Human Geography of Russia

Chapter 16
A History of Expansion

The Birth

- The Russian state began in the region between the Baltic and Black seas
  - Ninth century Vikings settled and adopted the customs of the local Slavic population.
    - Settlements began to expand
A History of Expansion

The Birth

- Tatars – 13th century invaders from Mongolia halted expansion
  - They controlled the region until 1500s
  - Ivan the Great, prince of Moscow, ended their rule.
- Russia continued to expand
  - Expanded at a rate of 55 square miles a day for the next four centuries.
A History of Expansion

Russia Lags behind

- Growth was rapid, but lagged behind in science and technology.
- Peter the Great (1682 – 1725)
  - Moved capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg
  - St. Petersburg was closer to Western Europe
- Peter the Great made strides toward modernizing Russia but did not industrialize until the late 1800s
Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union

- **Russian Revolution**
  - 1917
  - Ended the rule of the czars
  - Led by V.I. Lenin
  - Communist take charge of the economy
Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union

- 1922 – The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed. (USSR)
- Lenin dies in 1924 and Stalin becomes leader of the USSR.
Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union

- After WWII, Stalin installs pro-Soviet governments in Eastern European countries that Russia had Liberated.
- Tension grew between the USSR and the United States in the late 1940s.
- The Cold War began
  - Never grew into open warfare
Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union

- By the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev started to give more economic and political freedom to the Soviet people.
  - This led to the collapse of the Communist government and the USSR in 1991
  - Ended the Cold War
  - The USSR divided into 15 independent republics
Building a Command Economy

- Inspired by Karl Marx

- Command Economy
  - The central government makes all economic decisions
  - Collective Farms
    - Large Government ran farms
The Chernobyl disaster was a nuclear reactor accident that occurred on 26 April 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine (then part of the Soviet Union). It is considered to be the worst nuclear power plant disaster in history and the only level 7 event on the International Nuclear Event Scale. It resulted in a severe release of radioactivity following a massive power excursion that destroyed the reactor. Most deaths from the accident were caused by radiation poisoning.

Further explosions and the resulting fire sent a plume of highly radioactive fallout into the atmosphere and over an extensive geographical area. Four hundred times more fallout was released than had been by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.
Transcaucasia

- Consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia
- Used as a migration route between Europe and Asia
  - This has led to a variety of cultures
History of Outside Control

Transcaucasia

- The Czars of Russia entered in the 1700s
- By 1870s, Transcaucasia is added to the Russian Empire
- 1917 – Russian Revolution
  - By the early 1920s, the Red Army takes control of the region.
Central Asia

- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
Central Asia

- Silk Road (Pg 375)
  - 4,000 mile journey from China to the Mediterranean Sea
    - Gold, Silver, Ivory
    - Wine, Spices, Porcelain
  - Spreading of ideas, technology, and religion
Central Asia

The Great Game

- Competition between Great Britain and Russia over Central Asia
- By the end of the 19th century, Russia won control of Central Asia
- In 1920s the USSR took control and governed until 1991

The Russian Bear with the British Lion
Central Asia

- Soviet Union exploded 470 nuclear device in the “Polygon”
- Recent discoveries of oil fields in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have triggered the new “Great Game.”
- This region is still home of many nomads
Regional Conflict

Chapter 17
Troubled Caucasus

- Chechnya
  - Remained part of Russia
  - Russia invaded in 1994 and 1999

- Georgia
  - In a conflict with the Ossetian people

- Armenia and Azerbaijan
  - Fought of the Nagorno-Karabakh
Steps Toward Capitalism

- **Privatization**
  - Government-owned businesses to individuals and private companies
  - Economic crash in 1998
  - 40% of Russians live below the poverty line

- **Distance Decay**
  - Long distances between places is an obstacle facing economic reformers.
The Soviet Union’s Nuclear Legacy

CASE STUDY PG 392
Soviet’s Nuclear Problems

- Nuclear War Heads
- Ballistic missiles
- Poorly constructed and maintained nuclear power stations