CHAPTER FIVE

Russia and the Newly Independent States
Russia and the Newly Independent States

Figure 5.1
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I. THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

- Constituted by 12 former republics of the USSR
  - Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia already discussed
- Russia contains more than 30 ethnic internal republics
  - Diversity hidden by single country
A. Physical Patterns

- Undulating landforms from west to east
  - North European Plain
  - Ural Mountains
  - West Siberian Plain
  - Central Siberian Plateau
  - Pacific Mountains

- To south, no regular physical barriers
  - Caucasus, steppes, mountains of East Asia
A. Physical Patterns

► Landforms

- North European Plain: western subregion
  - European Russia; most densely populated
  - Volga River – important for transportation

- Ural Mountains: border between Europe and Asia
  - Relatively low, not a barrier to movement

- West Siberian Plain: largest plain in the world
  - Oil reserves, permafrost
A. Physical Patterns

- Landforms
  - Central Siberian Plateau
    - Permafrost at varying depths
  - Pacific Mountain Zone
    - Moderated by ocean, warmed by volcanic activity
      - Pacific Plate sinking under Eurasian Plate
  - These two regions, together, size of USA
  - Steppes and mountains to the south; area of cultural interpenetration
Kamchatka

Figure 5-4
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A. Physical Patterns

- Climate and Vegetation
  - Harsh continental climate
  - Protected from moderating oceanic winds by mountains to the south
  - Agriculture focused in west, where precipitation is maximized
  - Best soils are found in southwest
  - Taiga found in northern Siberian vastness
    - Northern coniferous forest
Figure 5.6

Climate Zones

- Storms blowing in off the Atlantic Ocean supply rainfall that reaches European Russia and the Caucasian republics.
- Some moisture comes in from the Arctic, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans in the summer.

Climate Zones:
- **Arid and Semiarid Climates (B)**: Desert, Steppe
- **Temperate Climates (C)**: Mediterranean, summer dry
- **Cool Humid Climates (D)**: Continental, winter dry, Continental, moist all year
- **Coldest Climates (E)**: Arctic, High altitude

Winds, Ocean currents
B. Human Patterns Over Time

- Historic trend has been centralization
  - Core area: European Russia, ethnic homeland for Russians
  - Other ethnic groups conquered by Russians
  - Later, Russian Empire became USSR

- New trend: de-centralization
  - Breakup of USSR
B. Human Patterns Over Time

► The Rise of the Russian Empire

- Slavs: farmers from Poland, Ukraine, Belarus
  - Occupied most of Eastern Europe
  - Controlled Volga River trade route
  - Kiev and Moscow: key urban areas; influenced by Byzantine traders (Cyrillic, Orthodoxy)

- Conquered by Mongols
  - Moscow’s elites became tax collectors; eventually rebelled and started expanding their own empire
Independence Square, Kiev

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B. Human Patterns Over Time

► The Rise of the Russian Empire

- Similar to other European colonizers: resources appropriated, private property upheld over communal property
- Different from other European colonizers: large numbers of Russians migrated in, surpassing indigenous populations
  - Central Asia: provider of cotton
- Russian czar: lived in splendor
  - Serfdom remained in place until mid-1800s
Russian Imperial Expansion

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B. Human Patterns Over Time

The Communist Revolution and its Aftermath

- During WWI, czar overthrown, Bolsheviks take power
  - Communism: criticizes capitalism for centralization of production in a wealthy minority

- Centrally planned economy instituted by Stalin
  - Government owned all land and means of production
  - Government directs all economic activity
  - Significant successes and failures
B. Human Patterns Over Time

World War II and the Cold War

- Almost single-handedly won WWII
  - 23 million casualties
- Created buffer of allied Communist countries
- Cold War confrontation over ideology
  - Arms race, promotion of communism overseas
- Steady drift away from hard-line communism
  - Dragged down by war in Afghanistan
The Cold War in 1980

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B. Human Patterns Over Time

► The Post-Soviet Years

- Gorbachev: glasnost, perestroika
  - Failed to solve problems, stoked nationalism
- Russia: major inheritor of USSR’s mantle
- 11 other new republics in this region
  - Haphazard transition to free market economies
  - Rollback of democratic reforms in Russia?
C. Population Patterns

- European Russia: densest population in the region
  - Wedge from Odessa north to St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk (best farmland)

- Siberian settlement follows the Trans-Siberian Railway
  - Concentrated in a few cities
Population Distribution

Figure 5.13

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C. Population Patterns

Recent Population Changes

- USSR: Relatively high standard of living and well-being
  - Post-1991, rapidly deteriorating
- Decline in life expectancy (esp. men)
  - Physical and mental stress from lost jobs and social disruption
  - Alcoholism
  - Nutritional deficiencies
- Women choosing not to have children
Population Pyramids

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II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

- Soviet experiment: to reform quickly and totally a society and its institutions
- Now, a new experiment: shifting to democracy and a free market economy
  - As in Bolshevik Revolution, great uncertainty as to outcomes
A. Economic and Political Issues

► The Former Command Economy

 Successfully eradicated abject poverty, basic needs met

 Still, because of inefficiencies, scarcities and gluts

► No competition, therefore inefficient production methods

► Products of poor quality and overpriced

► Lack of technological innovation outside of military, space exploration
A. Economic and Political Issues

► Soviet Regional Development Schemes

- Central government in charge of locating industry
  - Spread throughout vast territory to boost standards of living in distant areas
  - Also, protected from enemy attack

- Cost of transport made industry inefficient
- Many industries incapable of being sustained after breakup of USSR
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Industrial Regions and Land Transportation

The heaviest concentrations of industrial sites are near natural resources.

The Trans-Siberian Railroad is the chief link between Moscow and the east.

- Red delta: Ferrous ores and metals
- Green square: Nonferrous metals
- Black circle: Industrial area

Main trunk line, Trans-Siberian Railroad
Other railroads
A. Economic and Political Issues

- Transport Issues
  - Water transport: cheapest
    - However, Soviet rivers generally run north-south
    - Few oceanic ports
  - Land transport: best option
    - Hindered by permafrost, swampy forests, complex upland landscapes, limited car ownership
  - Therefore, USSR (2.5x size of USA) has 1/6 the roads
  - Importance of Trans-Siberian Railway, air transport (expensive)
A. Economic and Political Issues

Reform in the Post-Soviet Era

- Privatization: government-owned industries sold to private companies or individuals
  - Intended to maximize efficiency
  - Importance of supply and demand for prices
- Price controls: Initial scarcity during privatization led to massive profits
  - Squeezed those who might become entrepreneurs
  - Suffering until supply able to meet demand
- Oligarchs: early profiteers, now powerful
A. Economic and Political Issues

- **Foreign Direct Investment**
  - Foreign investors bringing in money
  - Afraid of over-dependence on oil and natural gas

- **The Growing Informal Economy**
  - Extension of old communist-era black market
  - So large now it skews economic statistics
  - Tax-free, does not benefit entire country
  - Undermines government authority
A. Economic and Political Issues

► High energy prices end debt crisis
  ▪ Russia owed 90% of GDP in 1998
  ▪ Defaulted in 2000, rescheduling contingent on economic reforms
  ▪ By 2008, debt expected to be 12% of GDP

► New Trading Partners
  ▪ Shift away from intra-regional trade to EU, other Asian countries (India, China)
Oil and Natural Gas Resource Areas and Pipelines

**Oil Production, 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region or Basin</th>
<th>1000 Barrels/day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Siberia</td>
<td>5,882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volga-Urals</td>
<td>1,887</td>
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<td>Precaspian</td>
<td>679</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Caspian</td>
<td>454</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timan-Pechora</td>
<td>373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Caspian</td>
<td>261</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Turgay</td>
<td>209</td>
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<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>161</td>
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<td>North Caucasus</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani Onshore</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Siberia</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltic</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barents Sea</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td><strong>Total Region</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total World</strong></td>
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**Gas Production, 2003**

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<th>Billion Cubic Meters</th>
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<td>Barents Sea</td>
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