

RUSSIA



# GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

- Largest country in world
- Contains 11 time zones
- Majority of country is north of 49<sup>th</sup> degree latitude (U.S. – Canada border)
- Abundance of Natural Resources that exist in inhospitable or inaccessible geographic locations



# AUTHORITARIAN OLIGARCHY OR BUDDING DEMOCRACY

- Between 1945-1991 global politics defined by competition between the USA and USSR
- Collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 left the Russian Federation as the largest piece of territory remaining from the USSR

# TRENDS IN PUTIN'S RUSSIA

- Centralization of Power in President
- Movement towards authoritarian rule



# LEGITIMACY

- Putin may use authoritarian strategies to solidify Russia's weak, **illiberal democracy**.
- Constitution of 1993 – provided for a strong president, although power of the president can technically be checked by popular elections and the Duma



# HOSTILITY TOWARD GOVERNMENT

- Despite strong, central authority and Russian statism, citizens can be surprisingly hostile toward their government
- Years of repression spark resentment that leads to badmouthing of political leaders
- Pessimism towards political and economic policies



# REVOLUTION OF 1991

- Protesters were led by Boris Yeltsin, president elect of the Russian Republic
- In December 1991 eleven Soviet republics declared their independence
- Gorbachev officially announces dissolution of Soviet Union

# BORIS YELTSIN

- Emerged as president of the Russian Federation
- Attempts to create a “western-style” democracy
- “Shock Therapy” economic reforms (Immediate market economy)
  - Russian economy does not respond to “shock therapy” reforms
  - Conflict erupts between Yeltsin and the Duma





Source: David Horsey, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

# YELTSIN

- Poor president
- Hires and fires numerous prime ministers
- Alcoholic & frequently ill; this leads to erratic political behavior
- Resigns before the 2000 elections
- Vladimir Putin, Yeltsin's prime minister, takes over and wins the 2000 & 2004 elections



March 21, 1993

# Dry Bones



DryBonesBlog.com

# CITIZENS, SOCIETY, AND THE STATE

## Nationality

- *Most important single cleavage in Russia*
- 80% of population is Russian
- Others include:
  - Tatars
  - Ukrainians
  - Armenians
  - Chuvashes
  - Bashkis
  - Byelorussians
  - Moldavians

# NATIONALITY

- Nationality determines the organization of the country into “federations”, “autonomous regions”, republics, and provinces
- Many ethnic groups would like to have their independence, but are enticed by trade benefits with the Russian government to stay in the Federation
- Chechnya rebelled, wanting independence



# RUSSIANS

There's a reason we drink.

# CHECHNYA

- Primarily Muslim region of Russia
- Contains some valuable resources, such as oil fields
- Independence movement is strong, and Russian government has struggled to keep Chechnya region within its control
- Chechens have reverted to terrorist tactics including taking over a heavily attended Russian theater and in 2004 the seizure of a school that resulted in the deaths of over 350 people, mostly children





# OLIGARCHS

- Have emerged as leaders in Russia after acquiring major corporations, including Media Most & Yukos Oil.
- Putin arrested or sent into exile CEOs of these companies for refusing to pay or underpaying government taxes



Mikhail  
Khodorkovsky

# RURAL VS. URBAN LIFE

- 73% of all Russians live in urban settings, usually in the western part of the country
- Economic divide between rural and urban residents is wide, however, all Russians have been hit hard by recent economic woes of the post-Cold War Russia
- Urban residents tend to be more educated and in touch with western culture



# BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

- **Mistrust of Government** – result of treatment and government secrecy during tsarist and Soviet regimes
- **Statism** – despite mistrust of government, Russian citizens still expect the state to take active role in their lives
- **Economic Beliefs** – nearly all groups and political factions favor market reforms, although not all do so enthusiastically

# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- In the 2012 election, turnout was 65%, with some precincts reporting 107% turnout!
- Only 1% of Russia's citizens report being a member of a political party
- Few Russians are members of clubs, churches, or cultural groups



# ASYMMETRICAL FEDERALISM

- Russia consists of 89 regions, 21 of which are ethnically non-Russian by majority
- Most regions are called “republics”
- Putin ended direct election of the 89 regional governors, they are now nominated by the president and confirmed by the regional legislatures



# UNITED RUSSIA

- United Russia won 238 (53%) of the 450 Duma seats in 2011 elections
- United Russia is hard to define other than that it is pro-Putin



# COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (CPRF)

- In 2011 elections CPRF held 92 seats (20%) of the 450 Duma seats
- Party emphasizes central planning and nationalism





# A JUST RUSSIA

- Won 64 seats (14%) in the 2011 Duma Elections
- Leftist, democratic party

# LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

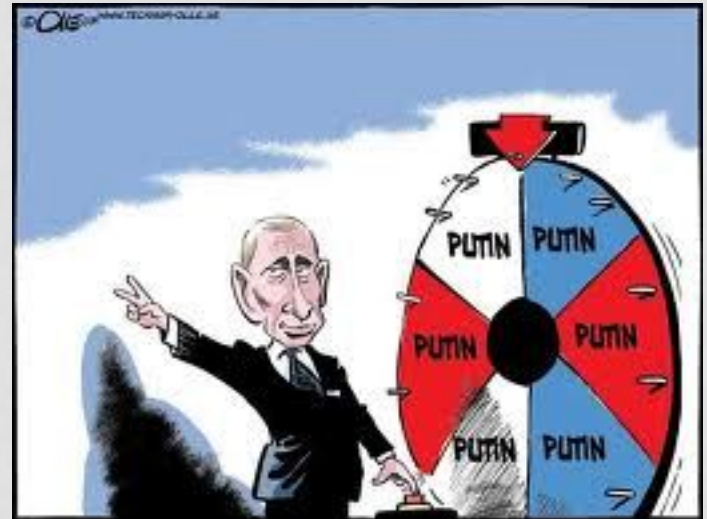
- Controversial party
- Headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy
  - Extreme nationalist
  - Anti-semitic
  - Sexist
  - Said he would use nuclear weapons on Japan if he were elected

Won 56 Seats (12%) in the 2011 Duma elections.



# ELECTIONS

- 3 types
  - Referendum
  - Duma Elections
  - Presidential Elections



# CONSTITUTION OF 1993

- **Created a three-branch government**
  - President & Prime Minister
  - Lower legislative house (DUMA)
  - Constitutional Court
- **Referendum** - the president may call for a national referenda by popular vote on important issues

# PRESIDENT & PRIME MINISTER

- Duties of the President

- **Appoints the prime minister and cabinet** – Duma must approve prime minister's appointment, but if they reject the president's nominee three times, the president may dissolve the Duma
- **Issue decrees that have force of law** – cabinet has great deal of power, Duma can not censure cabinet according to Constitution of 1993
- **Prime Minister:** relationship between PM and President not exactly clear, but with no vice-president if anything happens to president the PM assumes the office of president

# “WE’RE JUST GOOD FRIENDS”

- Putin was elected president in 2000 and 2004
- Medvedev was elected president in 2008 and appointed Putin as prime minister.
- Putin was elected president in 2012



# BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE

- **Duma**

- Lower House
- 450 deputies
- **Chosen by proportional representation , with a 7% threshold**
  - Passes Bills
  - Approves Budgets
  - Confirms president's political appointments

- **Federation Council**

- Upper House
- Two members selected from each of the 89 regions of the federation
- One is picked by governor, one by regional legislature
- Power to delay legislation
  - On paper Federation Council can change boundaries of republics, ratify use of armed forces, and appoint and remove judges. These powers have yet to be used



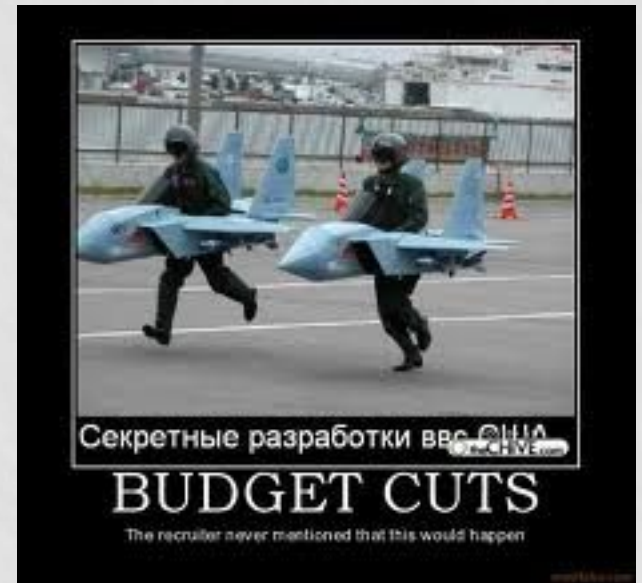
# JUDICIARY

- Supreme Court
  - Created by 1993 Constitution
  - Serves as final court of appeals in criminal & civil cases
- Constitutional Court
  - Created by 1993 Constitution
  - 19 members
  - Appointed by president and confirmed by Federation Council



# MILITARY

- Generally did not get involved in politics, this continues under the Russian Federation
- Suffered significant humiliation from the late 1980's to early 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Withdrawal from Afghanistan
  - Defeated by Chechen guerrillas in 1994-1996 conflict
  - Often ill-equipped, Russian soldiers had to feed themselves and went unpaid for months in late 1990's and early 21<sup>st</sup> century



# PUTIN AND AUTHORITARIANISM

- The president may dismiss governors
- Allowed the federal government to disband political parties for “extremism”
- Limited the powers of local governments
- Restricted parliamentary investigations of the president



# PUTIN AND AUTHORITARIANISM

- Changed the Duma to all PR, raising the threshold from 5% to 7%
- Governors are no longer directly elected
- Governors are appointed by the President and approved by regional legislatures
- Toughened the formal requirements for nominations



# FOREIGN POLICY

## • Relations with Former Republics

- Putin meddled in Ukrainian election of 2004
- Attacked Georgia in the South Ossetia War in 2008



## • Relations with the World

- Accepted into the G-20 UN Security Council permanent member
- Supported UN sanctions on Iran in 2010
- Russia joined the WTO in 2011
- Vetoed UN resolution on Syria in 2012

