



**Great Decisions
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Russia and the near Abroad

Luba Iskold
Professor of Russian
Muhlenberg College

Presentation Outline

- **Geography & Culture**
- **History & Culture**
- **Attempts to Westernize Russia**
- **Westernizers & Slavophiles**
- **Russia's Leaders**
- **Culture & Character**
- **The Russian Idea**
- **Language & Culture**
- **Crimea**
- **What will Russia do next?**

Russia



Russia vis-à-vis the West

Discussion Questions:

- **How did Russia try integrating itself into the Western world?**
- **Are Putin's actions motivated by ideology?**
- **How have Russian-Ukrainian and Russian-Western relations been affected by Euromaidan?**
- **How effective are the sanctions?**
- **What other options does the West have in dealing with the crisis?**

Geography and Culture

- **Russia is twice as large as the United States**
- **It stretches 6,000 miles from West to East**
- **Occupies 1/8th of the Earth's land surface**
- **11 time zones in Russia**
- **Low temperatures, permafrost covers almost 60% of the territory**
- **Limited availability of farmland**
- **Vast territories- generate the need to rule from the center**
- **Geography made Russia inwardly oriented**
- **Harsh climate – created strength and ability to endure hardships**
- **People- patient and cautious**
- **A test of time is preferred to the risk of new and untried**

Understanding Russia: What will it do next?

Winston Churchill (1939):

- **I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.**

Is Russia a part of the West?

Mikhail Gorbachev captures the essence of the centuries-old debate about Russia's cultural relationship to the West. In *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World* (1987), he argues:

- Some in the West are trying to “exclude” the Soviet Union from Europe. Now and then, as if inadvertently, they equate “Europe” with “Western Europe.” Such ploys, however, cannot change the geographic and historical realities. Russia's trade, culture and political links with other European nations and states have deep roots in history. **We are Europeans** (p. 191).
- The Soviet Union is an **Asian**, as well as a **European** country.... (p. 180).

Russia vis-à-vis the West

- For many centuries Russia has been an enigma for the West
- What is Russia? Who are the Russians?
- In the 20th century- revolutionary changes:
 - profoundly affected the lives of its own citizens
 - influenced the course of world history
- With the fall of communism and the current internal dynamics of that area of the world, it is important to analyze Russia's cultural identity
- Is Russia a part of Western civilization, or apart from the West?
- The answer would speak volumes about the trajectory of Russian politics, economics and culture in the 21st century

What is the meaning of “the West”? (Huntington)

- **Classical Legacy- influences from Greece & Rome**
- **Christianity (Catholicism & Protestantism for Huntington)**
- **European Languages**
- **Separation of Church & State**
- **Rule of Law (the basis for constitutional government)**
- **Social Pluralism (diverse interests are accepted as legitimate)**
- **Representative Bodies (the basis for modern democracy)**
- **Individualism (the basis of the human rights concept)**

Some Historical Dates

- **862** Varangian Invasion of Kiev and Novgorod
- **863** Saints Cyril & Methodius create the Cyrillic Alphabet
- **988** Christianization of Kievan Rus
- **1147** Moscow
- **1240-1380** Mongol Invasion/Tatar Yoke
- **Peter the Great (1672–1725) St. Petersburg 1703**
- **1812** War with France (Napoleon)
- **1825** The Decembrist Uprising
- **1862** Emancipation of the Serfs

History and Culture

- **Viking raiders and Scandinavians became the rulers of Rus**
- **Kievan Rus linked via Constantinople to the Mediterranean and the West for commerce & culture**
- **Tatars- the conquest didn't make Asians of Russians, but it delayed their becoming Europeans**
- **Today's Russians- a mix of Slavic, Finnish, and Tatar blood**
- **Russian Orthodox Church developed independently as a national church**
- **Moscow saw itself as the 3d and last Rome- a new center of Christianity**

History and Culture

- **Isolated from the West, Russia missed the major developments that shaped modern Europe:**
 - Renaissance-the revival of classical influences & flowering of the arts**
 - Reformation- pluralism of religious & secular thought**
 - Rise of big cities**
 - Development of modern agriculture and commerce**
 - Scientific revolution**
 - Economic liberalism**
 - Recognition of individual rights**
 - Beginnings of political liberty**
 - Growth of a strong middle class**
 - Failure to develop a strong middle class delayed reform**
- **Russia- vast, backward, agrarian empire ruled by an autocratic dynasty**

Soviet History & Culture

- **1917 October Revolution**
- **1924 USSR: Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia & Transcaucasia**
- **1928 Five Year Plans, Collectivization**
- **1941-45 Great Patriotic War**
- **De-Stalinization**
- **Thaw -- Khrushchev (1953-64)**
- **Stagnation -- Brezhnev (1964-82)**
- **Perestroika, glasnost -- Gorbachev**
- **Yeltsin (1991-99) – first democratically elected President of Russia**
- **Putin - First Presidential Term (2000-04) Second Term (2004-08)**
First Premiership (1999) Second Premiership (2008–2012)
- **Medvedev (2008-12)**
- **Putin - Third Presidential term (2012–present)**

Attempts to Westernize Russia

- **Pluralism of the West was seen as chaotic**
- **Cacophony of voices without harmony**
- **Discord of thought and purpose**
- **In its episodic attempts to modernize, Russia came to the West**
- **But it rejected the Western ways that came with modernization**

Attempts to Westernize Russia

- **Many things Western came late to Russia:**
 - Manufacturing
 - Higher education
 - Science and technology
 - Blue jeans
 - Rock music
- **Other things Western have not yet arrived:**
 - Good government
 - Transparency
 - Efficiency

Attempts to Westernize Russia: Leaders

Peter the Great -Emperor of All Russia (1672–1725)

Built St. Petersburg- “a window on Europe

- **Was given the title "the Great"**
- **Russia's first Emperor**
- **Started to change the people’s ways**
- **Overturned the traditions and habits of centuries**



Attempts to Westernize Russia

Major Petrovian Reforms:

- **Sent hundreds of promising Russians to Europe to learn navigation, engineering and arts**
- **Founded schools of navigation, mathematics, medicine, politics, philosophy, and astronomy**
- **Invited foreigners to work in Russia**
- **Began the first Russian newspaper**

- **Introduced Western etiquette**
- **Ordered to shave beards**
- **Instituted Western-style jackets**
- **Made war on the seclusion of women**
- **Ordered not to marry young people against their wills**

Westernizers & Slavophiles

- Peter's reforms were not universally embraced in Russia
- Inspired heated intellectual debates between "Westernizers" & "Slavophiles"
- "Anti-Christ with smoke billowing out of his mouth"

- **Westernizers** saw Russia's future tied to Western Europe
- **Slavophiles** rejected westernization & sought to carve out a unique Russian road

Soviet Leaders: Lenin

- **Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov**
- **Collapse of the Romanov monarchy**
- **Confusion and chaos in the country**
- **Marxism**
- **Bolshevik Party**
- **1917 -Great October Socialist Revolution**
- **Goal: to break the chains of capitalism**
- **Civil War**
- **Lenin was idolized in the USSR for 72 years**
- **Lenin's tomb & monuments**
- **Recent controversies around Lenin**



Soviet Leaders: Stalin

- **Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) Josef Dzhugashvili**
- **Five-year plans**
- **Collectivization of agriculture**
- **1936 Constitution**
- **1937 Stalin purges begin**
- **Leader of the USSR in WWII**
- **Post-war restructuring in Russia**
- **De-Stalinization begins in 1953**



Soviet Leaders: Khrushchev (1953-1964)

- USSR- the Thaw World- the Cold War
- 1954 gave Crimea as a gift to the Soviet Ukraine
- 1955 Warsaw pact- satellite countries
- 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis



Soviet Leaders: Brezhnev (1964- 1982)

- 18 years in office
- Advocated détente between Eastern and Western countries
- Global influence of the Soviet Union grows dramatically
- Invasion of Czechoslovakia to stop the Prague Spring
- Serious economic problems by the mid-1970s- Stagnation
- Sent Soviet military to Afghanistan to fight the mujahedeen
- His presidency led to eventual dissolution of the USSR in 1991



Attempts to Westernize Russia

Soviet Leaders: Gorbachev (1985-1991)

- Glasnost & Perestroika- Openness & Restructuring
- New geopolitical concept- the “Common European home”



Attempts to Westernize Russia

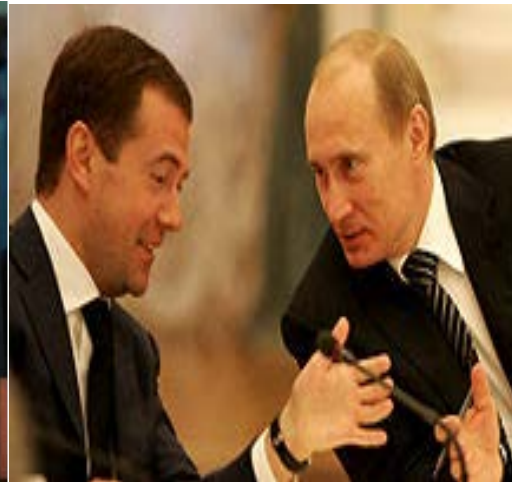
Russian Leaders: Yeltsin (1991-1999)

- **First democratically elected President of the Russian Federation**



Russian Leaders: Putin

- Prime Minister of Russia 1999 – 2000 and 2008 – 2012
- President of Russia 2000 – 2008 and 2012-to present
- may stay in office for the next 10 years



Russian Leaders: Medvedev

- Served as the third President of Russia, 2008 -2012
- He was the youngest serving Russian President, at the age of 43



Culture & Character

- **Communalism**– the affinity for the group
- Russian communalism vs. American individualism
- Sobornost, Mir-village commune, world and peace
- Communal spirit– exploited by the Soviets
- Communal way of life persisted well into the 20th century
- **Egalitarianism**- a social philosophy that advocates the removal of inequities among persons
- **Nationality**- high ethnic consciousness
- In post-soviet spaces- resurgence of Russian nationalism
- Caution & conservatism
- Suspicion of foreigners
- Pessimism
- Extremes & contradictions
- The Russian soul
- Continuity & inheritance
- Suffering is divine

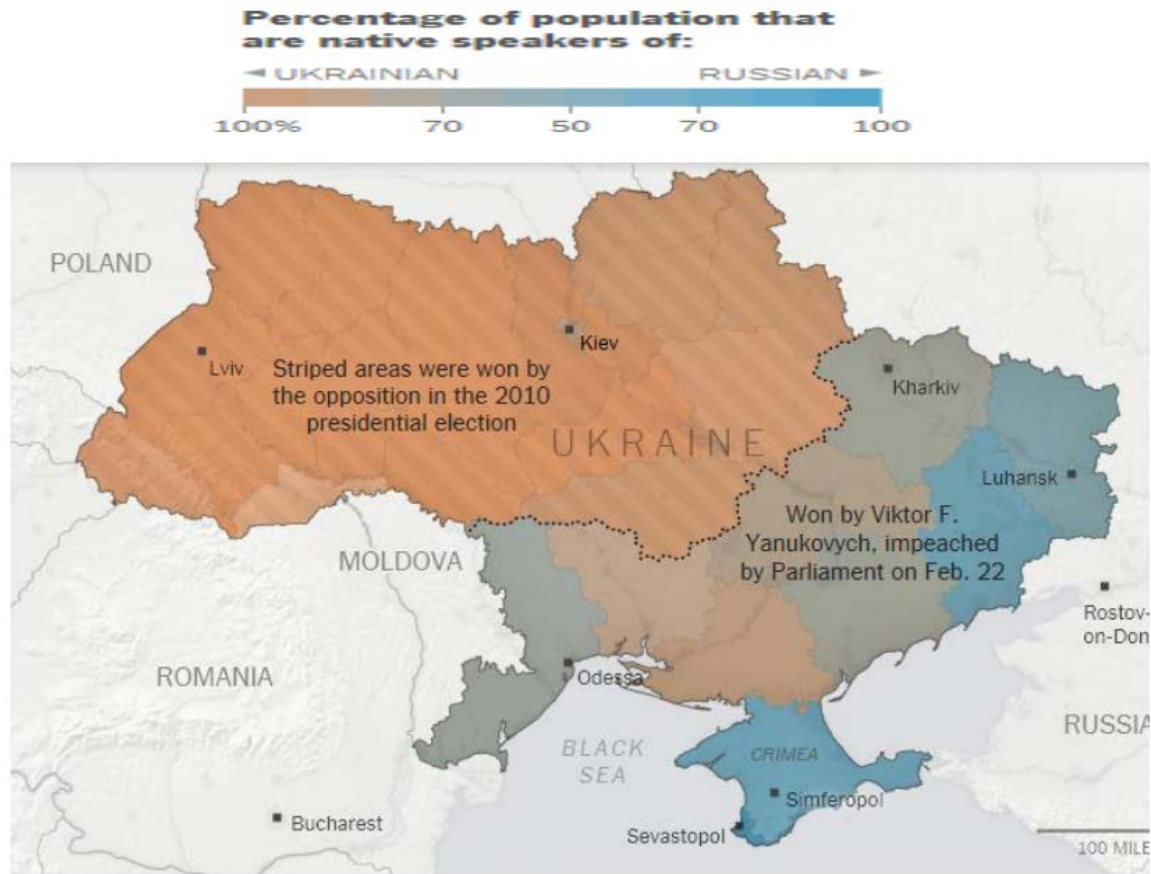
The Russian Idea

- **Particularism or exceptionalism- unique meaning of Russian history**
- **Orthodox Christianity- the one true Christian faith**
- **Messianism**
- **Patriotism and Nationalism**
- **Populism – a social revolution transforms the lives of the ordinary people**
- **Eurasianism – Russia represents a distinctive civilizational pattern**
- **Russia duplicates neither European nor Asiatic models**
- **Pan- Slavism**

Language & Culture

- Russian in the USSR – lingua franca
- Russian remains important for international communication
- The fate of Russian has taken different courses in former Soviet republics
- Demographic necessity and political choice determine the differences
- **Ethnic languages are viewed as a vital part of regaining independence**
- Belarus is still a near uniform stronghold of Russian
- Ukraine: West is dominated by Ukrainian, East- by Russian
- In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Russian remains an uncontested lingua franca
- Russian is spoken less in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- In the South Caucasus Russian it is vital for communication with minorities
- Latvia & Estonia-knowledge of titular language is a condition for citizenship
- Result: 600,000 Russian-speaking residents without a formal status
- Russian is an official language in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
- Georgia is aiming to root out Russian and replace it with English
- 1/3 of the population are Russian-speakers, but it's not an official language in Ukraine
- Concern: marginalization of Russians in the near abroad
- People who want to study Russian cannot find instructors, let alone schools

Learn the Language



Sources: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Ukraine's Central Election Commission

Conflicts in Post-Soviet Spaces

Language

Interpretations of History

Integration with the West

Crimea

Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Why did they do this?

- **On Crimea's southern shore sits the port city of Sevastopol**
- **Sevastopol is home to Russian Black Sea Fleet and its thousands of naval personnel**
- **Russia had an agreement with Ukraine to lease the port of Sevastopol till 2042 as well as to station up to 25 thousand military there**
- **Russia feared that Ukraine's new pro-Western government could evict the Fleet**

Crimea

Why is Crimea important to Russia and to Putin?

- **The Black Sea Fleet has been based on the peninsula since 1783**
- **The fleet's strategic position remains crucial to Russian security interests in the region**
- **While the peninsula formally became part of independent Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Crimea still has a 60 % Russian population**
- **In addition, there is a “shared history of pride” with Crimea where Russians fought and won numerous battles**

Crimea

Ethnic Composition: Why did residents of Crimea vote to join the Russian federation? Was this a fair and true election?

- Ethnically, the Crimea is a diverse region
- Its population is about 2.2 million
- Ethnic Composition:
 - 1,5 million are Russians
 - 350 thousand are Ukrainians who primarily identify themselves as speakers of Russian
 - about 300 thousand are Crimean Tatars who historically were anti-Russian and, more recently, many became pro-Ukrainian
 - Thus, the majority of the population there is pro-Russian

Land & People

Crimea



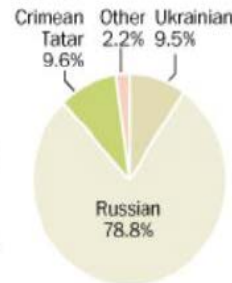
Land area

Crimea, which is about the same size as Maryland, represents only about 4 percent of Ukraine's total land mass. However, it has a third of Ukraine's coastline.

Population

Ukraine has 46 million citizens, scarcely 2 million of whom live in Crimea.

People



The majority of people in Crimea speak Russian, especially in the city of Sevastopol. This is the only region of Ukraine where Ukrainian isn't the main language.

Gross domestic product



Crimea and Sevastopol, a city in the peninsula that is independent, account for just 3.7 percent of Ukraine's total gross domestic product.

Sources: Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, CIA, Economic review of Crimea, Invest Sevastopol, Ukraine Statistics

DARLA CAMERON AND GENE THORP/THE WASHINGTON POST

(Darla Cameron and Gene Thorp / The Washington Post)

Crimea

History: Why did residents of Crimea vote to join the Russian federation? Was this a fair and true election?

- Historically, Crimea was part of the Soviet Union until 1954
- Khrushchev gave the peninsula to Soviet Ukraine to mark the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's inclusion in the Russian Empire
 - Many in Russia still see this gesture as illegitimate
 - This hardly mattered until the Soviet Union broke up in 1991 and Crimea ended up in independent Ukraine

Crimea

Is the Referendum legitimate?

- In the disputed referendum on March 16th, the majority voted in favor of joining Russia
- It is difficult to assess the legitimacy and legality of this vote with no international observers on the ground
- Vice President Biden characterized it as “nothing more than a land grab”

Question:

- Do you think Crimea will remain part of Russia?

Crimea without Ukraine

Crimea



What's on Putin's Mind?

Putin said he did not plan to seize any other regions of Ukraine. Should the world believe him?

- **When President Bush first met Mr. Putin, he said:
“I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy. ... I was able to get a sense of his soul, a man deeply committed to his country and the best interests of his country.”**

However

- **Republican Senator John McCain said that when he looked into Putin's eyes, he didn't see his soul. What he saw was three letters, KGB.**

Ukraine



What's on Putin's Mind?

**Should neighboring countries be concerned about Putin's actions?
If so, which ones and why?**

- **Poland and the Baltics are less vulnerable because of their NATO membership**

However

- **Other neighboring states with history as Soviet satellites, all share concerns revived by the Russian incursion into Ukraine**

What should the International Community do?

If Putin shows signs he intends to take more of Ukraine 's territory what measures should the international community take?

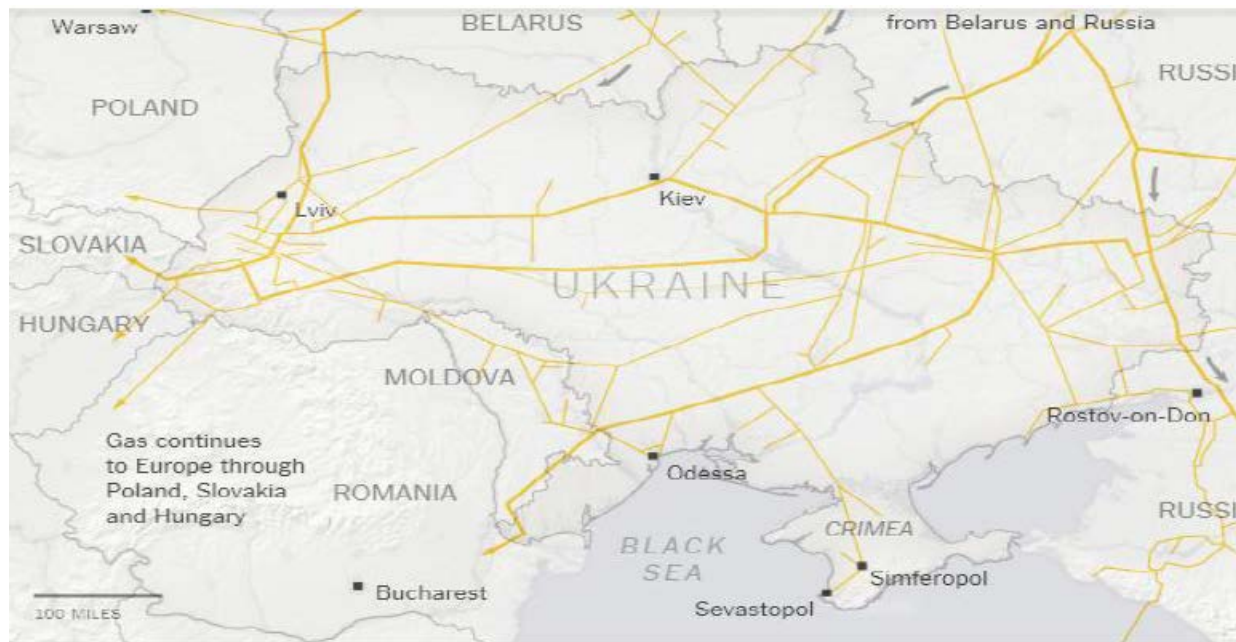
Will the Sanctions Work?

- Russia largely depends on oil and gas revenues to fund its imperial ambitions. Thus,
 - furthering the sanctions
 - discussing energy security with the Europeans
 - diversifying energy sources

WILL

make it harder for Russia to use its gas and oil supplies as a political weapon against other countries

Russia's Gas Pipelines



Source: East European Gas Analysis

- About 53 percent of Russian gas exports to Europe pass through Ukraine
- Europe, in turn, depends on Russia for 40 percent of its imported fuel

What should the International Community do?

Is the US doing enough to stop Russia's actions in Ukraine?

- **Taking additional steps to bring Russia to a negotiation table with Ukraine might be an effective measure in stabilizing the situation in Eastern Europe**