

Chapter 9: Russia



THE BASICS

Russia

Official Name	Russian Federation
Size	17,075,200 sq. km (roughly 1.75 times the size of the United States)
Climate	Subarctic in much of the country
Population	141 million
Currency	25.54 rubles = US\$1
GNP per capita	\$12,200
Ethnic composition	79.8% Russian, 3.8% Tatar, 2% Ukrainian, 14.4% Other
Life Expectancy	Men 59, Women 73
Capital	Moscow
President	Vladimir Putin (1999)
Prime Minister	Mikhail Fradkov (2004)

Thinking about Russia

– The Basics

- Geography: a huge country at high northern latitudes
- Diversity: dozens of cultural and ethnic identities preserved into the 21st century
- Poverty: a poor country that got poorer after 1989 until oil prices began rising
- The Environment: pollution and the health problems it causes are endemic all across the country

TABLE 9.1 Ethnic Composition of the Former Soviet Republics

COUNTRY	POPULATION	TITULAR NATIONALITY (PERCENTAGE)	MAIN MINORITIES (PERCENTAGE)
Russia	147.0	82	Tatars 4
Ukraine	51.5	73	Russians 22
Uzbekistan	19.8	71	Russians 8
Kazakhstan	16.5	40	Russians 38 Ukrainians 5
Belarus	10.2	78	Russians 13
Azerbaijan	7.0	83	Russians 6 Armenians 6
Georgia	5.4	70	Armenians 8 Russians 6 Azeris 6
Tajikistan	5.1	62	Uzbeks 23 Russians 7
Moldova	4.3	65	Ukrainians 14 Russians 13
Kyrgyzstan	4.3	52	Russians 22 Uzbeks 12
Lithuania	3.7	80	Russians 9 Poles 7
Turkmenistan	3.5	72	Russians 9 Uzbeks 9
Armenia	3.3	93	Azeris 2
Latvia	2.7	52	Russians 35
Estonia	1.6	62	Russians 30

Source: Based on 1989 census.

TABLE 9.2 Economic Decline in Russia, 1990–97 (All figures in millions of tons unless otherwise noted.)

PRODUCT	1990	1997
Meat	6.6	1.4
Butter	0.8	0.3
Canned goods (billions of cans)	8.2	2.2
Salt	4.2	2.1
Bread	16.2	8.9
Pasta	1.0	0.5
Footwear (millions of pairs)	385.0	32.0
Silk (millions of square yards)	1,051.0	134.0
Coats (millions; later figure is 1992)	17.2	2.3
Cement	83.0	26.6
Beer (millions of gallons)	874.0	655.0
Watches and clocks (millions of units)	60.1	5.0
Refrigerators (millions of units)	3.8	0.1
Vacuum cleaners (millions of units)	4.5	0.6

Source: Adapted from the *Washington Post*, 14 Nov. 1998, A16.

Thinking about Russia

– Key Questions

- How and why did the USSR collapse?
- How has the legacy of the USSR affected Russia?
- Will Putin's successors be able to strengthen and stabilize the state?
- Will Russia become more democratic and legitimate?
- With economic strength, can leaders build stronger and more legitimate institutions?
- How will Russia adapt to new global realities?

The Evolution of the Russian State

- The Broad Sweep of Russian History
 - Thousands of years of cultural history awareness
 - Intermittent, ineffective reforms

TABLE 9.3 Key Events in the Origins of the Soviet State

YEAR	EVENT
1854	Start of the Crimean War
1881	Assassination of Tsar Alexander II
1904–05	Russo-Japanese War
1905	First revolution
1914	Outbreak of World War I
1917	February and October revolutions
1921	End of civil war, formal creation of Soviet Union
1924	Death of Lenin

The Evolution of the Russian State

- Prelude to revolution
 - Backwardness in a European context
 - Failed reform because there was no “room” for innovation within the system
 - A weak state in which neither domestic nor foreign policy worked
- Lenin and the “wrong” revolution: Lenin’s new take on Marxism led to democratic centralism and a revolution to create socialism

The Evolution of the Russian State

- Stalin, Terror, and the Modernization
 - Industrialization: based on squeezing all possible surpluses out of agriculture to make industrial development possible
 - Foreign Policy: moving from world revolution to “socialism in one country, to united fronts against fascism to the Cold War
 - The Purges: the elimination of anyone who threatened or was thought to be a future threat to Stalin’s leadership

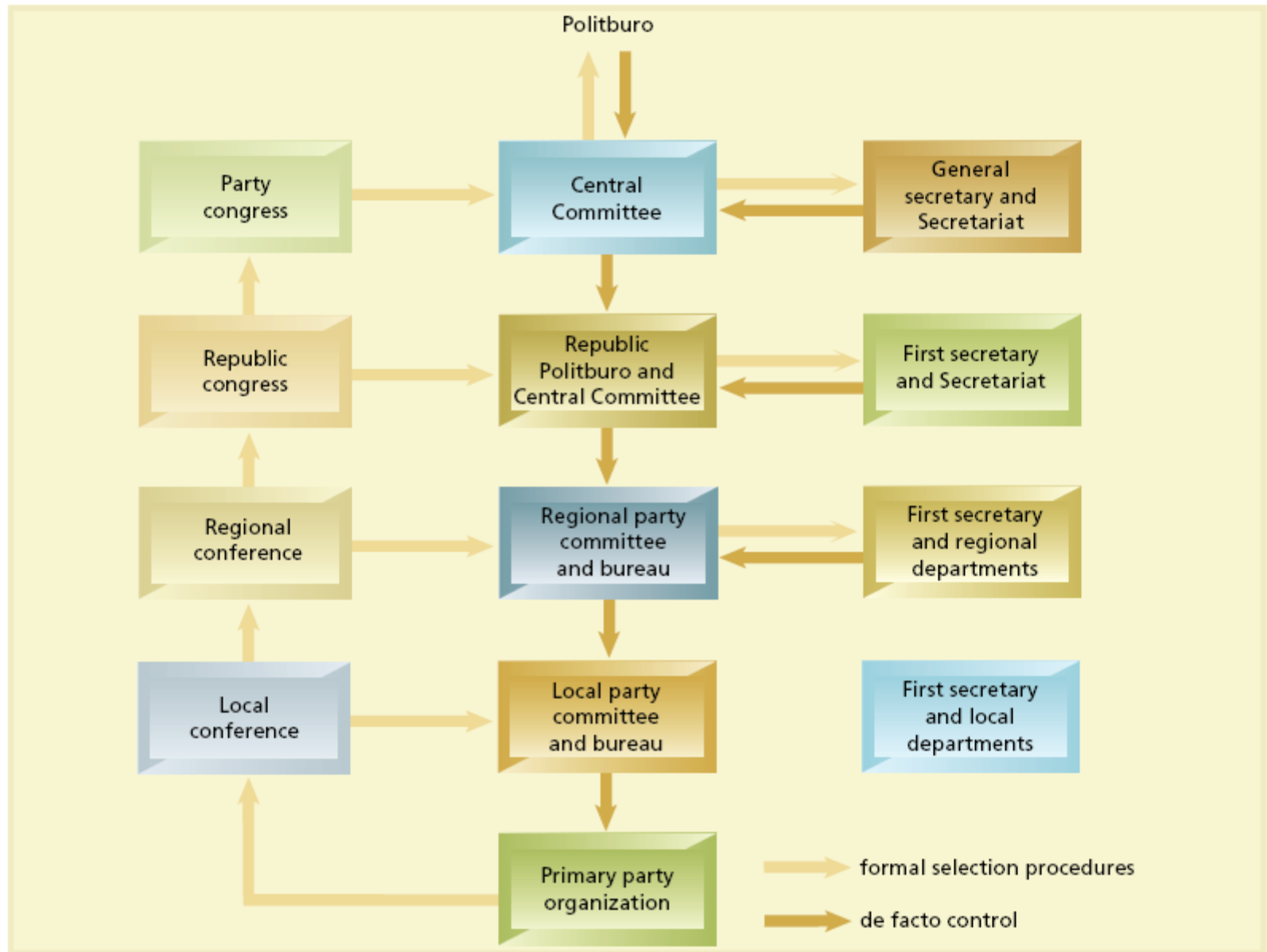
TABLE 9.4 Key Events in the Evolution of the Soviet State

YEAR	EVENT
1927	Solidification of power by Stalin; socialism in one-country speech
1929	Beginning of collectivization campaign
1934	First major purges and show trials
1939	Nonaggression pact with Germany
1941	German invasion of Soviet Union
1945	End of World War II, beginning of cold war
1953	Death of Stalin
1956	Twentieth Party Congress and Khrushchev's secret speech
1964	Ouster of Khrushchev
1982	Death of Brezhnev

The Evolution of the Russian State

- Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and the politics of decline
 - New leaders in the early '50s pursued group leadership and peaceful coexistence
 - Economic and technological decline result from a conservative consolidation of power
 - Gorbachev's ascendancy in '85 led to innovation

FIGURE 9.1 The Communist Party of the Soviet Union



The Evolution of the Russian State

- The Party state
 - Democratic centralism meant that the top Party leaders held all the power
 - *Nomenklatura* was the tool for maintaining loyalty and choosing successors

FIGURE 9.2 The Changing Soviet Political Landscape

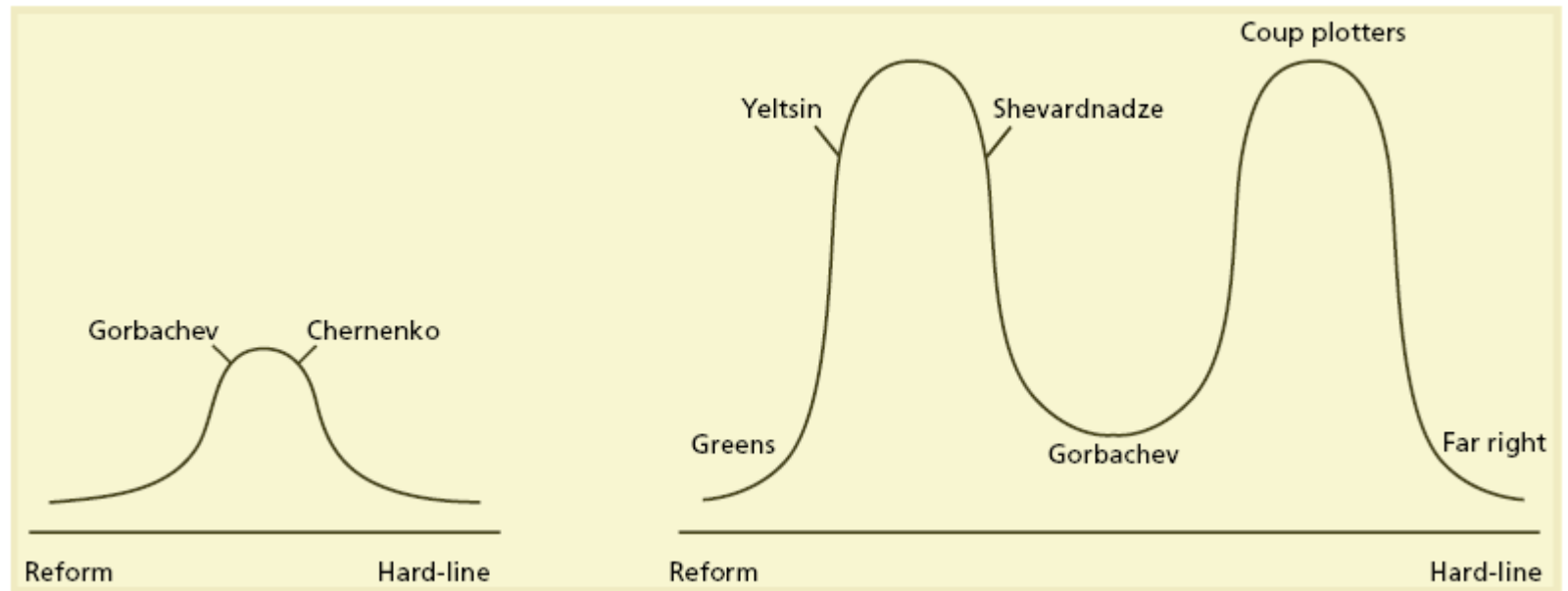


TABLE 9.5 Key Events in the Gorbachev Years

YEAR	EVENT
1985	Gorbachev becomes general secretary of CPSU
1986	Chernobyl; first summit with President Reagan
1987	Intermediate nuclear forces agreement; Yeltsin removed from office
1988	Special party conference; Reagan visits Moscow
1989	First somewhat competitive elections; collapse of communism in Eastern Europe
1990	Final CPSU congress; Yeltsin resigns from party
1991	Failed coup attempt; collapse of USSR

The Evolution of the Russian State

- Reform
 - Glasnost: greater transparency in Party and government operation
 - Democratization: strengthening of government powers and the election of a legislature
 - Perestroika: economic restructuring and introduction of market mechanisms
 - Small-scale private ownership
 - Agricultural reform
 - Facilitation of joint ventures with foreign investors
 - Foreign policy: end the Cold War

The Evolution of the Russian State

- Crisis and collapse
 - Disintegration of Communist Eastern Europe and the USSR
 - Security services led coup to replace Gorbachev and Yeltsin

Between dictatorship and democracy

- Birth pangs
 - Old-order leaders and economic disasters
 - New spectrum of competing political ideas
 - '93 coup attempt and new constitution
 - '95 and '96 elections led to political stalemate

TABLE 9.6 Key Events in Russian Politics since 1991

YEAR	EVENTS
1991	Yeltsin elected Russian president Failed coup Collapse of USSR
1992	New state called Russian Federation
1993	Referendum supports most reforms Coup attempt First parliamentary elections New constitution
1994	Drift rightward accelerates Outbreak of war in Chechnya
1995	Yeltsin's second heart attack Second parliamentary election
1996	Presidential election
1997	Expansion of NATO
1998	Economic collapse Two prime ministers sacked
2000	Putin assumes presidency
2004	Putin reelected
2007/8	End of Putin presidency, new elections

Between dictatorship and democracy

- Putin and stability
 - Named PM and acting president
 - Elected president and consolidated power
 - Since 2000, Putin has centralized power more and more on presidency (or is it on Putin?)

Political Culture and Participation

- Political culture
 - Lacking legitimacy, regimes in Russia have relied on force
 - This leads to continuing suspicion of power elites even if they're elected
 - People don't expect much besides authoritarianism from regimes
 - Absence of civil society in past leads to tiny, weak civil society and alienation now

TABLE 9.7 Percentage of Population Citing Improvement: 1993–2004

QUESTION	1993	1998	2000	2004
Everybody has freedom of choice in religious matters	71	79	84	84
Everybody has the right to say what they think	65	73	81	81
One can join any organization one likes	63	75	77	83
Everyone can decide individually whether or not to take an interest in politics	57	66	70	76
Compared to the political system before perestroika	62	72	73	65
Our present system of governing	36	70	72	63
The system of government will have in five years	52	49	64	88



Source: Levada Center, www.russiavotes.org, accessed 28 July 2007.

TABLE 9.8 Russian Attitudes about Democracy (percent of respondents agreeing with the following statements)

ISSUE	1995	1997	2000
Democratic procedures are a façade	73.1	74.4	74.5
Democratic procedures are indispensable	56.0	51.0	47.8
Public participation is important	23.4	18.8	23.8
Ordinary citizens have no role to play, only politicians do	66.1	70.3	66.4

Source: Adapted from Michael McFaul, Nikolai Petrov, and Andrei Ryabov, *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*. (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 276.

Political Culture and Participation

- Political Parties
 - Floating party system means that people don't identify with a party
 - Putin's manipulation of parties reduces their legitimacy and increases alienation
 - Elections
 - Low participation rates
 - Changing rules and parties reduces legitimacy of votes

TABLE 9.9 Elections to the Russian Duma, 1993, 1995, and 1999

PARTY	PERCENTAGE OF LIST VOTE			SEATS ON PARTY LIST			SEATS IN SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS		
	1993	1995	1999	1993	1995	1999	1993	1995	1999
Communists	12.35	22.30	24.29	32	99	67	32	58	55
Women of Russia	8.1	–	–	21	–	4	3	–	–
Liberal Democrats	22.79	11.18	5.98	59	50	17	11	1	2
Our Home is Russia	–	1.13	–	–	45	–	–	10	7
Unity	–	–	22.32	–	–	64	–	–	9
Yabloko	7.82	6.89	5.93	20	31	17	13	14	5
Russia's Democratic Choice	15.38	–	–	40	–	–	56	9	–
Union of Right Forces	–	–	8.52	–	–	24	–	–	5
Fatherland All Russia	–	–	13.33	–	–	36	–	–	32
Party of Russian Unity and Accord	6.76	–	–	18	–	–	9	1	–
Democratic Party of Russia	5.5	–	–	14	–	–	7	–	–
Others and independents	–	–	–	–	–	–	60	103	110
Against all	4.36	3.60	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Note: Includes only parties that broke the 5 percent barrier.

TABLE 9.10 The 2003 State Duma Election

PARTY	VOTE (PERCENT)	SEATS
United Russia	37.6	222
Communists	12.6	51
Liberal Democrats	11.5	36
Rodina	9.0	37
Yabloko	4.3	4
Union of Right Forces	4.0	3
Independents	21.0	94

Note: The “others” were all elected from single-member districts. Many have since rallied to United Russia.

TABLE 9.11 The Russian Presidential Election of 1996

CANDIDATE	PERCENTAGE OF FIRST- BALLOT VOTE	PERCENTAGE OF SECOND- BALLOT VOTE
Boris Yeltsin	35.3	53.8
Gennady Zyuganov	32.0	40.3
Alexander Lebed	14.5	–
Grigori Yavlinsky	7.5	–
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	5.7	–
Others	2.2	–
Against all	1.5	4.8

TABLE 9.12 The Russian Presidential Election of 2000

CANDIDATE	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE
Vladimir Putin	52.94
Gennady Zyuganov	29.21
Grigori Yavlinski	5.80
Anan Tuleev	2.95
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	2.70
Other candidates	2.58
Against all	1.88

TABLE 9.13 Presidential Vote, 2004

CANDIDATE	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE
Vladimir Putin	71.2
Nikolai Charitonov	13.7
Sergei Glaziev	4.1
Others	6.7
Against all	4.3

Political Culture and Participation

- Political Parties Today
 - Personalized parties of the early years of Russian Federation have almost disappeared
 - United Russia, a party of power, has established itself to survive elections and leadership changes
 - Just Russia, competition created by the power elite will not contest for real power
 - Communist Party of the Russian Federation is a nationalistic, social democratic (self-labeled) party that is a nation-wide organization losing support everywhere
 - Yabloko is a reformist party favoring democracy and a social welfare system that is also losing support
 - Union of Right Forces is a reformist party favoring drastic economic restructuring which is also losing popularity
 - Liberal Democrats are an anti-Semitic, super nationalistic party that earns headlines more easily than votes

Political Culture and Participation

- A Balance Sheet: politics are in transition toward an indecipherable goal

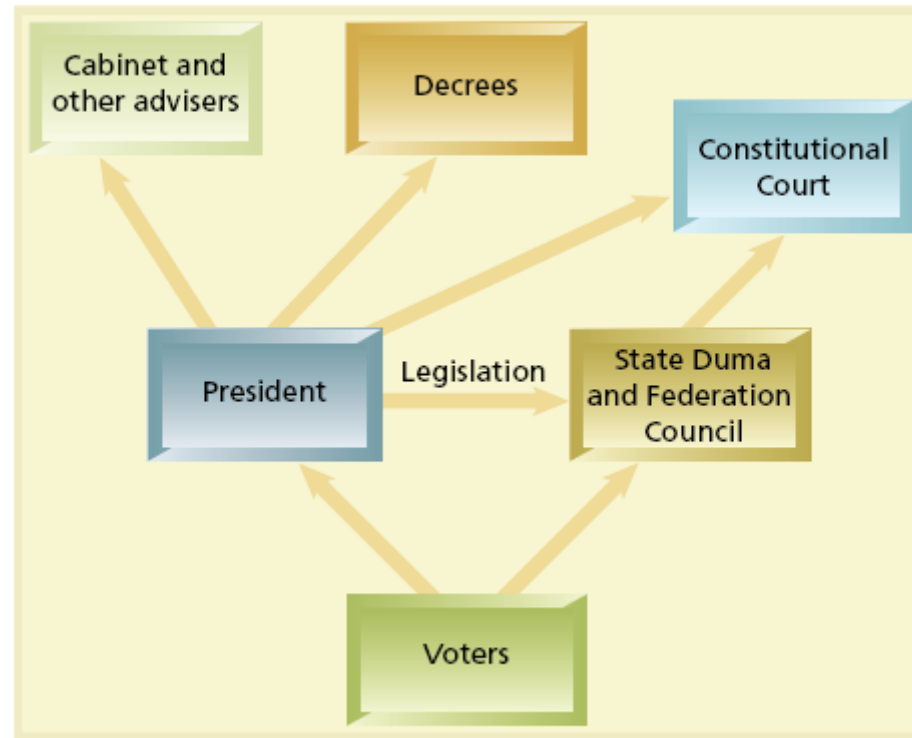
The Russian State

- The presidency: center of growing power
- The Oligarchs: beneficiaries of privatization and corruption who must remain unquestionably loyal to Putin to preserve their positions
- Parliament: weak in early years because of disunity; weak now because of loyalty to president
- The bureaucracy: dominated by old Soviet elite; distrusted by current power elite
- The judiciary: traditionally a 2nd or 3rd tier power, now pushed to be adversarial and to promote rule of law (as long as that doesn't step on powerful toes)

TABLE 9.14 Russian Presidents and Prime Ministers

PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER
Boris Yeltsin (1991–1999)	Boris Yeltsin (1991–1992) Yegor Gaidar (Acting 1992–1993) Viktor Chernomyrdin (1993–1998) Sergei Kiriyenko (1998) Yevgeni Primakov (1998–1999) Sergei Stepashin (1999) Vladimir Putin (1999)
Vladimir Putin (2000–)	Mikhail Kasyanov (2000–2004) Mikhail Fradkov (2004–7) Viktor Zubkov (2007–)

FIGURE 9.3 Decision Making in Russia



The Russian State

- The federation
 - Ethnic minorities contend with Russians and each other
 - Negotiated resolutions to some conflicts may hold promise
 - Putin’s appointment of governors of “federal districts” may resolve old problems and create new ones
- The military: Will it stay out of politics?

Public Policy

- The economy
 - Reform: What kind and for whom?
 - Early privatizations
 - Small-scale businesses quickly and successfully adapted
 - Large-scale industries caught up in complex and corrupt processes
 - Economic shrinkage of 1990s was 6% a year
 - Economic growth since then has been 5% a year
 - Based on oil and gas industries and rising energy prices
 - Most Russians still poor

Public Policy

- Foreign policy
 - Basically pragmatic
 - Stability is primary goal

Feedback

- Opening of media in '90s was enthusiastically received and used
- Since 2000, Putin has led the consolidation of media into the hands of loyal oligarchs and the government
- Conclusion: Half Empty or Half Full: the future is difficult to discern; optimism and pessimism seem equally justifiable

Learning Objectives

After mastering the concepts presented in this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand key factors of the historical formation of the Russian state in 19-20th centuries.
- Comprehend the development of communist doctrine and ideology in Russia.
- Define key elements of the 1917 revolutions in Russia. Define the following:
 - Provisional Government
 - Bolsheviks
 - Mensheviks
 - Vladimir Lenin
- Define Russian diversity, geography and current economic challenges.
- Understand the process of political, economic and social developments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
- Discuss the role of Joseph Stalin in the history of the USSR.
- Understand the necessity of creating the Comintern by Vladimir Lenin.
- Comprehend the impact of the following Soviet leaders on the political development of the USSR: Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, Constantine Chernenko, Mikhail Gorbachev
- Recognize the structure of the Communist Party and government institutions in the Soviet Union. Define the following terms: Central Committee, Politburo, Secretariat, Nomenklatura

Learning Objectives

After mastering the concepts presented in this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the role of Mikhail Gorbachev in the process of party, state and ideological reformation in the USSR.
- Comprehend Gorbachev's doctrines of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *democratization*.
- Define and differentiate between the 1991 and the 1993 coups in the USSR and the Russian Federation.
- Discuss the implications of the shock therapy and privatization in Russia.
- Identify patterns of political culture, civil society participation and party affiliation among Russian voters in 1990s.
- Understand Russia's electoral system and its impact on the development of the political system.
- Define the role of political parties in the elections and differentiate among the following political parties: Yabloko, United Russia, Just Russia, Liberal Democrats, Union of Right Forces
- Understand the composition of the Russian federal state.
- Comprehend the challenging process of the development of Russian economy.
- Discuss the role of oligarchs in the Russian political and economic development.