷

The Romanovs

Between 1645 and 1676, under Romanov rule, Russia enjoyed some stability and expanded its territory to include eastern Siberia.³⁸ But memories of the peasant revolts during the Time of Troubles contributed to governmental restrictions on the rights of landless peasants.³⁹

Peter I (Peter the Great), the first great Romanov leader, came to power in 1696. Acting on a fondness for the West that began in his youth, Peter ambitiously set out to transform Russia into a modern European state. He gathered technical specialists from all over Europe to his court and with their help established Russia's first navy, overhauled the army to contemporary European standards, created a meritocratic civil service system, and developed the country's nascent metallurgical and textile industries. His other reforms included establishing an education system, creating a legislature, and incorporating the Russian Orthodox Church into the government structure. Peter's Western ambition was evident in the new city of Saint Petersburg, situated on the Gulf of Finland. The city, built in a European architectural style, grew rapidly and became Russia's capital in 1712. After some initial defeats, Peter's

26 Nikolay Andreyev, "Ivan the Terrible," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 21 August 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ivan-the-Terrible>.

27 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 108, 143–46.

28 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

29 David R. Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2006), 11–12.

30 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

31 Nikolay Andreyev, "Ivan the Terrible," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 21 August 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ivan-the-Terrible>.

32 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

33 David R. Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2006), 24–30.

34 Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels: 1600–1800* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), 15–23.

35 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

36 Ronald Hingley, *Russia: A Concise History*, a revised and updated ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

37 Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels: 1600–1800* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), 50–51.

38 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

39 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 41–43.

modernized military bested Sweden in 1721 and gained territories on the Baltic coast. That same year, Peter took the title of emperor, inaugurating the Russian Empire.⁴⁰

Peter I died in 1725, and with no living male successor, a tumultuous period marked by uncertain leadership, frequent coups, and puppet tsars followed. One exception was the 20-year reign of Peter's daughter, Elizabeth, who gradually loosened state controls over economic matters and formed political alliances with European powers. Peter III, Elizabeth's nephew, succeeded her but had little support. Popular resentment led to his removal in a coup in 1762.^{41, 42, 43, 44}

That coup brought Catherine II (the Great), Peter III's wife, to power and marked the end of the Era of Palace Revolutions. During Catherine's 34-year reign, Russia again expanded, incorporating much of Poland and Ukraine. In 1773, Catherine divided the nation into provinces and districts and granted these local governmental entities expanded administrative responsibilities. The Russian elite increasingly reflected Western economic, intellectual, and cultural ideas and traditions, but much of the country's population was unaffected by these changes. Russian peasants continued to suffer, fueling resentments that occasionally boiled over into rebellions.^{45, 46, 47}

The Early 19th Century

After Catherine's death in 1796, her son, Paul I, succeeded her to the throne. Paul's erratic ruling style and decision to pull out of an alliance with Britain and Austria against Napoleonic France made him enemies within the military and nobility. He was assassinated in 1801 and replaced by his son, Alexander I. Alexander re-joined the European alliance against France. Russia fended off a French invasion in 1812, with the help of a harsh winter, and played a pivotal role in Napoleon's final defeat in 1815. Alexander thus became a major player in Europe's post-Napoleonic balance of power. During this time, the Russian empire expanded, gaining control of Poland and Finland and acquiring territory in the Caucasus and North America (Alaska).⁴⁸

After Alexander's unexpected death in 1825, his younger brother, Nicholas I, assumed the throne in spite of an uprising by Russian dissidents known as the Decembrists.⁴⁹ Nicholas instituted tight censorship controls and created the Third Department, a secret security force.^{50, 51} Russia's defeat by the British, French, and Ottomans in the 1853–

40 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

41 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 245–47.

42 Zoé Oldenbourg-Idalie, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Catherine the Great," 13 November 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Catherine-the-Great>.

43 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

44 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

45 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

46 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

47 Zoé Oldenbourg-Idalie, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Catherine the Great," 13 November 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Catherine-the-Great>.

48 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

49 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

50 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Third Department," 20 July 1998, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Third-Department>.

51 Patrick O'Meara, "Chapter 9: The Decembrist Pavel Pestel and the Roots of Russian Republicanism," in *Russian and Soviet History: From the Time of Troubles to the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, eds. Steven A. Usitalo and William Benton Whisenhunt (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 123–31.

56 Crimean War precipitated an economic crisis, forcing Russia to sell its Alaskan territories to the United States in 1867 and strengthening the hand of reformers.^{52, 53, 54}

Alexander II succeeded his father Nicholas I in 1855. He introduced reforms lifting censorship restrictions, modernizing the army and communications system, and creating a legal system based on Western European models. Alexander granted powers to levy taxes to a group of provincial- and county-level elected assemblies (*zemstvos*). One of Alexander's most important reforms was the Emancipation Act of 1861, ending serfdom in Russia.^{55, 56} The Russian peasantry had been enserfed (bound to hereditary plots of land at the will of a landlord) since the 17th century. The emancipation of the serfs escalated resentments against the tsar's authority. By the 1870s, city youths traveled to the countryside to incite peasant revolts. Although the government put down the revolts, a terrorist faction known as Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will) initiated several assassination attempts against Alexander, finally succeeding in 1881.^{57, 58, 59, 60}

Russia's next tsar, Alexander III, ruled for 13 years, during which he accelerated the process of Russification. Schools taught solely in Russian and the government forbade publications in certain foreign and minority languages. The government stepped up its persecution of minority groups and increased restrictions on Jewish settlements. A wave of violent attacks (pogroms) against Jews in the early 1880s reignited ethnic tensions.^{61, 62}

Harsh conditions in Russia's rapidly expanding heavy industries spurred worker unrest. Despite a famine in 1891–92 that killed hundreds of thousands, the government proceeded with expansionist programs, including the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, resulting in extensive foreign loans and heavy taxation of Russia's peasantry.^{63, 64}

Revolutions and Civil War

Prologue to Revolution

Alexander III died in 1894 and was succeeded by his son, Nicholas II. Popular dissatisfaction deepened after Russia's decisive defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Numerous political parties, many of them radical, formed in opposition to the government. Later that year, the tsar, facing a general strike, issued the October Manifesto,

52 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "Nicholas I," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2 July 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nicholas-I-tsar-of-Russia>.

53 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 92–93.

54 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 46.

55 Victor Leontovitsch, *The History of Liberalism in Russia*, trans. Parmen Leontovitsch (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 189–202.

56 Richard S. Wortman, "Chapter Two: The Tsar-Emancipator," in *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Volume Two: From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 58–90.

57 Alan Wood, *The Origins of the Russian Revolution: 1861–1917*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 12–26.

58 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

59 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

60 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Serfdom," 20 August 2019, retrieved on 16 February 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/serfdom>.

61 Richard S. Wortman, "Chapter Two: The Tsar-Emancipator," in *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Volume Two: From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 237.

62 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

63 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

64 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

conceding basic civil liberties and creating a popularly elected national parliament (Duma). The army remained loyal and crushed the insurrection in December.^{65, 66, 67}

Voters elected several Dumas over the next few years, but the government promptly dissolved each of them, because the Dumas disagreed with the tsar over the extent of proposed governmental reforms. At the heart of this conflict was the tsar's unwillingness to concede autocratic rule. As the government increasingly modified the electoral system to ensure the Duma was in closer alignment with the government's positions, the Duma became less representative of Russian society.^{68, 69}

World War I and Revolution

Russia's participation in World War I created more turmoil. After initial military successes, the Russian army suffered reversals in 1915. Nicholas II traveled to the front to take personal control of the army, leaving day-to-day government under the control of his wife, Tsarina Alexandra.⁷⁰ In February 1917, the economic and social burdens borne by Russians during the three years of war coalesced into a spontaneous series of riots and strikes. The army refused to intervene, resulting in the collapse of the imperial government and the abdication of Nicholas II. A provisional government consisting of Duma representatives was quickly formed and given a mandate to rule until a new government could be established by a democratic parliament in January 1918. After Nicholas II's abdication, the Romanov family was sent to Yekaterinburg where, in July 1918, they were executed on the order of Bolshevik revolutionaries.^{71, 72, 73}

Two Marxist factions existed in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (better known by his pseudonym, Lenin) led the more radical group, the Bolsheviks, which favored the violent overthrow of the Russian government.⁷⁴ A more moderate wing, represented by the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionary Party, was the more powerful group in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg).⁷⁵ In the struggle for power between moderates and radicals, the provisional government banned Bolsheviks, causing Lenin to flee. Returning in April 1917, Lenin began calling for a dictatorship of the proletariat instead of a parliamentary democracy, which he saw as representative of the propertied elite.^{76, 77}

In late October 1917, armed Bolsheviks seized government buildings in Petrograd, overthrowing the provisional government. By March 1918, they had consolidated control, renamed themselves the Communist Party, signed

65 Walter Gerald Moss, *A History of Russia: Volume II: Since 1855*, 2nd ed. (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 50–62.

66 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

67 Sandra Wilson and David Wells, "Chapter 1: Introduction," in *The Russo-Japanese War in Cultural Perspective, 1904–1905*, eds. David Wells and Sandra Wilson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 1–29.

68 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

69 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 120–22.

70 Maureen Perrie, "Chapter 9: The Russian Revolution," in *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition in the West, 1560–1991*, ed. David Parker (New York: Routledge, 2000), 162.

71 Keep, J. L.H., "Nicholas II," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 8, 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2023 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nicholas-II-tsar-of-Russia>.

72 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

73 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

74 Adam B. Ulam, *The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia* (Harvard University Press, 1998).

75 Vera Broido, *Lenin and the Mensheviks: The Persecution of Socialists under Bolshevism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986).

76 Albert Resis, "Vladimir Ilich Lenin," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 17 January 2022, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vladimir-Lenin>.

77 William J. Duiker, *Contemporary World History*, 5th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 80–81.

a peace treaty with Germany that relinquished most of the Russian territories in the far western part of the old empire, moved the capital to Moscow, and installed Lenin as leader. During the ensuing civil war the communist Red Army, commanded by Leon Trotsky, overcame the White Russians, disparate conservative elements opposed to communist rule and supported by the French, Italian, British, and U.S. governments. During the war Lenin instituted harsh economic and political measures to support the Red Army effort and to initiate the social engineering goal of a classless society. By 1921, Lenin had declared a New Economic Policy and reinstituted some forms of capitalism.^{78, 79, 80}

The Soviet Era

Josef Stalin

In 1922, the communists established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In the same year, Lenin suffered the first of several strokes and a power struggle began. By 1929, rivals had forced Trotsky, increasingly marginalized within the party, into exile. Josef Stalin maneuvered to become general secretary of the party and methodically eliminated his other opponents. By 1930, Stalin had gained full control of the party and the USSR; he had Trotsky assassinated in Mexico in 1940.^{81, 82, 83}

Shortly after consolidating power, Stalin instituted plans to increase the Soviet Union's industrial might. He initiated an ambitious Five-Year Plan in 1929 aimed at quadrupling industrial output, particularly in non-consumer-related sectors such as power plants, mineral extraction, steel production, and railways.^{84, 85, 86} Under the new plan, the government collectivized agricultural production. This system required groups of farmers to pool their land and resources and to meet production quotas given by the state. The more prosperous peasant farmers, known as *kulaks*, resisted these new measures. Initially, the government fined those who resisted or confiscated their lands, but the penalties quickly escalated to deportations to Siberia and other Arctic regions. The collectivization process resulted in a massive peasant migration to the cities, deadly famines in grain-growing areas, and a sharp decline in agricultural output.^{87, 88, 89} A particularly grim episode was the engineered 1931–34 famine in the Soviet republic of Ukraine that led to some 3.9 million deaths.⁹⁰

During the 1930s and 1940s, Stalin ordered the execution of large numbers of suspected disloyal Communist Party members, intellectuals, and other “enemies of the people” and sent others to the Gulag, a network of prison camps,

78 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 51.

79 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 162–64.

80 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

81 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 53.

82 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 166–71.

83 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

84 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 53.

85 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 171.

86 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

87 Richard E. Pipes et al., “Soviet Union,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10 November 2020, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union>.

88 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 53.

89 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

90 Anne Applebaum, “Holodomor,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 November 2019, retrieved on 16 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Holodomor>.

work camps, and detention facilities, many located in Siberia. The total number of people killed during these purges is estimated to be as high as 20 million.⁹¹ Agents of the NKVD, Stalin's secret police, often took victims from their homes in the middle of the night. More visible were the show trials of ex-Bolshevik leaders, all of whom authorities later executed. Of the first nine full members of the Communist Party Politburo elected between 1919 and 1924, only two died of natural causes.^{92, 93, 94, 95}

World War II

In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression agreement, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, dividing much of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. Germany received a large portion of Poland, and Russia acquired the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), certain regions of eastern Poland, and Finland. After Germany invaded Poland on 1 September, the Soviet Union invaded from the east. Russia secured easternmost Poland and the other regions in its sphere, with the exception of Finland.^{96, 97}

Germany later ignored the nonaggression pact, invading Russia in June 1941 in Operation Barbarossa. The Soviet Union suffered major losses of territory, military personnel, and equipment in the first months of the German invasion. The siege of Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) lasted almost two-and-a-half years, costing hundreds of thousands of lives. Stalingrad (now Volgograd) was the site of a key battle that halted the German army in its push toward the oil fields of the southern Caucasus. Nearly two million German and Soviet troops died in what would be the deadliest battle of the entire war.⁹⁸ Eventually Soviet forces, aided by the severe Russian winter, overcame the Germans. The heroic efforts of the Soviet people (both military and civilian) during World War II helped unify the country in a way that no other event had.^{99, 100}

As German forces crumbled during the latter stages of World War II, the Soviets liberated much of Eastern Europe. This region remained in the Soviet sphere of influence for the next four decades. Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) all adopted communist governments under Soviet influence. They eventually aligned themselves militarily in the Warsaw Pact as a counterpart to Western Europe and North America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). British prime minister Winston Churchill called the new boundary between Eastern and Western Europe the Iron Curtain, a name that lasted

91 Bill Keller, "Major Soviet Paper Says 20 Million Died as Victims of Stalin," *The New York Times* (The New York Times, February 4, 1989), retrieved on 20 January 2023 <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/02/04/world/major-soviet-paper-says-20-million-died-as-victims-of-stalin.html>

92 Wladislaw Hedeler, "Chapter 3: Ezhov's Scenario for the Great Terror and the Falsified Record of the Third Moscow Show Trial," in *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, eds. Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 34–55.

93 Oleg Khlevniuk, "Chapter 2: Party and NKVD: Power Relationships in the Years of the Great Terror," in *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, eds. Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 21–33.

94 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

95 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

96 Andrejs Plakans, ed., *Experiencing Totalitarianism: The Invasion and Occupation of Latvia by the USSR and Nazi Germany, 1939–1991: A Documentary History* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), 3.

97 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

98 Edwin P. Hoyt, *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1993).

99 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 424.

100 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 186–88.

throughout the Cold War.¹⁰¹ In 1949, the Soviet Union became a nuclear nation with the successful detonation of its first atomic bomb.¹⁰²

Post-Stalin Era (1953–1991)

After Stalin's death in 1953, a power struggle among rival Politburo members ensued.¹⁰³, ¹⁰⁴ Nikita Khrushchev, a longtime Stalin ally, emerged victorious. Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin in a secret speech in 1956 marked the beginning of a de-Stalinization period during which the government released political prisoners and closed the Gulag camps.¹⁰⁵

Khrushchev was a modest reformer. The production of consumer goods increasingly became a priority after years of focusing on heavy industry. Khrushchev pursued the decentralization of economic decision-making. The Soviet Union became less aggressive in its foreign relations and more open to coexistence with the West. Nevertheless, the Khrushchev years witnessed two major East-West confrontations: the Cuban Missile Crisis and the construction of the Berlin Wall.¹⁰⁶, ¹⁰⁷, ¹⁰⁸ Relations with China, the Soviet Union's neighbor and fellow communist state, declined. Led by Mao Zedong, the Chinese government criticized the Soviets as revisionists because of their increasing willingness to negotiate with the West.¹⁰⁹, ¹¹⁰

In 1963, rivals removed Khrushchev from power, settling on Leonid Brezhnev as his successor. Economic stagnation, increased repression, and contradictory foreign policy with the West were hallmarks of the Brezhnev era. Although this period included a time of detente (relaxed relations among international superpowers) and the signing of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), the Soviet government continued low-level confrontation with the West via Soviet sponsorship of proxy wars in developing nations.¹¹¹, ¹¹², ¹¹³

In 1979, Soviet troops invaded neighboring Afghanistan to support the fledgling left-wing government that had taken over the country the previous year. The invasion was an expression of Brezhnev's policy of intervention in countries where socialist rule was threatened. The Soviet troops were soon mired in a protracted conflict against assorted groups of Afghan and foreign insurgents, some armed by the United States. Unable to prevail against the insurgency

101 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

102 History.com, "Soviets Explode Atomic Bomb," 27 August 2020, retrieved on 23 February 2022, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/soviets-explode-atomic-bomb>.

103 Leonida Krushelnitsky, "The Mystery of Stalin's Death," BBC News, 24 February 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2793501.stm>

104 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 57.

105 Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

106 Frank B. Gibney, "Nikita Khrushchev," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 7 September 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nikita-Sergeyevich-Khrushchev>.

107 Sergei Khrushchev, ed., *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, Volume 3, Statesman, 1953–1964* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 293–358.

108 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

109 Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, U.S. Department of State, "Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water," 5 August 1963, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4797.htm>

110 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>.

111 William E. Watson, *The Collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 7.

112 William C. Wohlforth, "Chapter 2: Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," in *International Relations Theory and the Consequences of Unipolarity*, eds. G. John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58.

113 Mark Harrison, "Chapter 3: Economic Growth and Slowdown," in *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, eds. Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 22–37.

and with casualties mounting, the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. The invasion is considered a significant contributor to the decline and fall of the Soviet Union.¹¹⁴

In 1982, Yuri Andropov, former chief of the Committee for State Security, or KGB, replaced Brezhnev. After Andropov died in 1984, Konstantin Chernenko, a 72-year-old party apparatchik, succeeded him, ruling for only a year before his own death.^{115, 116}

The Politburo chose 54-year-old Mikhail Gorbachev as Chernenko's successor. Gorbachev immediately began transferring reform-minded officials into high positions in the party and government. Two words, *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) came to signify the thrust of the Gorbachev reforms. Perestroika involved instituting market reforms to revive the ailing economy, while glasnost promoted an opening up of the political system, resulting in freedom of speech and more democratic elections.¹¹⁷

In April 1986, a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in present-day northern Ukraine exploded, causing the worst nuclear disaster in history. The causes of the incident were flawed reactor design and operator errors. The explosion and its aftermath caused the deaths of some 50 people and acute radiation sickness in many more. High levels of radioactive chemicals were released into the atmosphere and spread as far west as Italy and France. The Soviet government initially attempted a cover up, before admitting to the incident when faced with evidence of high atmospheric levels of radioactivity.^{118, 119}

The Last Years of the Soviet Union

Many in the West viewed Gorbachev's reforms more positively than did people in the Soviet Union. As the economy slipped toward chaos, Gorbachev found himself positioned between party hardliners who wished to return to a fully centralized command economy and others who favored a full free-market economy.¹²⁰ Reform movements in Eastern Europe ushered in a wave of democratically elected noncommunist governments between 1989 and 1990. Gorbachev agreed to the phased withdrawal of Soviet forces from these countries, thus marking the collapse of the Iron Curtain.¹²¹

After 1988, the Communist Party began losing its hold on power, and the USSR's constituent republics became more assertive. A new democratically elected body, the Congress of People's Deputies, chose members of the Supreme Soviet, the nation's legislative body, which wielded true legislative powers.¹²² In March 1991, the Russian republic for the first time elected a president. The winner was Boris Yeltsin, a former Gorbachev protégé who had become a critic of Soviet stagnation and corruption.¹²³

114 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," 11 May 2020, retrieved on 23 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>.

115 Robert S. Sharlet, *Soviet Constitutional Crisis: From De-Stalinization to Disintegration* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 55–84.

116 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

117 Peter J. Boettke, *Why Perestroika Failed: The Politics and Economics of Socialist Transformation* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

118 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Chernobyl Disaster," 24 February 2022, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chernobyl-disaster>.

119 World Nuclear Association, "Chernobyl Accident 1986," February 2022, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/chernobyl-accident.aspx>.

120 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 227–29.

121 Nobelprize.org, "The Nobel Peace Prize 1990," 15 October 1990, http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1990/press.html

122 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Mikhail Gorbachev," 16 March 2021, retrieved on 22 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mikhail-Gorbachev>.

123 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

In August 1991, members of the party's old guard staged a failed coup to try to depose Gorbachev and shore up the disintegrating Soviet Union. Although Gorbachev survived the coup attempt, the end of his rule and of the Soviet Union itself was seemingly inevitable. In early December 1991, Yeltsin announced that all Russian property in the Soviet Union was, from that point, under the control of Russia. He banned the Communist Party in Russia.^{124, 125, 126} Other Soviet republics declared their independence, and by 8 December 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. On Christmas Day, Gorbachev resigned and the Russian flag replaced the Soviet hammer and sickle at the Kremlin.¹²⁷

Post-Soviet Russia

Economic Troubles

Russia, renamed the Russian Federation, had a fraught political and economic evolution after 1991. An economic contraction that spanned 1992–97 characterized the government's transition to a free market economy. Authorities lifted price controls, leading to inflationary pressures. Crime and corruption became rampant. A new class of super-rich oligarchs built business empires by purchasing and controlling interests in key formerly state-run industries, such as oil.¹²⁸ Economic demand forced the nation's industrial base to shift its emphasis from defense and heavy industry to consumer goods. The factories that survived from the Soviet era often proved noncompetitive in the global economy because of obsolete technology, excessive labor forces, and inordinate transportation costs for shipping and receiving.^{129, 130}

Yeltsin and his government were under tremendous political pressure. The tension spilled over in a parliamentary revolt in 1993, during which the government declared a state of emergency and the military fired on the parliament building.¹³¹ Nevertheless, Yeltsin maintained political capital and, aided by the oligarchs, won reelection to a second presidential term in 1996.¹³² He would not, however, complete the term. In December 1999, amid growing pressure, Yeltsin resigned and turned over power to Vladimir Putin, his prime minister and a former KGB officer.¹³³

Chechnya

Conflicts in several administrative regions desiring autonomy or complete independence marked Russia's early post-Soviet years. Among these areas was Chechnya, located along the northern flank of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. The region had an established history of conflict with both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

124 Robert K. Schaeffer, *Understanding Globalization: The Social Consequences of Political, Economic, and Environmental Change*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 142.

125 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 227.

126 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

127 Simon Richmond et al., *Lonely Planet: Russia and Belarus*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2006), 61–64.

128 Andrew Mueller, "What a Carve-Up!" *Guardian*, 2 December 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2005/dec/03/tvandradio.russia>

129 Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 215–39.

130 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

131 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

132 David E. Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia* (Philadelphia: Public Affairs, 2011), 2.

133 Celestine Bohlen, "Yeltsin Resigns: The Overview; Yeltsin Resigns, Naming Putin as Acting President to Run in March Election," *New York Times*, 1 January 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/01/world/yeltsin-resigns-overview-yeltsin-resigns-naming-putin-acting-president-run-march.html?pagewanted=all>

Stalin, during World War II, exiled the Chechens en masse to Siberia, accusing them of collaborating with Nazi Germany. The government allowed them to return only after Stalin's death.^{134, 135}

In 1991, Chechnya unilaterally declared independence from Russia. In 1994, Russian troops entered Chechnya and soon became embroiled in a costly guerrilla war. Although the two sides signed a peace treaty and the Russian troops left in 1997, the ultimate status of Chechnya remained undecided. By 1999, Russian troops had returned to Chechnya, after a number of bombings in Moscow and other Russian cities were attributed to Chechen rebels. This stage of the conflict continued well into the regime of Vladimir Putin. In 2002, Chechen separatists seized a Moscow theater, leading to a botched rescue attempt that cost the lives of 130 hostages. By 2008, a pro-Moscow regime was installed in Chechnya, and the republic was reintegrated into the Russian Federation.^{136, 137, 138}

The Rule of Vladimir Putin

After winning the presidential elections in 2000, Vladimir Putin moved to establish economic and political order in Russia and tackle the dysfunction that had caused a stark decrease in living standards and increase in crime during the previous decade. He reorganized the country's administrative districts and brought regional laws in line with federal laws, as a way to reduce corruption and legal confusion. He worked with the legislature to pass badly needed tax, judicial, and labor reforms. He promoted the export of Russia's oil, natural gas, and weapons, and created a more welcoming environment for foreign investment. He carried out a visible campaign to subdue the Yeltsin-era oligarchs, seen by many as corrupt and rapacious. In 2005, oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Russia's richest man, was convicted of tax evasion and fraud.¹³⁹

Putin's relations with the West were mixed. The fighting in Chechnya drew Western criticism until the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001.¹⁴⁰ Russia's cooperation in international efforts to combat terrorism received praise from many Western leaders, including U.S. President George W. Bush. Yet Putin remained wary of U.S. intentions and cultivated stronger ties with China, India, and Iran. In 2003, Russia joined France and Germany in opposing American and British military intervention in Iraq.^{141, 142}

Putin secured reelection in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. In 2008, as a way of bypassing the two-term limit on the presidency, Prime Minister Dimitri Medvedev successfully ran for president and Putin became his prime minister. By this time, Russia's elections were recognized by many observers as not fully fair, and Putin's prime minister position was seen as a way for him to continue to dominate the country's politics.¹⁴³

¹³⁴ Tanya Basok, "The Chechen-Russian Conflict: The Spiral of Hostilities," *Refuge* 14, no. 10 (1995): 10–12.

¹³⁵ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹³⁶ Reuters, "Russian Officers Killed in Chechnya Attack," ABC News, 24 August 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/08/24/2344999.htm>

¹³⁷ John Russell, "Ramzan Kadyrov: The Indigenous Key to Success in Putin's Chechenization Strategy?" *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 36, no. 4 (2008): 659–87.

¹³⁸ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹³⁹ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹⁴⁰ BBC News, "Regions and Territories: Chechnya," 22 November 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/2565049.stm

¹⁴¹ Michael Kort, *A Brief History of Russia* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 244–45.

¹⁴² Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

¹⁴³ Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

In 2008, Russian troops entered Georgia under the guise of protecting Russian peacekeeping forces and nonethnic Georgians in the two breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Georgian government alleged that Russia's attack was unprovoked. With the territories of the two breakaway regions under the control of Russian troops, Moscow recognized their independence, setting the stage for a long-term stalemate with Georgia. Many in the West saw the Georgian incursion as a heavy-handed use of force designed to intimidate and signal Russia's limited willingness to accept further alliances between the former Soviet republic and its allies in the West. The short Georgian war fueled fears that Russia and the United States and its NATO allies could enter into a new era of Cold War-like geopolitics.^{144, 145, 146}

Tensions and occasional outbreaks of violence continued in the Caucasus, especially in Ingushetia and Chechnya. In 2009, with the Chechen situation apparently under control, Medvedev ended counterinsurgency operations. Chechen rebels continued, however, to mount attacks which included the 2010 attack in a Moscow metro.¹⁴⁷

In September 2011, Medvedev declined to run for a second term, paving the way for the resumption of the Putin presidency. Putin's party, United Russia, lost its supermajority, capturing less than 50% of the vote in the 2011 legislative elections. Putin, however, won his third presidential term in March 2012. He named Medvedev as his prime minister.¹⁴⁸

Recent Events

After regaining the presidency, Putin focused his efforts on further consolidating power and stifling opposition to his rule. New laws mandated harsh penalties for unauthorized protesters and placed restrictions on nongovernmental organizations that received foreign funding. Government control over the media was tightened. Aleksey Navalny, a dogged anticorruption politician and activist, became a frequent target of politically motivated prosecutions. Ahead of the opening of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Putin demonstrated magnanimity by releasing some 25,000 people from Russian prisons, including high profile figures like Mikhail Khodorkovsky.¹⁴⁹

In early 2014, shortly after Ukraine removed its pro-Russian president, Putin sent Russian forces to invade Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. After Crimean residents voted to join Russia, Putin annexed the region.^{150, 151} The Russian move prompted the European Union and the United States to impose sanctions that seriously damaged the Russian

144 Global Security, "Abkhazia—Path to War," 11 July 2011,

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/abkhazia-1.htm>

145 Robert Kagan, "Putin Makes His Move," *Washington Post*, 11 August 2008,

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/10/AR2008081001871.html>

146 Svante E. Cornell, Johanna Popjanevski, and Niklas Nilsson, "Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World," (policy paper, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, August 2008), 3–4, 23,

http://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2008_08_PP_CornellPopjanevskiNilsson_Russia-Georgia.pdf

147 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022,

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

148 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022,

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

149 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022,

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

150 Shaun Walker, Harriet Salem, and Ewen MacAskill, "Russian Invasion of Crimea Fuels Fear of Ukraine Conflict," *Guardian*, 28 February 2014,

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/28/russia-crimea-white-house>

151 BBC News, "Ukraine: What Is NATO and Why Doesn't Russia Trust It?" 24 February 2022, retrieved on 24 February 2022,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18023383>.

economy.^{152, 153} Russia also began supporting pro-Russia separatist fighters in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk with weapons and, unofficially, troops.¹⁵⁴

Despite the Russian economy plunging into recession in 2015 due largely to ongoing sanctions, Putin continued to behave in ways that antagonized the West. That same year, Russian troops intervened in Syria's civil war, helping the beleaguered regime of dictator Bashar al-Assad regain momentum against the Islamic State terrorist group and other opponents. During the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, Russian state actors were implicated in cyberattacks meant to skew and destabilize the democratic process.¹⁵⁵ In 2018, Putin resoundingly won another term as president, in an election marred by irregularities. In February 2022, after a tense buildup of Russian troops at Ukraine's borders, Putin affirmed the separatist aspirations of the breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and attacked Ukraine.^{156, 157}

152 Yeganeh Torbati, "U.S. Imposes More Russian and Ukrainian Sanctions," Reuters, 30 July 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/30/us-usa-russia-sanctions-idUSKCN0Q42H720150730>

153 BBC News, "How Far do EU-US Sanctions on Russia Go?" 15 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28400218>

154 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

155 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

156 Andrew Roth, "Vladimir Putin Secures Record Win in Russian Presidential Election," *Guardian*, 19 March 2018, retrieved on 23 February 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/19/vladimir-putin-secures-record-win-in-russian-presidential-election>.

157 BBC News, "Ukraine Conflict: Russian Forces Attack from Three Sides," 24 February 2022, retrieved on 24 February 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60503037>.

Russia in Perspective

History Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Kievan Rus became Orthodox Christian in 988 after Vladimir I converted to the faith. ☐ True ☐ False

2. Peter the Great opposed Western influence in Russia. ☐ True ☐ False

3. The 1918 Bolshevik Revolution brought an end to serfdom in Russia. ☐ True ☐ False

4. The 1939 nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union held throughout World War II. ☐ True ☐ False

5. In 2008, Russia aided Georgia in subduing the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. ☐ True ☐ False

Russia in Perspective

History Assessment Answers

1. True:
This event marked the beginning of the Russian Orthodox Church, which would become a major force in Russian life and culture.
2. False:
Acting on a fondness for the West that began in his youth, Peter ambitiously set out to transform Russia into a modern European state.
3. False:
Tsar Alexander II's 1861 Emancipation Act brought an end to serfdom. The Russian peasantry had been enserfed (bound to hereditary plots of land at the will of a landlord) since the 17th century
4. False:
Germany broke the pact and invaded Russia in 1941. Eventually Soviet forces, aided by the severe Russian winter, overcame the Germans.
5. False:
Russia attacked Georgia under the guise of protecting Russian peacekeeping forces and nonethnic Georgians in the two breakaway regions.

Chapter 3 | Economy



International Business Center, Moscow
Wikimedia/Pasquale Paolo Cardo

Introduction

Russia began transitioning toward a market-based economy in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Most industries were privatized in the 1990s, but the energy, transportation, banking, and defense sectors remained under state control. The Russian economy became centered on the export of commodities, primarily oil and natural gas, but also steel and aluminum. As such, it was vulnerable to the ups and downs of the global commodity market. In the 2010s, rising levels of oil and gas production and increasing prices spurred several years of strong gross domestic product (GDP) growth. GDP is the overall value of all goods and services created by an economy within a certain period. But as world oil prices declined and economic sanctions were levelled against Russia after its occupation of Crimea, the economy staggered, experiencing a deep recession in 2016 and 2017. Growth then returned, and by 2019, the Russian economy ranked 6th of 228 countries with a gross GDP purchasing power parity of USD 3.8 trillion.^{1, 2, 3}

- 1 Simon Hooper, "Russia: A Superpower Rises Again," CNN.com, 13 December 2006, <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/12/12/russia.oil/index.html>
- 2 Rob Garver, "Putin's Economy May Be in Even Worse Shape than It Looks," Fiscal Times, 18 August 2015, <http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/08/18/Putin-s-Economy-May-Be-Even-Worse-Shape-It-Looks>
- 3 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

Agriculture

In 2017, agriculture accounted for 4.7% of Russia's GDP and employed 9.4% of the labor force.⁴ Russia's harsh climate makes much of its land unsuitable for farming. Although Russia is the largest nation in the world by landmass, only 13% of its area is agricultural land. Most of this land is in the "fertile triangle," a region encompassing most of southern and central European Russia and small stretches of land in southwest Siberia.⁵ The majority of Russian farms are cooperatives in which landowners are members of *kolkhozes* (collective farms) or *sovkhozes* (state farms).^{6, 7}

More than half of Russia's farmland is devoted to grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats). Fodder crops, including most of Russia's corn yield, are grown on another one-third of Russian farmlands.^{8, 9} Sunflower seeds are the dominant oilseed crop, and farms grow sugar beets for sugar processing. Russians grow potatoes and other vegetables mostly on small private household plots.^{10, 11}

Russia's vast forest reserves are the largest in the world. Russia's forests constitute about one-fifth of the world's total, representing an area nearly as large as the continental United States. But the cold Russian climate inhibits rapid growth in logged areas. Logging has already claimed nearly one-third of Russia's original forests, a situation that led to legislation in the 1990s to slow down the rate of deforestation. Russia's forestry subsector contributes slightly more than 1% of GDP and employs about 1% of the labor force. It accounts for 2.4% of Russia's export revenues.^{12, 13, 14}

Russia has the second-longest coastline in the world after Indonesia. With its access to 12 seas in three oceans and its 100,000 rivers, fishing is an important segment of the agricultural sector.¹⁵ Russian fishermen catch approximately

4 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

5 Joseph J. Hobbs, *World Regional Geography*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, 2009), 183.

6 G. Blagoveshchenskii et al., "Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles: Russian Federation: Introduction" (report, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Rome, 2006), <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Russia/russia.htm>

7 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

8 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

9 European Commission, "Russia: Bilateral Relations in Agriculture," (factsheet, November 2014), http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/bilateral-relations/pdf/russia_en.pdf

10 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

11 European Commission, "Russia: Bilateral Relations in Agriculture," (factsheet, November 2014), http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/bilateral-relations/pdf/russia_en.pdf

12 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

13 Alexey Eremenko, "Russia is Running Out of Forest," Moscow Times, 30 September 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russia-is-running-out-of-forest/508149.html>

14 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "The Russian Federation Forest Sector: Outlook Study to 2030," (report, Rome 2012), vii-ix, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3020e/i3020e00.pdf>

15 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "National Fishery Sector Overview: The Russian Federation," (country profile, November 2007), 1, ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/document/fcp/en/FI_CP_RU.pdf

4 million tons of fish annually, mostly for export.¹⁶ Russian canneries produce nearly one-third of the world's canned fish and one-fourth of its fresh and frozen fish.¹⁷ Aquaculture is a small but growing subsector.^{18, 19}

Industry and Manufacturing

Industry and manufacturing are a significant part of the Russian economy, accounting for 32.4% of GDP and employing 27.6% of the workforce.²⁰ Excluding industries such as mining and energy resources development, most of Russia's industrial production comes from heavy industries and is primarily located in western Russia and the Ural Mountains region. To the west, the larger cities, such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, and Yekaterinburg, are where most of the processing industries are located; these urban areas have done relatively well compared to smaller cities. The Soviet model of industrialization often led to clusters of related industrial enterprises in the same urban area, and this lack of industrial diversification has hurt some of the smaller and medium-sized cities during the post-Soviet era.^{21, 22}

Russia manufactures a wide range of products, although not all are competitive on the world market. Machine-building industries make products such as steam boilers and turbines, automobiles and farm machinery, equipment for the oil and gas industry, ships, machine tools, automation components, and durable consumer goods (e.g., refrigerators and other appliances).²³

The defense industry is a strong industrial subsector. Russia is the second-largest arms exporter in the world after the United States, accounting for about one-fifth of global arms sales. The country produces a variety of weaponry, primarily aircraft, air defense systems, radars, naval vessels and submarines, missiles, armored vehicles, tanks, small arms, and artillery. Defense manufacturers are consolidated under Rostec, a state-run company.²⁴ Perhaps the most well-known Russian weapon is the AK-47 assault rifle, which began production in 1949. It is likely the most widely used shoulder fired weapon in the world, adopted by numerous national armies and guerilla movements. Today, the Kalashnikov Group produces a range of weapons whose designs can be traced back to the AK-47.^{25, 26}

16 Marina Obrazkova, "Russian Fishing Industry Witnesses Stable Growth," Russia Beyond the Headlines, 29 June 2015, http://rbth.com/business/2015/06/29/russian_fishing_industry_witnesses_stable_growth_47297.html

17 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

18 Fish Site, "Russia's Salmon Aquaculture Sector is Growing Rapidly," 20 August 2013, <http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/20980/russias-salmon-aquaculture-sector-is-growing-rapidly/>

19 Fish Site, "Russian Government Further Supports its Fishery Sector," 8 January 2015, <http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/24874/russian-government-further-supports-its-fishery-sector/>

20 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

21 Bernardina Algieri, "Chapter 3: The Russian Economy: Growth Factors and Trade Flows," in *Transition Economies: 21st Century Issues and Challenges*, ed. Gergő M. Lakatos (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2008), 103–4.

22 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

23 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

24 Andrew S. Bowen, "Russian Arms Sales and Defense Industry," Congressional Research Service, 14 October 2021, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46937>.

25 Encyclopaedia Britannica, "AK-47," 30 October 2020, retrieved on 1 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/AK-47>.

26 Kalashnikov Group, "Assault Rifles," n.d., retrieved on 1 April 2022, <https://en.kalashnikovgroup.ru/catalog/boevoe-strelkovoe-oruzhie/avtomaty>.

Energy

Oil and Natural Gas

Russia's economic engine is its energy sector. The nation is the world's leader in natural gas reserves and exports. It holds the world's second-largest coal reserves and the eighth-largest oil reserves, and it is the world's second-largest oil exporter behind Saudi Arabia.^{27, 28} Russia supplies some 40% of Europe's natural gas and over a quarter of its oil.²⁹

Most of Russia's proven oil reserves are located in western Siberia, between the Ural Mountains and the Central Siberian Plateau. Domestic oil firms dominate Russian oil production, controlled largely by state-run agencies. Five firms account for more than three-quarters of all production, with state-controlled companies accounting for 50% of the total production. Gazprom, a state-owned company, produces 73% of Russia's natural gas.^{30, 31, 32}

Coal and Nuclear Energy

Russia has about one-fifth of the world's coal reserves and is the world's sixth-largest producer of coal. Most of the nation's coal comes from seven basins, three of which are west of the Ural Mountains and four of which are in Siberian regions. Most coal production is in the eastern region in the Kuznetsk Basin, the Donets Basin, and the Kansk-Achinsk Basin. Coal accounts for about one-quarter of Russia's energy supply, although in Siberia, where much of the coal is mined, use is much higher. Russia exports only 25% of its coal each year, with the rest being consumed domestically.^{33, 34, 35}

In 2021 Russia had 38 operational nuclear reactors. Twenty of these reactors were more than 30 years old. Over 20% of the country's electricity is supplied by nuclear power, with plans to increase that share to 50% by 2050 and to as much as 80% by 2100. Russia is also a major exporter of nuclear plants to countries such as China, India, Turkey, Jordan, and Bangladesh. Russia's radioactive waste disposal sites are full, and much of the nation's spent nuclear fuel accumulates in the most densely populated regions of the country. Approximately half of the world's nuclear

27 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

28 Mining Technology, "Countries with the Biggest Coal Reserves," 21 November 2013, <http://www.mining-technology.com/features/feature-the-worlds-biggest-coal-reserves-by-country/>

29 Ben Hubbard, "The Mideast Offers no Easy Alternative to Europe's Need for Russian Oil and Gas," New York Times, 25 February 2022, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/02/25/world/russia-ukraine-war#the-mideast-offers-no-easy-alternative-to-europes-need-for-russian-oil-and-gas>.

30 Global Security, "Russian Oil Production," 22 November 2014, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/energy-oil.htm>

31 Gazprom, "About Gazprom," 2012, <http://www.gazprom.com/about/>

32 Energy Information Administration, United States Department of Energy, "Russia: Analysis," 28 July 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS>

33 Energy Global, "Opportunity Knocks," 9 March 2012, http://www.energyglobal.com/sectors/coal/articles/Opportunity_knocks.aspx

34 Energy Information Administration, United States Department of Energy, "Russia: Analysis," 28 July 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS>

35 Business Wire, "Research and Markets: Russia Coal Mining Industry," 9 February 2012, <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20120209005643/en/Research-Markets-Russia-Coal-Mining-Industry>

waste currently rests in Russia, leading to concerns that this could be a recipe for disaster unless new disposal plans are developed and implemented.^{36, 37, 38, 39}

Mineral Resources

Few, if any, nations can match Russia's mineral wealth and diversity. It is the world's second-leading producer of nickel, most of which is mined near the northern Siberian city of Norilsk, one of the world's largest cities above the Arctic Circle.⁴⁰ RUSAL is the world's largest aluminum producer and a major producer of alumina.^{41, 42} Russia is also among the world's top producers of lead, copper, and uranium ores.^{43, 44}

Russia is the world's top producer of rough diamonds, both gems and industrial.⁴⁵ The state-owned company ALROSA, which produces 25% of the world's rough diamonds, controls the diamond industry in Russia.⁴⁶ Most of the diamond mining sites are in the rugged northeastern part of Russia.^{47, 48}

Trade

Russia's trade balance has been positive since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, due mainly to energy exports, which account for between 40% and 50% of all export revenues.^{49, 50, 51, 52} Non-energy mineral resources (especially

- 36 Energy Information Administration, United States Department of Energy, "Russia: Analysis," 28 July 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS>
- 37 World Nuclear Association, "Nuclear Power in Russia," 7 October 2015, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/Russia--Nuclear-Power/>
- 38 IAEA, "Country Nuclear Power Profile: Russian Federation," 2021, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://cnpp.iaea.org/countryprofiles/Russia/Russia.htm>
- 39 Richard Rousseau, "Russia's Dangerous Nuclear Legacy," Diplomatic Courier, 13 June 2012, <http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/2012/06/14/russia-s-dangerous-nuclear-legacy/>
- 40 Elena Safirova, "The Mineral Industry of Russia," in 2012 Minerals Yearbook, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2015, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2012/myb3-2012-rs.pdf>
- 41 RUSAL, "Facts and Figures," 2012, <http://www.rusal.ru/en/about/facts.aspx>
- 42 RUSAL, "Aluminum Producers," 2015, <http://www.rusal.ru/en/aluminium/manufacturers.aspx>
- 43 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>
- 44 Elena Safirova, "The Mineral Industry of Russia," in 2012 Minerals Yearbook, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2015, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2012/myb3-2012-rs.pdf>
- 45 Elena Safirova, "The Mineral Industry of Russia," in 2012 Minerals Yearbook, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2015, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2012/myb3-2012-rs.pdf>
- 46 AAPOCA/ALROSA, "About ALROSA," n.d., <http://eng.alrosa.ru/about/>
- 47 Vladislav Vorotnikov, "Diamond Mining in Russia," E&MJ Engineering and Mining Journal, 11 September 2013, <http://www.e-mj.com/features/3237-diamond-mining-in-russia.html#.Vh7DKCtKau8>
- 48 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Sakha," 5 May 2013, retrieved on 31 March 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sakha-republic-Russia>
- 49 European Commission, "Russia," Trade Europa, 4 October 2014, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113440.pdf
- 50 F. William Engdahl, "Russia's High Stakes Energy Geopolitics," Global Research, 14 November 2011, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=27653>
- 51 Trading Economics, "Russia Exports," 2015, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/russia/exports>
- 52 Trading Economics, "Russia Balance of Trade," 2015, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/russia/balance-of-trade>

iron, steel, aluminum, nickel, and copper) are major contributors to Russia's trade. Other important export products are wood and wood products, fertilizers, organic chemicals, jet engines, nuclear reactor plants, raw diamonds, and wheat. Russia's largest export markets are China (14%), the Netherlands (10%), Belarus (5%), and Germany (5%). Russia's biggest imports are cars and vehicle parts, packaged medicines, broadcasting equipment, aircraft, and computers. China (20%), Germany (13%), and Belarus (6%) are the leading import partners.⁵³

Russia's trade with the former Soviet republics, most of which are now part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), underwent a period of transition during the 1990s. For a while, the prices of goods traded continued to reflect artificially low rates from the Soviet era, but many goods later transitioned to market values. The structure within the CIS is not systematic: price values can still vary widely from one former Soviet republic to another.⁵⁴ Russia has a free trade agreement in place with all CIS countries except Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, eliminating import and export taxes on many goods.⁵⁵

In 2014, following Russia's incursion into Ukraine, the United States, the European Union and other nations imposed temporary economic sanctions on Russia, slowing international investment and trade.^{56, 57} In 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, and several other countries again implemented harsh economic sanctions on Russia, targeting the country's banking, armament, and oil refining sectors.⁵⁸

Services

The services sector makes up 62.3% of Russia's GDP and employs 63% of the labor force.⁵⁹ Major services subsectors include transport and storage, consumer services, information and communication technology (ICT), finance and insurance, and real estate and business services.⁶⁰ Russia is still dealing with perceptions, dating back to the Soviet era, that services are inefficient, indifferent to consumer demands, and plagued by bureaucratization. Nevertheless, as the economy has gained strength since the turn of the millennium, the services sector has seen commensurate growth.^{61, 62}

53 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

54 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

55 RIA Novosti, "CIS Leaders Sign Free Trade Deal," 18 October 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20111018/167833875.html>

56 Alex VanNess, "Cut Russia's Power Line: More Sanctions are Needed to Combat Russia's Rebounding Economy," U.S. News and World Report, 1 July 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/economic-intelligence/2015/07/01/us-and-eu-must-do-more-to-sanction-russian-energy-sector>

57 Mark Thompson, "How Badly Have Sanctions Hit Russia?" CNN Money, 4 August 2015, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/08/04/news/economy/russia-sanctions-impact-imf/>

58 Al Jazeera, "List of Sanctions against Russia after Ukraine's Invasion," 25 February 2022, , retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/25/list-of-sanctions-on-russia-after-invasion>.

59 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 22 February 2022, retrieved on 25 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

60 IHS Markit, "Service Sector Helps Keep Russian Economy Growing as Manufacturing Fades," 16 August 2018, retrieved on 1 March 2022, <https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/service-sector-helps-keep-russian-economy-growing-160818.html>.

61 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>.

62 Reuters, "Russian Services Sector Activity Hits Nine-Month Peak in May—PMI," 2 June 2021, retrieved on 1 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-economy-pmi/russian-services-sector-activity-hits-nine-month-peak-in-may-pmi-idUSKCN2DF0GM>

The ICT subsector accounts for 2.7% of GDP and employs 1.3 million people, about 1.7% of the workforce. The fastest-growing ICT segments are software maintenance and administration, hosting, software customization, consulting, and information security services. ICT spending is driven by Russia's oil and gas industries and by the public sector. The country's 100 largest companies account for about 85% of total ICT spending.⁶³

Tourism

In spite of a large number of UNESCO heritage sites, historical sites, and other major attractions, Russia's tourism industry remains underdeveloped.⁶⁴ Before the implementation of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism employed more than 500,000 people and made up some 5% of GDP.⁶⁵ Issues around ground transportation infrastructure, safety and security, difficulties securing visas, and a generally closed attitude toward tourism were contributing factors to the relatively low numbers of visitors.⁶⁶

In 2020, Russia had about 6.4 million international visitors, down from 24.6 million before the start of the pandemic. Most tourists came from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and China, with others from Azerbaijan, Finland, Germany, and Poland. Pre-COVID domestic tourists numbered about 60 million annually.⁶⁷ Tourism is expected to suffer due to air travel restrictions and tour cancellations from many Western countries in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.⁶⁸

Banking and Finance

Banking and Currency

The Russian currency is the ruble (RUB).^{69, 70} RUB 1 is divided into 100 kopeks. The currency is denominated into banknotes of RUB 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000, and 5,000.⁷¹ In late February 2022, the ruble dropped by as much as

63 International Trade Administration, "Russia—Country Commercial Guide: Information & Communication Technology," 15 October 2021, retrieved on 1 March 2021, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/russia-information-communication-technology>.

64 World Travel and Tourism Council, "Travel and Tourism: Economic Impact 2015; Russian Federation," (report, 2015), 1, <http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/russianfederation2015.pdf>

65 Statista, "Travel and Tourism in Russia—Statistics & Facts," 29 July 2021, retrieved on 2 March 2022, https://www.statista.com/topics/4803/travel-and-tourism-in-russia/#topicHeader__wrapper.

66 Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. "The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015: Growing through Shocks," (report, World Economic Forum, Geneva Switzerland, 2015), 284-285, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/TT15/WEF_Global_Travel&Tourism_Report_2015.pdf

67 OECD, "Russian Federation: Tourism in the Economy," 2020, retrieved on 2 March 2022, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/d9d56902-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/d9d56902-en>.

68 Blane Bachelor, "How the World of Travel Is Responding to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," CNN, 2 March 2022, retrieved on 2 March 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/travel-world-response-ukraine-invasion/index.html>.

69 Andrey Ostroukh, "Russian Ruble Gets a Symbol," Wall Street Journal, 11 December 2013, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304202204579251623592165920>

70 Bank of Russia, "Ruble Symbol," n.d., <http://www.cbr.ru/Eng/today/?PrId=voterub>

71 Globo Cambio, "Russian Ruble," n.d., retrieved on 3 March 2022, <https://www.globocambio.co/en/currencies-of-the-world/russian-ruble>.

30% against the dollar after Western sanctions imposed over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.⁷² As of 3 March 2022, the ruble was trading at an exchange rate of USD 1 to RUB 109.89.⁷³

The Central Bank of Russia (CBR) controls the nation's money supply and regulates the commercial banking industry.⁷⁴ About half of the CBR's USD 643 billion in foreign currency is in American or European banks, making it vulnerable to being frozen as part of sanctions.⁷⁵ In keeping with agreements for Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2012, subsidiaries of foreign banks have been allowed to operate in Russia.^{76, 77} However, two state-owned banks, Sherbank and VTB, and the CBR dominate the banking sector.⁷⁸ Only about 25% of Russian households have bank accounts.^{79, 80}

Finance

Russia's legal system favors the government in disputes with foreign investors, and investment laws include various restrictions that work to maintain state control over strategic sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, in 2020 the total value of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Russia was USD 449 billion, some 31% of GDP.⁸¹ Top foreign investors are the United States, Germany, China, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.⁸² These countries invest primarily in agriculture, machinery and equipment, digital technologies, chemicals and plastics, the pharmaceutical industry, finance, ICT, and oil and gas. FDI into Russia was hampered by U.S. and EU sanctions starting in 2014 following Russia's aggression toward Ukraine, cyberattacks, support for rogue regimes, and other malicious behavior.⁸³ After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, foreign investment into Russia all but ceased.⁸⁴

72 Reuters, "Russian Inflation Accelerates to 9.05% as Rouble Slips," 2 March 2022, retrieved on 3 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/russian-inflation-accelerates-905-rouble-slips-2022-03-02/>.

73 XE, "1 USD to RUB--Convert US Dollars to Russian Rubles," 3 March 2022, , retrieved on 3 March 2022, <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=RUB>.

74 Bank of Russia, "The Central Bank of the Russian Federation," n.d., http://www.cbr.ru/Eng/today/?PrId=cbrf_sub

75 Patricia Cohen and Jeanna Smialek, "Russia Tried to Isolate Itself, but Financial Ties Called Its Bluff," New York Times, 3 March 2022, retrieved on 3 March 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/03/business/economy/russia-sanctions-global-economy.html>.

76 Anna Koroleva, "Russia's Banks to Get New Protection Ahead of WTO," Russia & India Report, 7 August 2012, http://indrus.in/articles/2012/08/07/russias_banks_to_get_new_protection_ahead_of_wto_16839.html

77 Mariana Maksimova, "New Law Bans Foreign Bank Branches in Russia," Russia Beyond the Headlines, 22 March 2013, http://rbth.ru/business/2013/03/22/new_law_bans_foreign_bank_branches_in_russia_24171.html

78 Corporate Finance Institute, "Top Banks in Russia," n.d., retrieved on 3 March 2022, <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/careers/companies/top-banks-in-russia/>.

79 Jason Corcoran, "Foreign Banks Are Fleeing Russia," Bloomberg Businessweek, 3 March 2011, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/11_11/b4219045793686.htm

80 Expat Arrivals, "Banking, Money and Taxes in Russia," n.d., <http://www.expattarrivals.com/russia/banking-money-and-taxes-in-russia>

81 Statista, "Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Inward Stock in Russia from 2013 to 2020," 2022, retrieved on 9 March 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/934241/foreign-direct-investment-inward-stock-in-russia/>.

82 EY, "Russia Once Again Entered top 10 Countries Leading by the Number of FDI Projects in Europe," 6 June 2019, retrieved on 9 March 2022, https://www.ey.com/en_ru/news/2019/06/russia-once-again-entered-top-10-countries-leading-by-the-number-of-fdi-projects-in-europe.

83 U.S. Department of State, "2021 Investment Climate Statements: Russia," 2021, retrieved on 10 March 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-investment-climate-statements/russia/>.

84 Sebastian Shehadi, "Foreign Investment to Russia Is Dead as a Doornail: What Now for a Country in Which Companies Cannot Invest or Divest?" Investment Monitor, 3 March 2022, retrieved on 23 March 2022, <https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/special-focus/ukraine-crisis/foreign-investment-russia-dead-ukraine-invasion>.

Standard of Living

Russia ranked 52 out of 189 countries on the 2020 UN Human Development Index, which measures a country's standard of living based on key dimensions.⁸⁵ Russia spends 5.7% of its GDP on health expenditures. Life expectancy at birth is 72.16 years, placing Russia below any other European nation and in the lowest 30% of the world. Life expectancy for males is 66.61 years and for females 78.05 years. The infant mortality rate is 6.51 deaths per 1,000 live births, a global ranking of 169 out of 227 countries. The maternal mortality rate is 17 deaths out of 100,000 live births, a global ranking of 130 out of 184 countries.⁸⁶ The major causes of death and disability are heart disease and stroke, lower back pain, and road injuries.⁸⁷

About 12% of Russians live under the poverty line, which the Russian government defines as an income of USD 154 per month. Some drivers of poverty have been external economic sanctions imposed on Russia and internal economic reforms. Poverty has declined in previous decades, from as high as 34% in 1994. Poverty rates vary across the country, anywhere from 5% to 34%. Tyva, a region in the southeast of the country with a sluggish economy and a weak social safety net, has the country's highest poverty rates. Tyva is also Russia's most indebted region, as many residents turn to loans in order to buy food and other necessities. Russia spends more than 3% of GDP on social assistance programs, a significant number, but few welfare programs are specifically targeted at eradicating poverty. The government is working to reduce the poverty rate to below 6.6% by 2030.^{88, 89, 90}

Employment

Russia's labor market is fragmented and characterized by earnings inequalities, poor enforcement of labor standards, and underdeveloped collective bargaining practices. The weak interface between the Russian education system and the job market has been instrumental in creating a lack of qualified skilled workers. In 2020, the Russian unemployment rate was 5.73%.^{91, 92, 93} Among youth, the rate is much higher, 15.46% in 2019.⁹⁴ Unemployment in

85 United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Data Center," n.d., retrieved on 22 October 2021, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>.

86 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

87 Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, "Russian Federation," n.d., retrieved on 28 March 2022, <https://www.healthdata.org/russia>.

88 Martin Brand, "The OECD Poverty Rate: Lessons from the Russian Case," Sage Journals, 4 April 2021, retrieved on 28 March 2022, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1468018121996075>.

89 Jake Cordell, "World Bank Urges Russia to Adopt Guaranteed Minimum Income to Slash Poverty," Moscow Times, 23 June 2021, retrieved on 28 March 2022, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/05/26/world-bank-urges-russia-to-adopt-guaranteed-minimum-income-to-slash-poverty-a74015>.

90 Viktor Borisov, "'Sell A Kidney': Locals in One Of Russia's Poorest Regions Struggle under a Mountain of Personal Debt," Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 28 November 2021, retrieved on 28 March 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-tyva-poverty-debt/31583681.html>.

91 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," World Factbook, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

92 U.S. Department of State, "Russia: Investment Climate Statement 2015," (report, May 2015), 27-28, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241925.pdf>

93 Aaron O'Neill, "Russia: Unemployment Rate from 1999 to 2020," Statista, 1 February 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263712/unemployment-in-russia/>.

94 Aaron O'Neill, "Russia: Youth Unemployment Rate from 1999 to 2019," Statista, 1 February 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/812918/youth-unemployment-rate-in-russia/>.

rural areas is much higher than in cities (6.6% vs. 3.8%).^{95, 96} The country's highest rates of unemployment are in the North Caucasus: Ingushetia (30.1%) and Chechnya (25%).^{97, 98} In Moscow and St. Petersburg, unemployment is low (2.5% and 2.9%, respectively).^{99, 100} The workforce is nearly equally divided between men and women (51% vs. 49%).¹⁰¹ Fears about economic uncertainty and the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine have prompted many Russians to seek work abroad.^{102, 103}

Economic Outlook

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 upended its economic trajectory. The unprecedented sanctions imposed by Western countries included blocking some Russian banks' abilities to transfer funds internationally, freezing government cash reserves held abroad, and targeting technology companies that helped evade previous sanctions. A slew of international businesses quickly exited the country, leading to disruptions in supply chains, shrinking manufacturing output, and a reduction in international trade. The situation leaves Russia facing multiple possible economic crises, including a run on the country's banks, a credit crunch, a rapidly devaluating ruble, and a default on international debt. Economists had projected that Russia would see a GDP reduction of 8% and inflation of 20% by the end of 2022. Nevertheless, economic ties with major economies such as China and India continue. Russia remains a major oil and gas producer and distributor. Germany and other European countries continue to rely on Russian natural gas, even as they make alternative energy plans for the near future.^{104, 105, 106, 107}

- 95 CEIC, "Russia Unemployment Rate: Rural," 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/russia/unemployment-rate/unemployment-rate-rural>.
- 96 CEIC, "Russia Unemployment Rate: Urban," 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/russia/unemployment-rate/unemployment-rate-urban>.
- 97 Knoema, "Ingushetia, Republic of—Unemployment Rate," n.d., retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://knoema.com/atlas/Russian-Federation/Ingushetia-Republic-of/Unemployment-rate>.
- 98 Caucasian Knot, "Kadyrov Explains High Unemployment in Chechnya by Laziness of Local Residents," 21 May 2021, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/55604/>.
- 99 TASS, "Unemployment Rate in Moscow in 2020 One of Lowest among World's Largest Cities," 9 April 2021, retrieved on 29 March 2022, https://tass.com/economy/1276143?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com.
- 100 CEIC, "Unemployment Rate: NW: City of St Petersburg," n.d., retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/russia/unemployment-rate-by-region-annual/unemployment-rate-nw-city-of-st-petersburg>.
- 101 World Bank, "Labor Force, Female (% of Total Labor Force)—Russian Federation," 8 February 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=RU>.
- 102 Rayhan Demytrie, "Russia Faces Brain Drain as Thousands Flee Abroad," BBC News, 13 March 2022, retrieved on 29 March 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60697763>.
- 103 Alissa de Carbonnel, "Russia's Smartest People are Leaving in Drove," Business Insider, 24 July 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-disenchanted-with-putin-some-russians-vote-with-their-feet-2014-24>.
- 104 Focus Economics, "Russia Economic Outlook," 8 March 2022, retrieved on 31 March 2022, <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/russia>.
- 105 Simon Kennedy, "Russia's Four Crises," Bloomberg, 3 March 2022, retrieved on 31 March 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-03-03/what-s-happening-in-the-world-economy-russia-s-four-economic-crises>.
- 106 Russia Briefing, "Revised Russia GDP and 2022 Economic Forecast," 11 March 2022, retrieved on 31 March 2022, <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/revised-russia-gdp-and-2022-economic-forecast.html/>.
- 107 Alan Rappeport, "The U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Russian Technology Companies and Evasion Networks," New York Times, 31 March 2022, retrieved on 31 March 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/us-sanctions-russia.html>.

Russia in Perspective

Economy Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The majority of Russian farms are collectives. ☐ True ☐ False
2. Russia is the world's largest producer of rough diamonds. ☐ True ☐ False
3. Russia's defense manufacturers are consolidated under the state-run company Rostec. ☐ True ☐ False
4. Over 20% of Russia's citizens live under the poverty line. ☐ True ☐ False
5. The majority of Russia's oil industry is controlled by private companies. ☐ True ☐ False

Russia in Perspective

Economy Assessment Answers

1. True:
Landowners are members either of *kolkhozes* (collective farms) or *sovkhozes* (state farms).
2. True:
The state-owned company ALROSA, which produces 25% of the world's rough diamonds, controls the diamond industry in Russia.
3. True:
Rostec oversees companies that produce aircraft, air defense systems, radars, naval vessels and submarines, missiles, armored vehicles, tanks, small arms, and artillery.
4. False:
About 12% of Russian citizens live under the poverty line, which the Russian government defines as an income of less than USD 154 per month.
5. False:
Domestic oil firms dominate Russian oil production, controlled largely by state-run agencies.

Chapter 4 | Society



Russian folk dancers
Pixelbay/delo

Introduction

Few societies have seen as many upheavals as Russia. From the Westernization policies of Peter the Great to the Bolshevik Revolution to post-socialist economic shock, Russian society has experienced ground-shaking events that have rearranged the political map and redefined its cultural and social landscape. Russian culture is a complex mix of foreign influence and native Slavic tradition. The country's vastness and harsh climate helped create its unique character.^{1, 2} Russians tend toward collectivism, where individual goals are subordinated to those of the family and the nation. Personal relationships are important and carefully cultivated as a means of getting information and furthering successful negotiations. Modesty is the norm, and it is unacceptable to tout personal achievements in public. When making plans, they often leave room for alternatives. This tendency is born of a long history of turmoil and change and a sense that one can never really know or control the future; therefore, truth is often relative. This pragmatism gives Russians a strong ability to adapt to change and the realities of life.^{3, 4}

1 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

2 Zhuo Na, "Research on Russian National Character," *International Education Studies* 1, no. 2 (May 2008): 22-23, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1057992.pdf>

3 Hofstede Centre, "What About Russia," n.d., <http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html>; <https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/the-post-obama-world/only-connect-russia-between-individualism-and-collectivism> ; <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/russian-culture/russian-culture-core-concepts>

4 Garant-InfoCenter, "Something about Russian National Character," Russia-IC, n.d., http://www.russia-ic.com/culture_art/traditions/336/#.ViANNCssCu-

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Ethnic Russians represent 77.7% of the population. Russian is the country's official language, spoken by 85.7% of the population. Along with Belarusian and Ukrainian, Russian makes up the eastern branch of the East Slavic language family. The Russian language is divided into three groups of dialects, Northern, Southern, and Central. Modern Russian comes from a version of the Central dialect spoken in Moscow. Russia has more than 100 ethnic minorities, the largest of which makes up less than 4% of the population. There are more than 140 languages and dialects spoken throughout the country.^{5, 6, 7}

Tatars are Russia's largest ethnic minority, representing 3.7% of the population.⁸ For many centuries, the term Tatar loosely denoted any group of Asian, Muslim, or Turkic descent.⁹ Tatars can more precisely be defined as descendants of Turkic-Mongolian tribes that migrated centuries ago from southern Siberia into the Volga-Urals region. These invaders, known as the Golden Horde, intermixed with the Volga Bulgar population and converted to Islam.¹⁰ As of late 2022, Tatars are the majority ethnic group in the Republic of Tatarstan, where Tatar is an official language.¹¹

Ukrainians, who live scattered throughout the country, are Russia's third-largest ethnic group, making up 1.4% of the population.^{12, 13} Like the Russians, Ukrainians are a Slavic people.^{14, 15}

Bashkirs represent 1.1% of the population of Russia.¹⁶ Their homeland is the Republic of Bashkortostan, located to the southeast of Tatarstan between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains. A Turkic people, they were originally nomadic pastoralists, but became settled agriculturalists in the 19th century. By 2016, the village had become the key element in the social structure of the Bashkirs, who are mostly Muslim or Eastern Orthodox.¹⁷

5 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

6 A. Golovina Khadka, "Russians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 415.

7 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Russian Language," 26 July 2021, retrieved on 4 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-language>

8 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

9 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Tatar," 16 April 2014, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tatar>

10 Azade-Ayshe Rorlich, "Chapter 1: The Origins of the Volga Tatars," in *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), <http://groznejat.tripod.com/fadlan/rorlich1.html>

11 Nebojša Vuković, "Comparative Geopolitical Analysis of 'Hotspots' in the Russian Federation and in the Republic of Serbia," *Journal of the Geographical Institute Jovan Cvijić* 61, no. 1 (2011): 61–83, <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0350-7599/2011/0350-75991101061V.pdf>

12 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

13 Paul A. Goble, "Four Million-Plus Ethnic Ukrainians in Russia Becoming a Problem for Moscow," *Euromaidan Press*, 31 March 2022, retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2022/03/31/four-million-plus-ethnic-ukrainians-in-russian-federation-becoming-a-problem-for-russia/>

14 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Slav," 6 May 2020, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Slav>

15 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

16 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

17 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Bashkir," 8 February 2016, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bashkir>

The homeland of the Chuvash (1% of the population) is the Chuvash Republic, immediately northwest of Tatarstan. Like the Tatars and Bashkirs, the Chuvash are a Turkic-speaking people in origin, but unlike these two groups, the Chuvash are predominantly Orthodox Christian rather than Muslim.^{18, 19}

Russia's most fiercely independent ethnic group is the Chechens, most of whom are Muslim and reside in the autonomous republic of Chechnya in the Northern Caucasus. During World War II, Stalin deported all Chechens to Siberia. More than a decade later, the government declared the Chechens rehabilitated and allowed them to resettle in their homeland. Chechnya waged an unsuccessful separatist war with Russia during much of the 1990s and early 2000s.^{20, 21}

Religion

Religious Demography

During the Soviet era, the government actively suppressed Russian religious institutions. Authorities considered practicing religion and being a member of the Communist Party incompatible activities. Russians once again freely practice their religions, but 70 years of religious oppression have greatly reduced the number of Russians who are actively religious.^{22, 23, 24}

Russian Orthodox Christianity is the largest religious group in the country, claiming 15–20% of the population as its members, although some estimates suggest the number may be as high as 43%. Russian Orthodox Christianity is by far the most common religion among Russian citizens of Slavic origin (e.g., Russians and Ukrainians). Among ethnic Russians, some 74% self-identify as Russian Orthodox. Between 10–15% of the population identify as Muslim, most of whom are Sunni. Russia's Turkic groups, such as the Tatars and Bashkirs, are predominantly Muslim, as are some of the ethnic groups of the Northern Caucasus, such as the Chechens. In addition to the Volga-Ural and North Caucasus regions, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and parts of Siberia have significant Muslim populations. Most of Russia's Muslim population is indigenous rather than having migrated to the country.^{25, 26, 27, 28}

Russian Jews have undergone several periods of discrimination and repression in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. During the Gorbachev regime of the 1980s, a reform policy allowing greater freedom for Jews

18 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

19 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Chuvash," 25 April 2011, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chuvash>

20 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Chechnya," 3 March 2022, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Chechnya>

21 Preeti Bhattacharji, "Chechen Terrorism (Russia, Chechnya, Separatist)," Council on Foreign Relations, 8 April 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/terrorism/chechen-terrorism-russia-chechnya-separatist/p9181#p2>

22 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), , retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>

23 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

24 "Religion in Russia: Russians Feel Less Positive Towards Religion Now than They Did in 1990," *Economist*, 31 July 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/erasmus/2015/07/religion-russia>

25 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

26 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report for 2014: Russia," (report, n.d.), 2, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238638.pdf>

27 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

28 Elmira Akhmetova, "Islam in Russia," Islam.ru, n.d., <http://islam.ru/en/content/story/islam-russia>

to emigrate to Israel and other countries seriously reduced the Russian Jewish population. As of 2022, observers estimated that between 150,000 and 750,000 Jews live in Russia, mostly in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.^{29, 30}

About one million Buddhists live in Russia. They live primarily in three southern republics: Tuva and Buryatia, which both lie along the Russian-Mongolian border, and Kalmykia, far to the west near the lower reaches of the Volga River.³¹

Christianity

The vast majority of Russia's Christians belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. Christian groups lived in Kyiv in the first part of the 10th century.³² The Russian Orthodox Church originated from the Byzantine Christianity of the Eastern Roman Empire.³³ For centuries, the Christian Church had two main centers: Rome and Constantinople. In the 11th century, differing viewpoints regarding the nature of Christ drove a wedge between the two. By 1054, the Roman and Eastern churches had split, resulting in the formation of the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity.³⁴

Like other Christian faiths, the Russian Orthodox ("right believing") Church believes in the Holy Trinity and in the distinct but inseparable divine and human natures of Jesus. The Church recognizes a number of saints including Mary, the mother of Jesus.^{35, 36} The veneration of icons and the inclusion of mystical forms of prayer are central features of Orthodox practices. The Church has a strong monastic tradition, which means that, ideally, both lay people and monks should fulfill the same requirements, living their lives according to the teachings of Christ.^{37, 38, 39}

Islam

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world after Christianity, with about 1.8 billion followers, roughly 24% of the global population.⁴⁰ Muslims believe that Allah, God, revealed his message to the Prophet Muhammad, a merchant who lived in Arabia from 570 to 632 CE. Muhammad is considered the last in a long line of prophets that included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. God's message, as relayed by Muhammad, is delivered in the Quran, the sacred text

29 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report for 2014: Russia," (report, n.d.), 2, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238638.pdf>

30 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., "Russia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

31 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report: 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148977.htm>

Edward C. Holland (2014) Buddhism in Russia: challenges and choices in the post-Soviet period, *Religion, State and Society*, 42:4, 389-402, DOI: [10.1080/09637494.2014.980603](https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2014.980603) ; <https://web.archive.org/web/20130414044144/http://en.ria.ru/russia/20130411/180578136/Putin-Promises-100-Support-for-Buddhists.html>

32 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Russian Orthodox Church," 26 February 2020, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-Orthodox-Church>

33 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Eastern Orthodoxy," 20 August 2020, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eastern-Orthodoxy>

34 John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent: Faith and Power in the New Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 141–80.

35 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>

36 BBC News, "Eastern Orthodox Church," 11 June 2008, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/easternorthodox_1.shtml

37 Kira V. Čekanskaja, "Traditional Veneration of Icons in the Russian Orthodox Church," *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 51, nos. 3–4 (September 2006): 265–80.

38 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>

39 Kristina Stoeckl, *Community After Totalitarianism: The Russian Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001), 82.

40 Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key Findings in the U.S. and around the World," Pew Research Center, 9 August 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

of Islam. Additional doctrinal guides include the Hadith, a collection of the sayings of Muhammad, and the Sunna, which describes the practices of Islam by way of Muhammad's example. The Arabic term *islam* means "to submit" or "to surrender." So, a Muslim is one who submits to the will of God.^{41 42}

Regardless of sect, Muslims follow the Five Pillars of Islam, which capture the essential beliefs and rites of the faith. The first is the *shahada*, the declaration of faith that "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is God's messenger." The *salat* is the requirement to pray five times a day. *Sawm* is the required fast during the month of Ramadan. *Zakat* is the expectation that Muslims should be generous by sharing their wealth. The fifth pillar is the *hajj*, which requires all able Muslims to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives.⁴³

Gender Issues

In 2021, Russia ranked 81st out of 156 countries on the Gender Gap Index, which tracks countries' gender-based gaps through economic, educational, health, and political dimensions.⁴⁴ Since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the resulting economic turmoil, the social status of women in Russia has declined. Patriarchal traditions are rebounding.^{45, 46} Traditional views suggest that women should stay home, have more children, and care for their families. Women continue to bear the major responsibilities for the home, even if they work. New policies have been enacted to increase maternity leave benefits and to give financial help to families with two or more children.^{47, 48}

Russia has a higher female labor force participation rate than any other country (54% in 2019); nearly half of senior leadership positions are held by women, the highest proportion in the world. Yet a significant gap between pay for men and women exists: on average, women are paid 24% less than their male counterparts.^{49, 50, 51, 52} Female political empowerment is less equitable than workforce participation, with women holding only 17% of parliamentary seats.⁵³

Domestic violence against women in Russia is a serious problem. The country has no laws criminalizing domestic violence, and repeated attempts to pass anti-domestic violence laws have stalled amid opposition from the Russian

41 Frederick Mathewson Deny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), 177.

42 Annemarie Schimmel, "Islam," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 17 August 2021, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>

43 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Pillars of Islam," 13 March 2020, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pillars-of-Islam>

44 World Economic Forum, "Gender Gap Report 2021," March 2021, retrieved on 4 April 2022, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

45 Nicola-Ann Hardwick, "Reviewing the Changing Situation of Women in Russian Society," E-International Relations Students, 20 December 2014, <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/12/20/reviewing-the-changing-situation-of-women-in-russian-society/>

46 Lisa Weilminster, "Gender and Human Rights," Topical Research Digest: Human Rights in Russia and the Former Soviet Republics (2007): 30, <http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/russia/gender.pdf>

47 Nicola-Ann Hardwick, "Reviewing the Changing Situation of Women in Russian Society," E-International Relations Students, 20 December 2014, <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/12/20/reviewing-the-changing-situation-of-women-in-russian-society/>

48 Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Russia: Discriminatory Family Code," 2015, <http://genderindex.org/country/russian-federation>

49 Global Economy, "Russia: Female Labor Force Participation," n.d., retrieved on 4 April 2022, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Russia/Female_labor_force_participation/

50 Statista, "Unadjusted Gender Pay Gap: Difference between Average Hourly Male and Female Earnings as a Percentage of Average Hourly Male Earnings in Russia from 2015 to 2019," 18 February 2022, retrieved on 4 April 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1261581/gender-pay-gap-russia/>

51 Isabel Gorst, "Women in Business," *Financial Times*, 5 March 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/91be6ca0-b83b-11e4-86bb-00144feab7de.html#axzz3p1a5wLNNW>

52 Statista, "Share of Leadership Positions Occupied by Women in Russia from October 2017 to October 2019," 15 March 2022, retrieved on 4 April 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123941/russia-women-leadership-ratio/>

53 Statista, "Share of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments in Russia from January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2021, by Institution," 14 March 2022, retrieved on 4 April 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123939/share-of-women-in-parliaments-in-russia/>

Orthodox Church and conservative groups. Measures passed in 2017 actually decriminalized some instances of domestic battery.⁵⁴ Women receive no support or protection from their abusers. Domestic abuse is still widely regarded as a private issue, and many Russians hold the view that the women bring the situation on themselves. Data suggests that as many as 14,000 women die annually from family violence and nearly 65% of homicides are purportedly related to domestic violence.^{55, 56, 57, 58}

Homosexuality is not against the law in Russia, but LGBTQ individuals face hardships ranging from intimidation to torture. Gay people have long faced threats and bullying from family and society as part of a general antipathy that views homosexuality as a danger to family and tradition. In 2013, anti-gay sentiments were codified into the “gay propaganda” law, which bans discussion of “nontraditional sexual relations” with children. The law has been used to shutter pro-gay websites, ban nongovernmental organizations that support LGBTQ rights, and curtail the ability of mental health providers to offer scientifically accurate services to patients. In 2017 and 2019, the hardline authorities in Chechnya initiated a series of anti-gay purges that led to the detention and abuse of some 140 gay and bisexual men and at least two deaths.^{59, 60, 61, 62}

Cuisine

Russian cuisine reflects a medley of influences inherited from an empire spanning two continents, from the *plov* (pilaf) of Central Asia to the walnut-and spice-laden dishes of Georgia. French influences, introduced in the 19th century, include thick meat sauces, elaborate salads, and cream-filled tortes that serve as dessert for many Russian meals.^{63, 64}

The Russian *zavtrak* (breakfast) typically includes *bliny* (pancakes) with either sweet or savory fillings, *kasha* (porridge) made with buckwheat or other grains, and *syrniki* (fried cottage cheese cakes). *Smetana* (sour cream) accompanies many favorite Russian dishes.^{65, 66}

Traditionally, the main Russian meal is *obed*, which Russians eat in the afternoon any time between 1 and 5 p.m. It begins with either *zakuski* (appetizers) or soup. The *zakuski* may include items such as salads with mayonnaise-based dressings, caviar, cold meats, sliced sturgeon, pickled cabbage, and mushrooms topped with sour cream.

54 Alexey Yurtaev, “Inside the Fight over Russia’s Domestic Violence Law,” Open Democracy, 17 February 2020, retrieved on 4 April 2022, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/russia-domestic-violence-law/>

55 Amelia Gentleman, “Breaking the Taboo: The Moscow Women Taking a Stand Against Domestic Violence,” *Guardian*, 10 June 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jun/10/moscow-domestic-violence-problem-russia>

56 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Russia: Restricted Physical Integrity,” 2015, <http://genderindex.org/country/russian-federation>

57 Jennifer Monaghan, “Domestic Violence in Russia: Optimism as Country Faces up to the ‘Silent Crisis,’” *Independent*, 9 May 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/domestic-violence-in-russia-optimism-as-country-faces-up-to-the-silent-crisis-10239053.html>

58 Anna Dolgov, “Gruesome Family Killing Highlights Russian Domestic Abuse Problem,” *Moscow Times*, 6 August 2015, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/gruesome-family-killing-highlights-russian-domestic-abuse-problem/527070.html>

59 Marc Bennetts, “‘Alone and in Fear’: Ordeal of Married Gay Couple Forced to Flee Russia,” *Guardian*, 5 September 2018, retrieved on 12 April 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/05/alone-and-in-fear-ordeal-of-married-gay-couple-forced-to-flee-russia>

60 Theo Merz, “Chechnya Opens Terror Inquiry into Gay Men Forcibly Returned from Moscow,” *Guardian*, 8 February 2021, retrieved on 12 April 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/08/chechnya-opens-terror-inquiry-into-gay-men-forcibly-returned-from-moscow>

61 Human Rights Watch, “No Support; Russia’s ‘Gay Propaganda’ Law Imperils LGBT Youth,” 11 December 2018, retrieved on 12 April 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/12/12/no-support/russias-gay-propaganda-law-imperils-lgbt-youth>

62 Andrew Roth, “Chechnya: Two Dead and Dozens Held in LGBT Purge, Say Activists,” *Guardian*, 14 January 2019, retrieved on 12 April 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/14/chechnya-two-dead-and-dozens-held-in-lgbt-purge-reports>

63 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 82.

64 Famous Wonders, “Russian Cuisine,” n.d., <http://famouswonders.com/russian-cuisine/>

65 Simon Richmond et al., *Russia and Belarus*, 5th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2011), 101.

66 Understand Russia, “What Russians Eat for Breakfast,” n.d., <http://understandrussia.com/what-russians-eat-for-breakfast/>

Two popular salads are *seledka pod shuboy* (literally, “salted herring in a fur coat”) and *salat olivye*, which includes chopped meat, cheese, and vegetables.^{67, 68, 69} Common soups include borscht (made from beetroot with vegetables and sometimes meat), shchi (made with cabbage or sauerkraut), and solyanka (a thick concoction of meat or fish, potatoes, and pickled vegetables).^{70, 71, 72}

Main courses generally include meat or various types of fish, such as pike, sturgeon, salmon, and chub. Some of the more common meat dishes are pelmeni (meat dumplings), various types of fish, biftstroganov (beef slices in a thick cream sauce), and shashlik (lamb kebabs, a popular food transplant from the Caucasus region).^{73, 74, 75}

The *uzhin* (evening meal), which is generally between 7 and 10 p.m., consists simply of *zakuski* and black tea. At this meal, Russians frequently consume shots of freezer-cold vodka with the salty or savory appetizer dishes.^{76, 77, 78}

Traditional Dress

The traditional folk costume for women in Russia was a *sarafan*, a brightly colored, jumper-like dress with wide straps. It was worn over a *rubakha*, a long-sleeved shirt with or without embroidered design motifs, braided around the waist by sashes with long, loose ends. The *kokoshnik*, a tiara-like headdress tied at the back with ribbons, often accompanied the *sarafan*. Women often elaborately decorated *kokoshniks* with mother-of-pearl, delicate needlework, and brightly colored stone. Numerous variations existed on this basic style, depending on the geographical location and the marital status of the woman.^{79, 80, 81, 82}

Men wore a kosovorotka, or long-sleeved shirt, which buttoned at the neck and came to the mid-thigh. Russian men also wore a rubakha that either hung loose like a smock or was tucked into the pants. Men's trousers were typically bound into leg wrappings or tucked into high boots made of felt or leather. The most common form of outerwear for men was the kaftan, a long, loose-fitting robe with tight sleeves that overlapped in the front and was fastened at the side.^{83, 84, 85}

67 Anna Pavlovskaya, *Culture Shock! Russia: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011), 174–76.

68 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 64–71.

69 Russian Foods, “Selyodka Pod Shuboy,” n.d., <http://www.russianfoods.com/en/selyodka-pod-shuboy/>

70 Anna Pavlovskaya, *Culture Shock! Russia: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011), 174–76.

71 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 64–71.

72 Barbara Rolek, “Traditional Russian Soup Recipes—Retsepty Supov,” 2019, thespruceeats.com, <https://www.thespruceeats.com/traditional-russian-soup-recipes-1135541>

73 Simon Richmond et al., *Russia and Belarus, 5th ed.* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2011), 102–3.

74 Sophia Boikov, Nadejda Lavrova, and Victor Ubungunov, “Meat and Cabbage Dumplings (Pelemeni),” SBS Foods, n.d., <http://www.sbs.com.au/food/recipes/meat-and-cabbage-dumplings-pelemeni>

75 Russipedia, “Of Russian Origin: Shashlyk,” RT, n.d., <http://russiapietia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/shashlyk/>

76 Anna Pavlovskaya, *Culture Shock! Russia: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011), 174–76.

77 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 64–71.

78 Diana Henry, “Zakuski,” *The Splendid Table*, 2005, <http://www.splendidtable.org/recipes/zakuski>

79 A. Golovina Khadka, “Russians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 419–20.

80 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 73.

81 Tom Barton, “Of Russian Origin: Kokoshnik,” RT, n.d., <http://russiapietia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/kokoshnik/>

82 Lovely Planet, “Traditional Dress of Russia: A Symbol of Ethnic Diversity in the Russian Federation,” 22 October 2014, <http://www.thelovelyplanet.net/traditional-dress-of-russia-a-symbol-of-ethnic-diversity-in-the-russian-federation/>

83 Alison Hilton, *Russian Folk Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 88.

84 Richard Hellie, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia, 1600–1725* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 346–86.

85 Lovely Planet, “Traditional Dress of Russia: A Symbol of Ethnic Diversity in the Russian Federation,” 22 October 2014, <http://www.thelovelyplanet.net/traditional-dress-of-russia-a-symbol-of-ethnic-diversity-in-the-russian-federation/>

Arts

Literature

Russians take great pride in their literature, and writers are among the country's most respected public figures.⁸⁶ In poetry and drama, Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) is the nation's earliest and foremost literary figure and remains highly influential and loved. In a 1999 poll of Russians asking which Russian had made the greatest contribution to world history, Pushkin came in second place, behind only Peter the Great.⁸⁷ Pushkin's seminal works include the drama Boris Godunov, written while in exile, and Eugene Onegin, a verse novel that later became the basis of one of Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky's most famous operas.^{88, 89} Several other 19th-century Russian writers are considered major figures in world literature. They include the satirist Nikolay Gogol; novelists Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy; and the dramatist Anton Chekhov.^{90, 91, 92}

Between 1900 and 1930 several Russian novelists and poets, such as Andrei Bely and Alexander Blok, embraced abstraction and mysticism in a style that collectively became known as Symbolism. Other Russian poets of the era, including Osip Mandelstam and Anna Akhmatova, took a more concrete, verbally precise approach known as Acmeism. These writers and others, including Boris Pasternak, found themselves censored or persecuted during the Stalin era when Social Realism became the only government-sanctioned literary and artistic style. Pasternak and Alexander Solzhenitsyn won Nobel Prizes for Literature in 1958 and 1970, respectively. But Pasternak ultimately refused the award under intense pressure from Soviet authorities. Solzhenitsyn did not leave the Soviet Union to receive his prize, fearing the regime would not allow him to return home.^{93, 94, 95}

Painting

Russian painting was strongly influenced by the adoption of Christianity in 988 CE.⁹⁶ Paintings first depicted Greek Orthodox iconography, but the Russian style became idealized and spiritual rather than naturalistic.⁹⁷ Icons included images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints, usually painted on wooden panels.^{98,99} Byzantine monks first painted icons in Kyiv. In the 14th century, a distinct style emerged in Moscow with Theophanes the Greek. Theophanes' student Andrei Rublev, known for the Holy Trinity (1411), perfected the style.^{100, 101}

⁸⁶ Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 77.

⁸⁷ Robert Parsons, "Pushkin Fever Sweeps Russia," BBC News, 5 June 1999, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/361169.stm

⁸⁸ Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 77–79.

⁸⁹ Isaiah Berlin, "Tchaikovsky, Pushkin and Onegin," *Musical Times* 121, no. 1645 (March 1980): 163–168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/963421>

⁹⁰ Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 82–85.

⁹¹ Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 110–11.

⁹² Juris Dilevko, Keren Dali, and Glenda Garbutt, *Contemporary World Fiction: A Guide to Literature in Translation* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 215–17.

⁹³ Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 85–90.

⁹⁴ Mauricio Borrero, *Russia: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 2004), 268.

⁹⁵ Stig Fredrikson, "How I Helped Alexandr Solzhenitsyn Smuggle His Nobel Lecture from the USSR," Nobelprize.org, 22 February 2006, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-article.html

⁹⁶ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>

⁹⁷ Anna Pavlovshaya, *Culture Shock! Russia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011), 198.

⁹⁸ John Noble, et al., *Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1996), 62.

⁹⁹ Anthony G. Ziagos, "What Makes and Icon an Icon?" Museum of Russian Icons, n.d., <http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/en/about/iconography/what-is-an-icon/>

¹⁰⁰ John Noble, et al., *Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1996), 63.

¹⁰¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Theophanes the Greek," 1 January 2022, retrieved on 18 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Theophanes-the-Greek>

Russian painting turned to secular subjects quite slowly. Although founded in 1757, the Russian Academy of Arts did not inspire national painting until 1870, with the emergence a group known as the Wanderers. Many touring exhibitions gave these painters their name and spread their influence across the country.¹⁰² The movement promoted social change and national consciousness, although subjects ranged from landscapes to portraits to social commentaries.¹⁰³

With the arrival of the 20th century, Russian painters experimented with many styles— Impressionism, Art Nouveau, and Symbolism—gradually becoming more abstract.^{104,105} Avant-garde painters, including Vasily Kandinsky, featured a style in which the human figure was simply drawn with rough, unfinished lines.¹⁰⁶ Other styles followed, including cubo-futurism, which broke from all previous styles. Natalia Goncharova painted in multiple styles with themes of Russian folk art, and later depicted objects suffused with rays of light. Marc Chagall achieved global renown for his paintings of child-like dream images reminiscent of Russian folk tales. Kazimir Malevich's work featured geometrical forms that no longer represented the physical world. His most famous paintings, *Black Square* and *White on White*, were simple shapes that were “doorways to the spirit,” or represented thinking on canvas.^{107, 108}

Music

Russian classical music reached its height during the 19th century.¹⁰⁹ Mikhail Glinka is generally credited as the father of a distinctive Russian style of classical music and opera built on the folk music of the Eastern Slavs, who inhabited the region that would eventually become Kievan Rus and later Muscovy.¹¹⁰ Shortly after the premier of Glinka's seminal opera *Ivan Susanin* in 1836, there emerged a set of composers known as the Group of Five—Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin, Mily Balakirev, and César Cui—who continued to look to Russian legends, history, and folk music for inspiration.^{111, 112, 113}

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, not included in the Group of Five, displayed distinctly Russian elements in his music, although less so than his contemporaries. His symphonies (No. 6 in B Minor), operas (*Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*), ballet scores (*The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*), and piano concertos (No. 1) are among the most renowned pieces in the classical music canon.^{114, 115, 116}

The generation of composers following Tchaikovsky included Sergei Rachmaninov and Igor Stravinsky, both of whom fled Russia after the 1917 revolution. Rachmaninov is best known for his works written for piano, although

102 John Noble, et al., *Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1996), 63.

103 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

104 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

105 John Noble, et al., *Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1996), 63.

106 KEM, “A Brief Overview of Major Movements in Russian Art after 1850,” 2003, <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/dept/WebBasedLanguage/Russian/Culture/RussianIconPainting.htm>

107 John Noble, et al., *Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 1996), 63.

108 KEM, “A Brief Overview of Major Movements in Russian Art after 1850,” 2003, <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/dept/WebBasedLanguage/Russian/Culture/OverviewModernRussianArt.htm>

109 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 105.

110 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Mikhail Glinka,” 11 February 2022, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mikhail-Glinka>

111 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 105–6.

112 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 116–19.

113 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “The Five,” 12 June 2015, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Five>

114 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 106–7.

115 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 122.

116 Alexander Poznansky, “Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 14 April 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pyotr-Ilyich-Tchaikovsky>

he also composed several orchestral works, including three symphonies. Stravinsky was an innovative composer whose music for the ballet *The Rite of Spring* shocked European listeners with its originality and modernity when it premiered in 1913.^{117, 118}

Other composers continued to work in the Soviet Union, but increasingly found themselves under state criticism. In 1948, the Soviet Central Committee denounced Dmitry Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, and Aram Khachaturian as composers whose works showed “clear manifestations of formalistic distortions and antidemocratic tendencies in music that are alien to the Soviet people and its artistic tastes.”^{119, 120, 121}

Ballet

Ballet entered Russia as part of Peter the Great’s Westernization program in the early 1700s. Two centuries later, Sergey Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* changed the international dance world, touring avant-garde works such as *The Rite of Spring*. During the Cold War, stars like Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Alexander Godunov defected to the West, continuing the Russian influence on classical ballet worldwide.^{122, 123}

Folk and Popular Culture

Although Russia is known for its famous ballet houses like the Bolshoi, folk dancing has an even longer heritage in the country. Around the world, wherever there are communities of Russians, there are usually Russian folk dancing groups. Some of these dances are associated with groups in Russia who have long lived at the margins of Russian society, such as the Roma, Jews, and Cossacks. Russian folk dancers perform to traditional music played on a *garmoshka* (buttoned accordion), *balalaika* (triangle-shaped guitar), seven-string guitar, and other instruments.¹²⁴

Russia has a rich heritage of folktales, many of which are familiar to people outside Russia because they form the basis of well-known Russian ballets and musical stories.^{125, 126} One example is the story told in the ballet *The Firebird*, which Igor Stravinsky based on a synthesis of two folk tales, “Prince Ivan, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf” and “Kastchei the Immortal.” Other examples include *The Snow Maiden*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and *Petrushka*.^{127, 128}

Self-publishing became a popular way to share unauthorized materials during the Soviet era. Writers’ works (including Pasternak’s *Dr. Zhivago* and Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago*) circulated as carbon-copy *samizdat*; poetry and music performances were recorded on used X-ray film *roentgenizdat* or magnetic tape *magnitizdat*; in late 2022,

117 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 118–19.

118 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 107–8.

119 Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 158.

120 “Music: Prokofiev’s Last,” *Time*, 26 December 1960, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,895174,00.html>

121 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 120–22.

122 Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996), retrieved on 3 February 2022, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/>

123 Lindsey Winship, “Dancers and Dissidents: How Ballet Became a Political Football Between East and West”, *The Guardian*, 17 March 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/mar/17/dancers-and-dissidents-how-ballet-became-a-political-football-between-east-and-west>

124 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 111–12, 115.

125 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 91.

126 Helen Pilinovsky, “Russian Fairy Tales, Part I: The Fantastic Traditions of the East and West,” *Journal of Mythic Arts*, <http://endicottstudio.typepad.com/articleslist/russian-fairy-tales-the-fantastic-traditions-of-east-and-west-by-helen-pilinovsky.html>

127 Sydney Schultze, *Culture and Customs of Russia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 116–17.

128 Jane Hutchings, ed., *Insight Guides: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine*, 3rd ed. (London: Apa Publications GmbH and Co., 2002), 119.

the internet provides outlets for savvy artists and musicians to reach their audience.^{129, 130, 131} In the Putin era, artists that challenge the authorized version of Russian society are once again targets of government surveillance and censorship—for example, the activist punk band Pussy Riot have been in and out of jail since 2012.^{132, 133}

Sports and Recreation

Russian athletes have long been recognized for their prowess in international sporting competitions such as the Olympics. Russia ranks 10th globally in terms of all-time gold medals won in the summer Olympic games and 9th for the winter games.^{134, 135} But Russian sport has been irrevocably marred by the uncovering of a vast doping conspiracy. In 2016 a whistleblower revealed a years-long, state-sponsored doping program that involved government institutions, doctors, trainers, and athletes, with the ultimate aim of ensuring Russia won the most medals at the 2014 winter Olympics in Sochi. As a result of the findings, Russia was banned from elite international sport competitions from 2020 to the end of 2022, although Russian athletes could still compete as “neutral” under the auspices of the “Russian Olympic Committee.”^{136, 137} In 2022, various world sports governing bodies banned Russia from some international competitions in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine.¹³⁸

The two top spectator sports in Russia are soccer and ice hockey.^{139, 140} The Russian Premier League is the nation's leading division in soccer. Clubs based in Moscow (Spartak, CSKA, Lokomotiv) and Saint Petersburg (Zenit) have historically dominated the league.^{141, 142} The Russian men's and women's national hockey teams are among the world's leaders. In 2022, the men's team was ranked third in the world and the women's team fifth.¹⁴³ Since the 1990s, many of Russia's best hockey players have played in the lucrative North American National Hockey League.

129 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: the Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 182-192. <https://www.voanews.com/a/3240434.html>

130 Friederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov, “Samizdat and Tamizdat,” in Friederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov (eds.), *Samizdat, Tamizdat, and Beyond: Transnational Media During and After Socialism, Studies in Contemporary European History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 1–29.

131 John Arterbury, “Russia’s Biggest Rappers Are Going Hard Against Putin’s War,” *Rolling Stone*, 17 March 2022, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/russia-rappers-putin-war-ukraine-1322497/>

132 Tom Taylor, “At War with Russian Oppression: A Brief History of Pussy Riot and Eastern Punk,” *Far Out Magazine*, 22 March 2022, <https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/pussy-riot-and-eastern-punk-at-war-russia/>

133 Russian Service, “Moscow Court Replaces Pussy Riot Member’s Parole-Like Sentence With Prison Term,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 21 April 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/aloykhina-prison-sentence-pussy-riot/31814681.html>

134 Topend Sports, “All-Time Olympic Games Medal Tally (Summer Olympics),” n.d., retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://www.topendsports.com/events/summer/medal-tally/all-time.htm>

135 Topend Sports, “All-Time Total Medal Tally (Winter Olympics),” n.d., retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://www.topendsports.com/events/winter/medal-tally/all-time.htm>

136 Tariq Panja, “Russia Banned from Olympics and Global Sports for 4 Years Over Doping,” *New York Times*, 9 December 2019, retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/09/sports/russia-doping-ban.html>

137 NBC Sports, “ROC Explained: Why Is Russia Banned from the Beijing Olympics?” 1 February 2022, retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://www.nbcsports.com/washington/tokyo-olympics/roc-explained-why-russia-banned-tokyo-olympics>

138 OlympicTalk, “Russia, Belarus Banned from Some Sports Events after IOC Recommendation,” *NBC Sports*, 28 February 2022, retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://olympics.nbcsports.com/2022/02/28/russia-belarus-sports-ban-olympics-ioc-paralympics/>

139 A. Golovina Khadka, “Russians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 421.

140 Russia Trek, “Russian Sports,” n.d., <http://russiatrek.org/about-russia-sport>

141 Ashley Gray, “Andrey Arshavin Targeted for Russia Return: Gas Giants Fuel Zenit St. Petersburg’s Ambitious Plans to Bring Arsenal Star Back,” *Mail Online*, 25 September 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-1215789/Andrey-Arshavin-targeted-Russia-return-Gas-giants-fuel-Zenit-St-Petersburgs-ambitious-plans-starting-Arsenal-star.html>

142 GAZPROM, “GAZPROM Football,” 2015, <https://www.gazprom-football.com/en/GAZPROM/1.htm>

143 International Ice Hockey Federation, “World Ranking,” 2022, retrieved on 13 April 2022, <https://www.iihf.com/en/worldranking>

The Kontinental Hockey League, founded in 2008 with the backing of several large state-owned Russian companies such as Gazprom, is increasingly attracting top Russian players.^{144, 145, 146}

In recent decades, Russians have had notable successes in professional tennis. In women's tennis, the rankings of the world's top players have included Maria Sharapova, Svetlana Kuznetsova, Vera Zvonareva, Anna Chakvetadze, Nadia Petrova, and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.¹⁴⁷ On the men's side, top players since the mid-1990s have included Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin, both of whom have won two Grand Slam events, and Nikolay Davydenko and Mikhail Youzhny. Many credit former president Boris Yeltsin, an avid tennis enthusiast, for having played a significant role in Russia's upsurge in the sport.^{148, 149}

Chess is a popular sport in Russia, with national training programs as rigorous as those for performing artists or athletes. The Russian and Ukrainian teams are regularly among the top scorers in the Chess Olympiad and other international competitions.¹⁵⁰ In spring 2022 FIDE, the world chess federation, banned Russia and Belarus from team competition and suspended a top Russian player for supporting Putin's war against Ukraine.¹⁵¹

A favorite Russian leisure activity is spending time in the *banya*, a bathhouse noted for its super-hot *parilka* (steam room).^{152, 153} Both sexes enjoy this tradition, but women and men seldom attend together unless it is a family banya.^{154, 155}

144 Shawn McCarthy, "New Russian-Based League Flexes Its Muscles," *Globe and Mail*, 22 May 2008, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/new-russian-based-league-flexes-its-muscles/article688412/actions.jsp>

145 National Hockey League, "Most Russians Selected at NHL Draft since 2004," 27 June 2015, <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=772628>

146 Hockey Reference, "NHL Players Born in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," n.d., <http://www.hockey-reference.com/friv/birthplaces.cgi?country=SU>

147 Tennis.com, "WTA Tour Rankings," 2015, http://www.tennis.com/rankings/rankings_women.aspx

148 Tennis.com, "ATP Tour Rankings," 2015, <http://www.tennis.com/rankings/index.aspx>

149 Matthew Knight, "Boris Yeltsin: Russia's No. 1 Tennis Fan," CNN, 24 November 2010, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/SPORT/tennis/11/24/boris.yeltsin.tennis.passion/index.html>

150 Jens Krepela, "Checkmate: Russia's War on Ukraine Fractures Tight-Knit World of Chess," *Deutsche Welle*, 17 Mar 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/checkmate-russias-war-on-ukraine-fractures-tight-knit-world-of-chess/a-61158979>

151 Trevor Pritchard, "How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine is Sending Shock Waves through the Chess World," CBC News, 12 April 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/chess-ukraine-war-russia-future-ramifications-1.6410575>

152 Simon Richmond et al., *Russia and Belarus*, 5th ed. (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2011), 122–23.

153 Master Russian, "Russian Banya," n.d., <http://masterrussian.com/russianculture/banya.htm>

154 Ethan Pollock, "Real Men Go to the Bania: Postwar Soviet Masculinities and the Bathhouse," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 11, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 47–76.

155 Nancy Condee, "Chapter 1: The Second Fantasy Mother, or All Baths Are Women's Baths," in *Russia, Women, Culture*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Beth Holmgren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 3–29.

Russia in Perspective

Society Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Russian Orthodox Christianity is the most common religion among ethnic Russians. ☐ True ☐ False
2. Russian law criminalizes domestic violence. ☐ True ☐ False
3. Alexander Pushkin is one of Russia's foremost literary figures. ☐ True ☐ False
4. *Rubakha* was a way to share unauthorized literature during the Soviet era. ☐ True ☐ False
5. Russia has one of the world's lowest female labor participation rates. ☐ True ☐ False

Russia in Perspective

Society Assessment Answers

1. True:
Among ethnic Russians, some 74% self-identify as Russian Orthodox. Russia's Turkic groups are predominantly Muslim, as are some ethnic groups of the Northern Caucasus, such as the Chechens.
2. False:
Russia has no laws criminalizing domestic violence, and repeated attempts to pass anti-domestic violence laws have stalled. Measures passed in 2017 actually decriminalized some instances of domestic battery.
3. True:
Pushkin's seminal works include the drama *Boris Godunov*, written while in exile, and *Eugene Onegin*. Other prominent 19th-century Russian writers are Nikolay Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov.
4. False:
A rubakha, is traditional garment for men and women. *Samizdat* refers to the circulation of banned works of literature.
5. False:
Russia has a higher female labor force participation rate than any other country (54% in 2019); nearly half of senior leadership positions are held by women, the highest proportion in the world.

Chapter 5 | Security



Russian honor guard, Alexander Garden, Moscow
Wikimedia/Public Domain

Introduction

Russia shares borders with 14 countries, many of whom are part of what the Kremlin refers to as the “near abroad,” reflecting the countries’ history as former Soviet republics. Some of these new nations have aligned themselves closely with the West, rejecting being part of the Russian sphere of influence.^{1, 2, 3} Others have developed closer relations with Europe and the United States, while retaining economic and political ties with Russia.^{4, 5} Since Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, he has focused on restoring Russia as a regional and global power, strengthening its economy, and rebuilding its military. This transformation has been financed largely by the sale of natural gas and oil, much of it to Western Europe. Relations with the West improved between 2001 and 2008 but have since deteriorated, mainly because of Russia’s actions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria. Putin perceives much of Western policy as hostile

- 1 Geoffrey Alan Hosking et al., “Russia,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>
- 2 Central Intelligence Agency, “Russia,” *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>
- 3 Birthe Hansen, “Chapter 5: The Baltic States and Security Strategies Available,” in *The Baltic States in World Politics*, eds. Birthe Hansen and Bertel Heurlin (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 98–105.
- 4 European Union, “External Relations: A Global Task,” 16 May 2012, http://europa.eu/pol/ext/index_en.htm
- 5 BBC News, “Ukraine Votes to Drop Non-aligned Status,” 23 December 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30587924>

to his nation, and as a result he has been willing to draw strong lines against the West.^{6, 7, 8} This has led to increased tensions, particularly as NATO expands eastward and Russia sides with China in international disputes. In February 2022, the fragile ties between Russia and the West unraveled when Russia invaded Ukraine.^{9, 10, 11, 12}

U.S.-Russia Relations

The United States and Russia are the world's top nuclear powers, and their relationship has global implications. Even before Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, U.S.-Russia relations were at their lowest point since the Cold War. Moscow was unwilling to accept the U.S. role as a global superpower and resented U.S. efforts to democratize Eurasian nations. The Kremlin regarded U.S.-led NATO missile defense efforts as a threat to its own strategic deterrent initiatives. For its part, Washington was wary of Russia's antidemocratic tendencies, arms sales to global trouble spots, and interference in Western democratic processes. The United States decried Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and subsequent interventions in eastern Ukraine. Starting in 2014, the United States actively supported economic sanctions against Russia. Russia's military involvements in Syria in 2015 and its attempted interference in U.S. elections also provoked tensions.^{13, 14, 15, 16, 17}

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the United States led the allied Western response of imposing unprecedented economic sanctions on Russia, isolating Russia on the world stage, and providing weapons and aid to Ukraine. Russia persisted in its destructive onslaught, claiming that the war was a "special military operation" within its sphere of influence and cautioning the United States against interfering. In March 2022, following informal U.S. accusations of war crimes against President Putin, the Russian foreign ministry stated that relations between the two countries were nearing "rupture."^{18, 19}

- 6 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS, "External Affairs, Russia," 19 August 2015.
- 7 Ivan Tsvetkov, "Five Big Challenges for Russian Foreign Policy in 2015," Russia Direct, 8 January 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/five-big-challenges-russian-foreign-policy-2015>
- 8 Samuel Charap and Cory Welt, "Policy Choices: Motifs and Unintended Consequences," Russia in Global Affairs, 26 June 2015, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Policy-Choices-Motifs-and-Unintended-Consequences-17547>
- 9 James M. Dorsey, "The Syrian Crisis: Russian Policy Risks Wider Conflict," Middle East Online, 31 July 2012, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=53663>
- 10 Sergei L. Loiko, "Russia Has Doubts about Syria President's Ability to Hold On," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/28/world/la-fg-russia-syria-20120729>
- 11 Ivan Tsvetkov, "Five Big Challenges for Russian Foreign Policy in 2015," Russia Direct, 8 January 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/five-big-challenges-russian-foreign-policy-2015>
- 12 Catherine Clifford, "How the EU Plans to Cut Dependence on Russian Gas by Two-Thirds This Year," CNBC, 8 March 2022, retrieved on 28 April 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/08/how-the-eu-plans-to-cut-dependence-on-russian-gas-by-67percent-this-year.html>
- 13 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS, "External Affairs, Russia," 19 August 2015.
- 14 "Pentagon Chief: Russian Action in Syria is Pouring Petrol on Fire," Middle East Monitor, 1 October 2015, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/americas/21381-pentagon-chief-russian-action-in-syria-is-pouring-petrol-on-fire>
- 15 Steven Lee Myers and Eric Schmitt, "Russian Military Uses Syria as Proving Ground, and West Takes Notice," *New York Times*, 14 October 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/15/world/middleeast/russian-military-uses-syria-as-proving-ground-and-west-takes-notice.html?_r=0
- 16 Reuters, "UN: Russia's Annexation of Crimea is Illegal," *New York Post*, 27 March 2014, <http://nypost.com/2014/03/27/un-russias-annexation-of-crimea-is-illegal/>
- 17 Voice of America, "Putin: US-Russian Relations Key for Solving Global Crisis," 4 July 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/content/putin-us-russian-relations-global-crisis-resolution/2848840.html>
- 18 William Roberts, "Ukraine War: What Would a 'Rupture' in US-Russian Relations Mean?" Al Jazeera, 28 March 2022, retrieved on 20 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/28/ukraine-war-what-would-a-rupture-in-us-russian-relations-mean>
- 19 Steven Pifer, "Russia vs. Ukraine: How Does this End?" Brookings, 10 March 2022, retrieved on 20 April 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/03/10/russia-vs-ukraine-how-does-this-end/>

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Azerbaijan

Relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are cordial, with occasional tensions. Trade and economic ties form the core of bilateral relations.²⁰ In 2021, bilateral trade reached nearly USD 3 billion. Russia is Azerbaijan's second-largest import partner.^{21, 22}

Russia has implicated itself in the ongoing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Armenia's support for the breakaway Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh.^{23, 24, 25, 26} In 2020, Russia brokered a ceasefire after a brief war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in which Azerbaijan made territorial gains in Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian peacekeepers are deployed to the region to maintain the terms of the ceasefire.²⁷

Belarus

Of all Russia's neighbors, few have closer political and economic ties to Moscow than Belarus.^{28, 29} More than 200 signed agreements form the foundation for strong bilateral cooperation between the two states. Russia's heavy subsidization of crude oil to Belarus has been crucial, helping shore up the ailing Belarusian economy. Belarus exports machinery and agricultural products to Russia and cooperates in construction efforts there; strong Russian investment in Belarus is improving bilateral trade.^{30, 31}

In 2020, Russia stood by Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko when mass street protests erupted in the wake of fraudulent presidential elections. With Moscow's backing, Lukashenko brutally suppressed the protests, strengthening his grip on power and incurring rebukes and sanctions from the West. In 2022, the Minsk-Moscow

20 Alexei Vlasov, "Russia-Azerbaijan: The Character of Bilateral Relations Is Changing," *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 4 July 2012, <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/analysis/politics/28537.html>

21 Central Intelligence Agency, "Azerbaijan," *World Factbook*, 22 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/azerbaijan/>

22 Russia Briefing, "Russia—Azerbaijan 2021 Bilateral Trade Hits US\$3 Billion," 26 January 2022, retrieved on 20 April 2022, <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/russia-azerbaijan-2021-bilateral-trade-hits-us-3-billion.html/>

23 Anar Valiyev, "Azerbaijan-Russian Relations after the Five-Day War: Friendship, Enmity, or Pragmatism?" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 135-137, http://turkishpolicy.com/pdf/vol_10-no_3-valiyev.pdf

24 Jim Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," (report, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, 31 March 2014), 48-49, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33407.pdf>

25 David M. Herszenhorn, "Russia Increases Military Flights over Armenia," *New York Times*, 9 June 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/10/world/europe/russia-increases-military-flights-over-armenia.html>

26 Central Intelligence Agency, "Azerbaijan," *World Factbook*, 22 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/azerbaijan/>

27 Euractiv, "Russia and Azerbaijan Trade Barbs over Nagorno-Karabakh," 27 March 2022, retrieved on 20 April 2022, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/russia-and-azerbaijan-trade-barbs-over-nagorno-karabakh/>

28 Thomas Ambrosio, "The Political Success of Russia-Belarus Relations: Insulating Minsk from a 'Color' Revolution," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 407-34, https://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/GWASHU_DEMO_14_3/9162J67W06523546/9162J67W06523546.pdf

29 Jim Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," (report, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, 31 March 2014), 47-48, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33407.pdf>

30 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Belarus, "Belarus and Russia's Regions," n.d., http://www.mfa.gov.by/en/courtiers/russia_regions/

31 Jim Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," (report, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, 31 March 2014), 47-48, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33407.pdf>

alliance was again evident as Lukashenko allowed tens of thousands of Russian troops to stage their invasion of neighboring Ukraine from Belarusian territory.^{32, 33}

China

China and the Soviet Union had a strained and often adversarial relationship during the Cold War. Divergent Marxist ideologies and territorial disputes led to a brief armed conflict on the Sino-Soviet border in 1969. Since 1991, relations between Beijing and Moscow have improved. When the United States and Europe would not sell China arms after its 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, Russia sold China weapons, oil, and natural gas.^{34, 35, 36}

Since 2010, Russia and China have deepened ties, driven by mutual military, diplomatic, and economic interests in the face of growing tensions with the United States. In 2021, the two countries held joint military exercises in the western Pacific, drawing the consternation of Japan and South Korea. Russia is a major supplier of weapons and oil for China; China is Russia's top trading partner and a key investor in Russian energy infrastructure.³⁷ Beijing refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 and has criticized Western sanctions against Russia.³⁸

Estonia

Russia-Estonia relations are at times strained and contentious. Tensions stem from Estonia's memberships in the European Union and NATO.³⁹ NATO patrol flights over Estonian airspace have angered Russia, and tensions in Russia-NATO relations have sometimes spilled over into diplomatic relations with Estonia.⁴⁰ The two countries have yet to sign a treaty demarcating their mutual border, due to conflicting historical territorial claims.⁴¹ Nearly one-quarter of Estonia's population consists of ethnic Russians.^{42, 43} In light of Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia, 2014 annexation of Crimea, and 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Estonia fears similar Russian aggression in the name of protecting ethnic Russians in former Soviet states.⁴⁴

32 Becky Sullivan, "Why Belarus Is So Involved in Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," NPR, 11 March 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/11/1085548867/belarus-ukraine-russia-invasion-lukashenko-putin>

33 Tatsiana Kulakevich, "3 Reasons Belarus Is Helping Russia Wage War against Ukraine," Conversation, 3 March 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://theconversation.com/3-reasons-belarus-is-helping-russia-wage-war-against-ukraine-177984>

34 Marcel de Haas, "Russian-Chinese Security Relations: Moscow's Threat from the East?" Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2013, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2013/20130327_rc_securityrelations.pdf

35 Stephen Blank, "Turning a New Leaf in Relations: Russia's Renewed Arms Sale to China," *China Brief* (Jamestown Foundation) 11, no. 2 (28 January 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37427&cHash=122a836e99](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37427&cHash=122a836e99)

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39 Ryan Maness and Brandon Valeriano, "Russia and the Near Abroad: Applying a Risk Barometer for War," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25, no. 2 (1 April 2012): 125–48.

40 Vahur Made, "Estonia-Russia Relations in the System of International Background [sic]," Estonian School of Diplomacy, n.d., http://kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ESDP/56426/ichaptersection_singledocument/4e35e8f0-5c93-4e41-b6aa-d5fc9d950a0f/en/7.pdf

41 Pekka Vanttinen, "Estonia Shows Willingness to Ratify Border Treaty with Russia," Euractiv, 18 February 2021, retrieved on 21 April 2022, https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/estonia-shows-willingness-to-ratify-border-treaty-with-russia/

42 Central Intelligence Agency, "Estonia," *World Factbook*, 22 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/estonia/>

43 Michael Amundsen, "Moscow Rattles Estonia with Talk of 'Concern' for Its Russian Population," *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 March 2014, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0321/Moscow-rattles-Estonia-with-talk-of-concern-for-its-Russian-population>

44 Phil McCausland, "Russian Speakers in Estonia Live in a Tug of War between Russia and the West," NBC News, 10 April 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russian-speakers-estonia-epitomize-two-worlds-russia-west-rcna22789>

Finland

Finland-Russia relations are delicate given the two countries' shared history of violent conflict. Recent relations, focused more squarely on security concerns, cooled after Russia's 2014 incursion into Ukraine. Helsinki adopted a hardline stance toward Moscow, which it regarded as a major security threat. In spite of tensions, Finland maintained strong trade relations with Russia, its third-largest import partner in 2019.^{45, 46, 47, 48} Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine upended the precarious balance between the two countries. In April, Finland took steps toward ending its longstanding military nonaligned status and possibly joining NATO. In response, Russia warned of a potential nuclear buildup in the Baltic region.⁴⁹

Georgia

Since Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia supported the secessionist movements in Georgia's South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions. Tbilisi sees this support as part of Russia's strategy to obstruct Georgia's integration with the West. Russian forces have been in the two breakaway republics since the early 1990s, in effect occupying about 20% of Georgia's territory. The animosity peaked in 2008 with the brief Russo-Georgian War and Russia's recognition of the two regions' independence.^{50, 51}

Bilateral relations improved slightly after 2012 as a new Georgian administration pursued a more balanced stance in relations with Russia and the West. Renewed contacts between the two countries focused on humanitarian issues and trade, avoiding contentious topics like the two breakaway regions. Trade rebounded after Russia lifted previously imposed economic restrictions, and by 2020 Russia was the destination of 13% of Georgia's merchandise exports.^{52, 53} In the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the Georgian government refused to join the West in imposing sanctions on Russia, citing its longstanding efforts to improve relations with Moscow.⁵⁴

45 Central Intelligence Agency, "Finland," *World Factbook*, 26 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/finland/>

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51 Amy Mackinnon, "A Flickering Beacon of Democracy in Russia's Backyard," *Foreign Policy*, 27 November 2019, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/27/georgia-georgian-dream-ivanishvili-russia-democracy/>

52 International Crisis Group, "Georgia and Russia: Why and How to Save Normalisation," 26 October 2020, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/georgia/b90-georgia-and-russia-why-and-how-save-normalisation>

53 Associated Press, "A Brief Look at the History of Russia-Georgia Relations," 21 June 2019, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/2fcbe15e50924aac9d45b60890cf6a82>

54 Conor Sheils, "'We Are Not Our Government': Georgians Slam Ukraine War Response," *Al Jazeera*, 5 April 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/5/we-are-not-our-government-georgians-slam-ukraine-war-response>

Kazakhstan

Russia and Kazakhstan have close relations, based on Kazakhstan's large population of ethnic Russians as well as Russia's control of Kazakhstan's oil and natural gas pipelines.^{55, 56, 57} Russia is Kazakhstan's largest import and third-largest export partner.⁵⁸ In addition, Kazakhstan and Russia are linked via memberships in the Eurasian Economic Union, Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Security ties are strong, and include Kazakhstan's purchase of equipment and hardware from Russia and close cooperation in the areas of aid defense, counterterrorism, intelligence, and law enforcement.^{59 60, 61} In January 2022, Kazakh President Tokayev requested the assistance of Russian troops to quell protests turned violent across the country.⁶²

The Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan was originally a secret Soviet installation for testing ICBMs. Now leased to the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos) until 2050, Baikonur launches all Russian geostationary satellites and manned space missions, as well as International Space Station flights.^{63, 64} In 2022, Baikonur's use by Western governmental and commercial enterprises was interrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.⁶⁵

Latvia

Latvia-Russia relations are complex, informed by Russia's history of imperial conquest and present-day regional aggression and Latvia's pivot toward the West. Since its independence in 1991, Latvia has sought to move away from the Russian cultural and linguistic influences left from the Soviet era. Russia has been a vocal supporter of the 24% of Latvia's population who are ethnic Russians and has protested Latvian laws that limit the use of the Russian language and have left many ethnic Russians without Latvian citizenship. Russia has cited the protection of ethnic Russians as a primary reason for its military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine in recent years, to the apprehension of Latvia. In 2019, Russia was Latvia's third-largest export partner and top import partner.^{66, 67, 68, 69}

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61 Julia Kuszniir, "Russia's Borders: Moscow's Long Alliance with Kazakhstan is Strong but Not Unbreakable," *Conversation*, 20 January 2015, <http://theconversation.com/russias-borders-moscows-long-alliance-with-kazakhstan-is-strong-but-not-unbreakable-36457>

62 Dasha Litvinova, AP, "Russian-led Security Troops Leave Kazakhstan as President Fires Defense Minister," *pbs.org*, 19 Jan 2022, retrieved on 4 May 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/russian-led-security-troops-leave-kazakhstan-as-president-fires-defense-minister>

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64 Almaz Kumenov, "Kazakhstan: Russia to Keep Using Baikonur until at least 2050," 12 May 2021, *eurasianet.org*, <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-russia-to-keep-using-baikonur-until-at-least-2050>

65 Reuters, "Russia Says Cooperation in Space Only Possible Once Sanctions Are Lifted," 2 April 2022, retrieved on 4 May 2022, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-04-02/russia-says-cooperation-in-space-only-possible-once-sanctions-are-lifted>

66 Arturs Bikovs et al., "Russia's Influence and Presence in Latvia," *New Direction*, 2018, [https://newdirection.online/2018-publications-pdf/ND-RussianInfluenceInLatvia-preview\(low-res\).pdf](https://newdirection.online/2018-publications-pdf/ND-RussianInfluenceInLatvia-preview(low-res).pdf), retrieved on 25 October 2021.

67 Central Intelligence Agency, "Latvia," *World Factbook*, 25 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/latvia/>

68 Indra Ekmanis, "Why Isn't Latvia the 'Next' Crimea? Reconsidering Ethnic Integration," *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, 2020, retrieved on 25 October 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7329285/>

69 BBC News, "Russia Threatens Sanctions over Latvian Language in Schools," 3 April 2018, retrieved on 25 October 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43626368>

Following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Latvia ceased purchases of Russian natural gas, relying instead on its existing reserves while exploring long-term solutions.⁷⁰

Lithuania

Lithuania, which shares a border with Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, has had a mix of tense and stable relations with Russia since achieving independence in 1990.^{71, 72} As Lithuania was nearing entry into the European Union in 2004, the government negotiated a transit policy with Russia for travel through Lithuania to and from Kaliningrad.⁷³ Tensions heightened starting in 2008 with Russia's regional aggression in Georgia and later Ukraine.

Lithuania has been dependent on Russia for energy and trade. In 2019, Russia was Lithuania's second-largest import partner and top export partner.⁷⁴ Bilateral trade was adversely affected starting in 2014 by the EU sanctions imposed on Russia and Russia's ban of EU food products.⁷⁵ Leading up to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Lithuania was receiving about a quarter of its natural gas supplies from Russia. Following the invasion, Lithuania became the first EU state to give up Russian gas, opting instead to receive gas from the United States and Norway.⁷⁶

Mongolia

Mongolia and Russia have longstanding bilateral ties, dating back to 1911 when Russia helped Mongolia declare independence from China.^{77, 78, 79} Today, Mongolia and Russia cooperate on military and security issues. Mongolian military officers attend Russian training colleges, and the two armies conduct joint military exercises. Russia has provided military aid to Mongolia, including tanks and helicopters.⁸⁰

The two countries are linked through trade and investment. Russia is Mongolia's second-largest import partner, supplying most of Mongolia's petroleum needs.^{81, 82} Russia uses Mongolia's railroads to supply oil to China. The rail

70 Benjamin Dodman, "Baltic States End Russian Gas Imports—but Can the Rest of Europe Follow Suit?" *France 24*, 5 April 2022, retrieved on 28 April 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/business/20220405-baltic-states-end-russian-gas-imports-%E2%80%93-but-can-the-rest-of-europe-follow-suit>

71 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Central Europe and the Baltic States, "External Affairs, Lithuania," 13 May 2015.

72 Global Security, "Lithuania-Russia Relations," 18 June 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/lt-forrel-ru.htm>

73 Adam Harrison, "Chapter 1: Solving the Kaliningrad-Russia Conundrum," in *Negotiating with the Russian Bear: Lessons for the EU?* ed. Paul Meerts (EU Diplomacy Paper, College of Europe, Bruges, Belgium, 2008–09), 10–18, http://aei.pitt.edu/12165/1/EDP_8_2009_Meerts.pdf

74 Central Intelligence Agency, "Lithuania," *World Factbook*, 24 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/lithuania/>

75 Reuters, "Russia Suspends Some Trade via Lithuanian Port, PM Says," *Voice of America*, 13 March 2014, <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-russia-suspends-some-trade-via-lithuanian-port-pm-says/1870819.html>

76 Milda Seputyte, "Lithuania Becomes First EU Member to Give Up Russian Gas," *Bloomberg*, 4 April 2022, retrieved on 21 April 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-04/lithuania-becomes-first-eu-member-to-give-up-russian-gas>

77 Edward Cody, "Feeling the Squeeze of China and Russia, Mongolia Courts U.S.," *Washington Post*, 12 February 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/11/AR2006021101224.html>

78 Central Intelligence Agency, "Mongolia," *World Factbook*, 24 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mongolia/>

79 David Sneath, "Russia's Borders: Mongolia Looks to its Old Big Brother to Counterbalance China," *Conversation*, 26 January 2015, <http://theconversation.com/russias-borders-mongolia-looks-to-its-old-big-brother-to-counterbalance-china-36721>

80 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—China and Northeast Asia, "External Affairs, Mongolia," 6 August 2015.

81 Central Intelligence Agency, "Mongolia," *World Factbook*, 24 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mongolia/>

82 Mendee Jargalsaikhany, "Rosneft Pipelines to and through Mongolia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 11, no. 81 (1 May 2014), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=42299#ViZVssissA8I](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=42299#ViZVssissA8I)

line—which runs from the Russian to the Chinese border—saw its annual freight double between 2011 and 2021.⁸³

⁸⁴ Russia is investing heavily in developing Mongolian coal reserves, copper, uranium, silver, and gold mines.^{85, 86}

As Russia is increasingly isolated from the West and seeks to strengthen economic ties with China, Mongolia's dependence on its two powerful neighbors is growing. Most of Mongolia's trade is carried out through Russian banks, making Mongolia vulnerable to Western financial sanctions against Russia. A proposed pipeline passing through Mongolia will supply Russian natural gas to China, even as Europe's distaste for Russian fossil fuels grows. In March 2022, Mongolia abstained from voting on a UN resolution calling for a withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine.⁸⁷

North Korea

Russia's shortest border, just 18 km (11 mi), is with North Korea.⁸⁸ Russia is North Korea's most important ally after China. Russia's interest in North Korea is rooted in Russia's focus on expanding its regional influence and its desire to interfere with U.S. efforts to isolate North Korea.^{89, 90} In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, North Korea defended Moscow and blamed the United States for the crisis.⁹¹

Russia maintains trade and economic relations with North Korea, often in defiance of international sanctions against Pyongyang. Russia is a destination for North Korean loggers and construction workers, whose mandatory remittances are a major source of cash for Pyongyang. Russia also illegally exports refined oil to North Korea, sometimes using ship-to-ship transfers at sea. With North Korea sealing its borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, trade with Russia all but ceased in 2021. In early 2022, as Russia was reeling from heavy economic sanctions from the West, Moscow and Pyongyang began discussing strengthening economic ties.^{92, 93}

⁸³ Russia Briefing, "Russia, Mongolia, to Boost Trade and Economic Ties," 6 January 2022, retrieved on 23 April 2022, <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/russia-mongolia-to-boost-trade-and-economic-ties.html/>

⁸⁴ Alicia Campi, "Mongolian Participation in an Upgraded Eurasian Energy and Transport Grid," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 296, (16 December 2014), <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/apb296.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=34880>

⁸⁵ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—China and Northeast Asia, "External Affairs, Mongolia," 6 August 2015.

⁸⁶ David Sneath, "Russia's Borders: Mongolia Looks to Its Old Big Brother to Counterbalance China," *Conversation*, 26 January 2015, <http://theconversation.com/russias-borders-mongolia-looks-to-its-old-big-brother-to-counterbalance-china-36721>

⁸⁷ Reuters, "Mongolia's East-West Balancing Act in Jeopardy after Russia Invasion of Ukraine," *Alarabiya News*, 3 March 2022, retrieved on 22 April 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/03/03/Mongolia-s-East-West-balancing-act-in-jeopardy-after-Russia-invasion-of-Ukraine>

⁸⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

⁸⁹ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—China and Northeast Asia, "External Affairs, Korea, North," 6 August 2015.

⁹⁰ Doug Bandow, "Russia and North Korea Play Nice: Vladimir Putin's Ukrainian Dance with Kim Jong-un," 24 March 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-bandow/russia-and-north-korea-pl_b_6934976.html

⁹¹ Sangsoo Lee, "North Korea Is Joining China and Russia in Confronting the US," *38North*, 2 March 2022, retrieved on 22 April 2022, <https://www.38north.org/2022/03/north-korea-is-joining-china-and-russia-in-confronting-the-us/>

⁹² Seulkee Jang, "Facing International Sanctions, North Korea-Russia Economic Cooperation Could Expand," *Daily NK*, 30 March 2022, retrieved on 22 April 2022, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/facing-international-sanctions-russian-north-korean-economic-cooperation-could-expand/>

⁹³ Raghav Bikhchandani, "Hit by Sanctions, Russia May 'Openly Disregard' West to Begin Trade with North Korea," *Print*, 9 March 2022, retrieved on 22 April 2022, <https://theprint.in/world/hit-by-sanctions-russia-may-openly-disregard-west-to-begin-trade-with-north-korea/865600/>

Norway

Russia and Norway share the world's second-most northern land boundary. Neither country is a key economic trading partner for the other.^{94, 95} Border tensions eased after 1991, with the opening of economic, environmental, and cultural opportunities, and in 2010 their longstanding maritime border dispute was settled.⁹⁶ Relations worsened, however, after Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Norway is a NATO member and has supported EU sanctions against Russia.^{97, 98, 99}

Norway is concerned over environmental issues and pollution caused on the Russian side of the border. One point of friction concerns high-level sulfur dioxide emissions from a nickel-smelting plant near the Norwegian border. Another centers on the potential for accidents among the Russian Navy's 40 nuclear submarines based in nearby Murmansk.^{100, 101} Leaks from Russian oil pipelines have caused environmental damage, and Norway is worried about the increasing tanker traffic along its coastline.^{102, 103, 104}

Poland

Poland has a 209-km (130-mi) border with the south side of Russia's Kaliningrad enclave. The two countries have a strained history, which includes Russia's contribution to the dismantling of Poland as a state in the 18th century, Soviet atrocities against Poland during World War II, and Soviet domination of Poland during the Cold War era. After 1991, Poland Joined NATO and the European Union, contributing to cooling relations with Russia. In 2010, the Polish president died in a plane crash during a visit to Russia. The crash was deemed an accident but nevertheless contributed to cooling relations between the two countries. Bilateral relations reached a low point when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.^{105, 106} Prior to 2022, bilateral trade was strong, despite ongoing Western sanctions against Russia and Russian embargoes on European goods.¹⁰⁷

94 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

95 Central Intelligence Agency, "Norway," *World Factbook*, 27 April 2022, retrieved on 29 April 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/norway/>

96 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Western Europe, "External Affairs, Norway," 15 January 2015.

97 Mick Krever, "Norway: 'We Are Faced with a Different Russia,'" CNN, 26 February 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/25/world/amanpour-norway-ine-eriksen-soreide/>

98 Gerard O'Dwyer, "Norway's NATO Missile Defense Aid Irks Russia," *Defense News*, 17 June 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/06/17/norway-missile-defense-budget-nato-russia-high-north-2-relations-cooperation/71021708/>

99 Andreas Osthaugen, "Relations with Russia in the North Were Already Tense. Now It's Getting Worse." Arctic Institute, 25 February 2022, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/relations-russia-north-tense-getting-worse/>

100 Nina Berglund, "Nuclear Sub Fire Sparks Concerns," *Views and News from Norway*, 2 January 2012, <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2012/01/02/nuclear-sub-fire-sparks-concerns/>

101 Dom Einhorn, "Mining in Russia: An Economic Boost or an Environmental Threat?" Born2Invest, 9 February 2015, <http://born2invest.com/cdn/mining-in-russia-an-economic-boost-or-an-environmental-threat/>

102 Zahra Hirji, "Behind Russia vs. Greenpeace Furor, Unreported Oil Pollution of the Arctic," *Inside Climate News*, 16 October 2013, <http://insideclimatenews.org/news/20131016/behind-russia-vs-greenpeace-furor-unreported-oil-pollution-arctic>

103 Nataliya Vasilyeva, "Russia Oil Spills Wreak Devastation," *Deseret News*, 17 December 2011, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700208068/Russia-oil-spills-wreak-devastation.html?pg=all>

104 Damien Sharkov, "Russia Wasting Millions of Tonnes of Oil from Leaking Pipes," *Newsweek*, 10 April 2015, <http://europe.newsweek.com/russia-need-not-drill-arctic-if-it-repairs-oil-pipeline-leaks-321372>

105 Polandin.com, "Poland Marks 10th Anniversary of Smolensk Crash," 4 April 2020, <https://polandin.com/47513861/poland-marks-10th-anniversary-of-smolensk-crash>

106 Stuart Lau, "'We Told You So!' How the West Didn't Listen to the Countries That Know Russia Best," *Politico*, 9 March 2022, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/western-europe-listen-to-the-baltic-countries-that-know-russia-best-ukraine-poland/>

107 Maria Wilczek, "Polish Exports to Russia Surpass Pre-Embargo Levels," *Notes from Poland*, 14 June 2021, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/06/14/polish-exports-to-russia-surpass-pre-embargo-levels/>

Ukraine

Ukraine-Russia relations deteriorated after 1991 as Ukraine began cultivating relationships with the West. Ukraine stated its intent to join the European Union and NATO, going so far as to request a membership action plan from NATO. The Orange Revolution of 2004 exacerbated already strained relations with Russia, which saw the revolution as a U.S.-backed conspiracy.^{108, 109} After the 2014 overthrow of Ukraine's Russia-friendly president, relations went into a deep-freeze when Russia annexed Crimea and stoked a civil war in eastern Ukraine by supporting pro-Russian separatists.^{110, 111} As Ukraine intensified its attempts to leave Russia's sphere of influence, Russia increasingly cast doubts on the validity of Ukraine's statehood and on the ethnic distinctions between Russians and Ukrainians. Additionally, Russia aired grievances about Ukraine's alleged persecution of Russian-speaking Ukrainians. In February 2022, Russia acted on its rhetoric and launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.¹¹²

Police

Russia has an extensive and powerful law enforcement apparatus, composed of multiple agencies that often compete with each other as they pursue overlapping missions and vie for funding and standing with the regime. The current system emerged from the post-1991 fragmentation of the notorious Committee for State Security (KGB), responsible for the Soviet Union's internal security. A notable feature of Russian law enforcement is that its top priority is the interests of the state rather than the enforcement of laws.^{113, 114}

The Interior Ministry (MVD) contains Russia's local police and criminal investigation capability. In 2011, the police implemented reforms that included higher pay, better training, and a reduction in the size of the force in an effort to curb corruption and professionalize the force. The MVD's responsibilities also include investigating economic corruption and organized crime.¹¹⁵

The National Guard contains some 200,000 paramilitary troops tasked with public order, internal security, and regime security. The force includes the Special Designation Police Detachments (OMON), the Special Rapid Response Detachments (SOBR), and Interior Troops (VV). OMON forces are in charge of riot control, while the SOBR is a SWAT-like commando force. Both are also available for private hire by companies to provide security services. The VV include several elite special forces (*spetsnaz*) units.^{116, 117}

108 "Relations with Ukraine," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 22 November 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm.

109 Taras Kuzio, "Poor Ukrainian-Russian Ties Reflect Yanukovich-Putin Relationship," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation) 8, no. 180 (30 September 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38477.

110 CBS News, "Russia Officially Annexes Crimea away from Ukraine with Signature from Vladimir Putin," 21 March 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-annexes-crimea-away-from-ukraine-with-signature-from-vladimir-putin/>.

111 Jane's, "External Affairs: Ukraine," in *Sentinel Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS*, 12 August 2015.

112 Paul Kirby, "Why Has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What Does Putin Want?" BBC News, 17 April 2022, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.

113 Andrew S. Bowen, "Russian Law Enforcement and Internal Security Agencies," Congressional Research Service, 14 September 2020, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11647>.

114 Mark Galeotti, "The Law Enforcement Agencies: Russian Domestic Security and International Implications," Marshall Center, February 2020, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/law-enforcement-agencies-russian-domestic-security-and-international-implications-0>.

115 Andrew S. Bowen, "Russian Law Enforcement and Internal Security Agencies," Congressional Research Service, 14 September 2020, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11647>.

116 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Russia and the CIS, "Security and Foreign Forces, Russian Federation," 19 August 2015.

117 Andrew S. Bowen, "Russian Law Enforcement and Internal Security Agencies," Congressional Research Service, 14 September 2020, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11647>.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) is a powerful agency whose responsibilities include counterintelligence, counterterrorism, political prosecutions, border security, and cybersecurity. The FSB is deemed responsible for some of Russia's offensive cyber operations and assassination attempts in other countries. Other law enforcement agencies are the Federal Protective Service, tasked with guarding the president, government officials, and state property; the Investigative Committee, responsible for investigating corruption within government bodies, in effect acting as a weapon against the regime's political opponents; and the Prosecutor General, which conducts the government's prosecutions.¹¹⁸

Military

Russia's armed forces, officially the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, consist of the Ground Troops, the Navy, and the Aerospace Forces. Additionally, the Airborne Troops and the Strategic Rocket Forces are independent from the three branches. The total active-duty troops number approximately 850,000, including 300,000 in the Ground Troops, 150,000 in the Navy, and 160,000 in the Aerospace Forces. As of 2022, Russian forces were deployed in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Central African Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova (Transnistria), Syria, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.¹¹⁹

Russian men 18–27 years of age have a one-year compulsory military service obligation; alternatively, they can volunteer for a two-year contract. In 2021, conscripts composed about 30% of active-duty personnel. Women can volunteer for military service, and they make up about 5% of active-duty troops. In early 2022, Russia drafted some 134,000 conscripts. In August of that year, they added another 137,000 conscripts. The following month they called up some 300,000 reservists to aid in the ongoing war in Ukraine.^{120,121}

The Ground Troops are equipped with some 12,000 tanks, 30,000 armored vehicles, 6,500 self-propelled artillery pieces, 7,500 towed artillery pieces, and 3,300 rocket projectors. The Navy has 15 destroyers, 11 frigates, 86 corvettes, 70 submarines, 59 patrol vessels, 49 mine warfare vessels, and 1 aircraft carrier. The Aerospace Forces have 772 fighters, 739 dedicated attack aircraft, 445 transport aircraft, 522 training aircraft, 132 special-mission aircraft, 20 tanker aircraft, 1,543 helicopters, and 544 attack helicopters. In 2020, Russia spent about 4% of GDP on military expenditures.¹²²

The Soviet Union became a nuclear armed state in 1949. Today, Russia is believed to possess 4,477 nuclear warheads. About 2,500 are strategic warheads, of which 1,500 are currently deployed. The strategic warheads can be delivered via land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, or heavy bomber

118 Andrew S. Bowen, "Russian Law Enforcement and Internal Security Agencies," Congressional Research Service, 14 September 2020, retrieved on 25 April 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11647>

119 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

120 Adam Taylor and William Neff, "Why the World Is So Worried about Russia's 'Tactical' Nuclear Weapons," *Washington Post*, 29 March 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/29/why-world-is-so-worried-about-russias-tactical-nuclear-weapons/>

121 Central Intelligence Agency, "Russia," *World Factbook*, 25 January 2022, retrieved on 3 February 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>

122 Global Firepower, "2022 Russia Military Strength," 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=russia

aircraft. Another 1,500 warheads are “tactical,” much less powerful than strategic nuclear bombs and designed for use on the battlefield by ships, aircraft, or ground forces.^{123, 124}

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 exposed weaknesses in the Russian military. From early on, the ground forces proved unable to coordinate with air power and intelligence capabilities. Plagued by low morale, shoddy equipment, and inadequate supplies—and faced with dogged Ukrainian resistance—Russian troops were bogged down, unable to achieve their initial objective of quickly overrunning the country. A month into the conflict, troop losses were at least 3,000. A dramatic development was Ukraine’s sinking of the *Moskva*, the flagship of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, in April. Faced with these setbacks, Russian commanders resorted increasingly to indiscriminate bombing, including of civilian areas.^{125, 126, 127, 128}

Cybersecurity

Russia possesses highly developed cyber capabilities that it uses to carry out damaging cyberattacks throughout the world. Cyber operations are carried out by a wide range of government agencies, including the Main Directorate of the General Staff (the country’s military intelligence agency), Foreign Intelligence Service, and Federal Protective Service. The Internet Research Agency, a private entity, supports government propaganda and disinformation efforts.¹²⁹

Targets of Russian cyberattacks include energy facilities such as oil refineries and nuclear power plants, critical national infrastructure, and government services in some 135 countries. Attacks range from overwhelming servers through distributed denial of service to the use of malware that gives attackers the ability to damage or disrupt targeted computer systems at will. In the United States, two well-known attacks linked to Russia were the hacking of the Democratic presidential campaign emails in 2016 and the ransomware attack on the Colonial Pipeline in 2021 that led to major gas shortages on the U.S. east coast.^{130, 131, 132} Cyber warfare has been an integral part of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine.¹³³

123 Adam Taylor and William Neff, “Why the World Is So Worried about Russia’s ‘Tactical’ Nuclear Weapons,” *Washington Post*, 29 March 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/29/why-world-is-so-worried-about-russias-tactical-nuclear-weapons/>

124 Amy F. Woolf, “Russia’s Nuclear Weapons: Doctrine, Forces, and Modernization,” Congressional Research Service, 21 April 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/R45861.pdf>

125 Helene Cooper et al., “As Russia’s Military Stumbles, Its Adversaries Take Note,” *New York Times*, 7 March 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/07/us/politics/russia-ukraine-military.html>

126 Jennifer Hauser, “1 Dead and 27 Missing after Russian Flagship Moskva Sunk in Black Sea, Russia Says,” CNN, 22 April 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/22/europe/moskva-russia-casualties-intl/index.html>

127 Anjali Singhvi et al., “How Kyiv Has Withstood Russia’s Attacks,” *New York Times*, 2 April 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/02/world/europe/kyiv-invasion-disaster.html>

128 Adam Taylor and William Neff, “Why the World Is So Worried about Russia’s ‘Tactical’ Nuclear Weapons,” *Washington Post*, 29 March 2022, retrieved on 26 April 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/29/why-world-is-so-worried-about-russias-tactical-nuclear-weapons/>

129 Andrew S. Bowen, “Russian Cyber Units,” Congressional Research Service, 2 February 2022, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11718>

130 U.S. Department of Justice, “Four Russian Government Employees Charged in Two Historical Hacking Campaigns Targeting Critical Infrastructure Worldwide,” 24 March 2022, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/four-russian-government-employees-charged-two-historical-hacking-campaigns-targeting-critical>

131 Michael Lista, “The Hacker King,” *Toronto Life*, 2 January 2018, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://torontolife.com/city/kid-made-millions-hacking-emails-fbi-took/>

132 Joe Warminsky, “Russia’s FSB Announces Sting against Members of REvil Cybercrime Gang,” *CyberScoop*, 14 January 2022, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://www.cyberscoop.com/revil-fsb-arrests-russia/>

133 Kate Conger and David E. Sanger, “Russia Uses Cyberattacks in Ukraine to Support Military Strikes, Report Finds,” *New York Times*, 27 April 2022, retrieved on 28 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/27/us/politics/russia-cyberattacks-ukraine.html>

The FSB and a department within the MVD are the two Russian government agencies primarily responsible for dealing with cybercrimes. The regime is believed to tolerate the presence of cybercrime groups within Russia, so long as their malicious activities do not target Russians. This arrangement has allowed Russian hackers to thrive: in 2021, an estimated 74% of money from ransomware attacks went to hackers linked to Russia. A Russian cybercrime group known as Evil Corp is the recipient of nearly 10% of known ransomware revenue. Furthermore, the government has been known to recruit independent hackers or use them as proxies to conduct offensive cyber operations in support of Russian interests.^{134, 135, 136}

Issues Affecting Stability

Terrorism and related violence are common in Russia's North Caucasus region. Chechen and other homegrown terrorist groups, which have become increasingly organized, conduct these operations. The terrorists use a variety of tactics and weapons, including suicide car bombings, improvised explosive devices, and sniper attacks. Terrorist groups in the region are radicalizing and increasingly forging links to one another. Russia claims it prevents multiple terrorist attacks against government facilities every year.¹³⁷

Russian organized crime networks form loose associations of criminal cells from all backgrounds, including senior leaders and politicians, street gangs, the unemployed, and the homeless. Drug smuggling, contract killing, computer hacking, money laundering, and human trafficking are some of the activities of Russian organized crime. The Solntsevskaya Bratva (Brotherhood) is among the world's most powerful organized crime groups. Alleged to have close ties to Russia's federal intelligence agency, the group also has a well-established presence throughout the world.^{138, 139, 140}

In recent years, Russia has seen a growing divide between well-connected, wealthy elites and the rest of the population. Economic hardship has deepened resentments against the government among reformers who wanted political and social controls lifted.^{141, 142} Russia's involvement in Ukraine is another source of division. International sanctions imposed after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 contributed to the flagging economy. The unprecedented

134 Flashpoint, "Russia Is Cracking Down on Cybercrime. Here Are the Law Enforcement Bodies Leading the Way," 14 February 2022, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://www.flashpoint-intel.com/blog/russian-cybercrime-law-enforcement-bodies-fsb-mvd-deptk/>

135 Tim Maurer, "Government Turns a Blind Eye to Cybercriminals," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2 February 2018, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/02/why-russian-government-turns-blind-eye-to-cybercriminals-pub-75499>

136 Joe Tidy, "74% of Ransomware Revenue Goes to Russia-Linked Hackers," BBC News, 14 February 2022, retrieved on 27 April 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60378009>

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sanctions that followed the 2022 Ukraine invasion were poised to cause a major economic contraction. Political divisions within Russia over its role in Ukraine could fuel dissent sufficient to destabilize the government.^{143, 144, 145}

Outlook

Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II, ended the post-Cold War security consensus. Russia's persistence despite its inability to meet military objectives early on in the conflict, as well as the West's increasing willingness to supply heavy weaponry to Ukraine, set the stage for a protracted, grinding war. Russia's unprovoked aggression put it squarely at odds with the West, leading the Biden administration to state that degrading Russia's military capabilities was one of its main objectives. Western European countries began the years-long process of quitting the purchase of Russian natural gas and oil, a major source of funding for the Kremlin's military capability. Domestically, the conflict seems to have spurred patriotism for the Russian population and strengthened Vladimir Putin's popularity. But as biting economic sanctions continue to hamper the economy and Russia becomes ever more isolated on the international stage, the risk of political instability is sure to increase. Among the several countries that have refused to condemn the invasion, China stands out as a potential economic and diplomatic lifeline to the Putin regime.^{146, 147, 148, 149}

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Russia in Perspective

Security Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Russia and Belarus are close allies. ☐ True ☐ False
2. Russia occupies 20% of Georgia's territory. ☐ True ☐ False
3. Russia supports international economic sanctions against North Korea. ☐ True ☐ False
4. Poland's president died in a plane crash during a visit to Russia in 2010. ☐ True ☐ False
5. Women cannot serve in the Russian military. ☐ True ☐ False

Russia in Perspective

Security Assessment Answers

1. True:
Of all Russia's neighbors, few have closer political and economic ties to Moscow than Belarus. More than 200 signed agreements form the foundation for strong bilateral cooperation between the two states.
2. True:
Russian forces have been in the two Georgian breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia since the early 1990s. The animosity peaked in 2008 with the brief Russo-Georgian War and Russia's recognition of the two regions' independence.
3. False:
Russia maintains trade and economic relations with North Korea, often in defiance of sanctions against Pyongyang..
4. True:
The crash was deemed an accident but nevertheless contributed to cooling relations between Poland and Russia.
5. False:
Women can volunteer for military service, and they make up about 5% of active-duty troops..

Russia in Perspective

Further Readings and Resources

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Russia in Perspective

Final Assessment

“To receive a certificate of completion for this course, please complete the final assessment on the DLIFLC website.”