

F305 Russia Study Group Summer 2011 Lesson Plan 1

Power Point Presentation: Contemporary Russia

Slide 1 – Intro (Flag)

As noted in catalog, there will be homework designed to facilitate discussion. You don't need to read everything and should avoid only reading the first 3 items.

Also modified the format of the SG. I will give a short lecture to begin each class and would like 2 or 3 of you to volunteer each week to give about a 10-minute presentation on a specific subject that you would research on your own. I hope that will encourage more discussion. Also unlocked the floodgates given the size of the wait list. We will see if it works.

Today I will provide an overview on contemporary Russia

Next week: Domestic politics and the topics for volunteers are:

Putin's All-Russian Popular Front

Medvedev's Fight against Corruption

Khodorkovsky and the Rule of Law in Russia

Week 3: The economy

Week 4: Military and defense policies

Many factors influence its psyche and policies: geography, history, demography, economy

Slide 2 – Time Zones

Largest country in the world – 9 time zones, 83 provinces

Slide 3 – RU map

West- borders on Norway and former Russian territories: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine

South- Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, China

East – N.Korea, Japan (12 mi from Kunashir to Hokkaido)

Note: extensive rail, limited interstate hwy

Slide 4 – Border with US

2 mi between Diomed Islands and former RU land AK

Slide 5 – Arctic Dispute Map

North border – Arctic Ocean. Ice melting = easier resource extraction

Apt to be a major region for conflict with NATO

Slide 6 – Topographic Map

3 layers N to S: tundra, forest, steppe

Mostly continental climate

Slide 7 - Siberia

Siberia and far north sparsely populated

Indefensible borders = desire for *cordon sanitaire*

Slide 8 – Invasion Route Map

Steppe – synonym for Invasion Route from E (Huns, Mongols)
N Eur plain: Napoleon, Hitler
Earliest from N – Viking invasion (800-1000)
View of history: they study it, learn it, feel it in their bones
So many invasions = need to be strong

Slide 9 – Demographic Factors

Ethnic Russians v. Citizens of the Russian Federation
Increasing population of non-Russians – currently 20%
High death rate & abortions, low birth rate among Russians
Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use epidemic
Life expectancy 60 for men, 73 for women
Population declined from 150M in 1990 to 143M in 2010
Estimate for 2050: 110M
Expected to lose an estimated one million workers every year until 2017.

Slide 10 – Russia’s Ethnic Republics Graphic

Many have only a small minority of ethnic Russians
North Caucasus is tinderbox

Slide 11 – RU in CIS Graphic

Collapse of USSR left large Russian populations outside
Russians left and became DPs in RF even tho never knew RU
Remaining are considered protected Russians by Moscow

Slide 12 – Economy [Pipeline Map]

Economic power = political influence
Under Putin, reversal of privatization of major sectors
Opposition of oligarchs = need to consolidate central power
RF has largest proven reserves of gas

Slide 13 - Dependence on Russian Gas

Europe heavily dependent on RU oil and gas

Slide 14 – Foreign Policy Goals [Topo Map]

Reclaim Russia’s role as a major player on the world stage
Reassert dominance over the states of the FSU
Join the WTO
Cancellation of the Jackson-Vanik amendment
Prevent US from obtaining 1st-strike capability
Prevent stationing of missile defense in E. Europe

Improve relations with EU and China

2001 Treaty of Friendly Cooperation

2004 Settled border dispute, effected in October 2008

2010 Military Cooperation Agreement signed

Eliminate NATO, sever EU military ties to US

Dominate Europe economically

Conclusion: World is a hostile place, federation is fragile – too much disunity, Russia humiliated in 1990s wants recognition again as a great power. Requires strong central authoritarian leadership

Slide 15 - Life in Russia Today [GDP chart]

Growth of economy = public support for strong leader

Increasing prosperity in middle and especially upper classes.

Slide 16-19 – Street scenes

Greater income disparity; rise of billionaire class

Winners: CPSU *nomenklatura*, KGB officers

Losers: peasants, unskilled labor, pensioners, military officers

Increasing corruption. No rule of law

Increasing centralization of political control

Reassertion of state economic control of “strategic” sectors (nationalization)

Limitations on freedom of press, especially TV, assembly

Yeltsin era democracy now viewed as chaos, humiliation

Brain drain; cash flight

Average Russian is better off than 10 years ago, supports Putin

No underlying supportive ideology – only greed