Chapter 16

Russia Today
Russia Today
Chapter Objectives

- Describe the economic changes Russia has experienced in its move from a command economy to a market economy, and the effects of those changes on agriculture, transportation, and communications.
- Identify the challenges Russia faces as the region struggles to manage its resources and control environmental damage.
Living in Russia

Section 1
Section Objectives

- Explain how Russia has moved toward a market economy.
- List changes in agriculture, industry, transportation, and communications since the breakup of the Soviet Union.
- Describe Russia’s role in the global community.
Terms to Know

- command economy
- consumer goods
- black market
- market economy
- privatization
- kolkhoz
- sovkhoz
A Geographic View

Muscovites selling food on the street
Geographic Literacy

In spite of its vast population and giant industries, Russia produces relatively few automobiles. In 1998, Russia manufactured slightly fewer than one million passenger cars and a little over one hundred thousand trucks. Compare these statistics with those of the United States, which manufactures 5.6 million cars and 6.5 million trucks a year.
Changing Economies

• **The Soviet Command Economy**  The Soviet Union functioned as a *command economy*, in which the government controlled production, pricing, and distribution.

• **The Market Economy**  In 1985 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev oversaw the beginnings of the transition to a *market economy*, in which supply and demand control prices.

• **Privatization**  Privatization of the economy continued after the Soviet Union broke up in 1991.

• Privatization so far has benefited a few wealthy businesspeople more than most average Russian workers.
Changing Economies

- Widespread corruption and organized crime threaten to destabilize Russia’s economy and society.

- **The Transition Continues** A financial crisis in 1998 made prices soar in Russia, and the international community made large loans to help the Russian economy.
Changing Economies
Agriculture and Industry

- Under the Soviets, farms and factories were organized and controlled by the government.
- **Kolkhozes** were small state-controlled farms worked by peasants who shared some of the goods and profits.
- **Sovkhozes** were large state-controlled farms worked by people who were paid wages.
- Russia’s most important industry is petroleum extraction and processing.
- Russia’s domestic oil provides its other industries with vital energy at a reasonable cost.
- Most of Russia’s heavy industries are in the Volga Valley, near Moscow.
Agriculture and Industry
Transportation and Communication

- **Transporting Goods** Russia’s highways span great distances, but many are in poor repair and are made impassable by the cold climate.
- Russia’s railroads and waterways provide most of its transportation.
- The Trans-Siberian Railroad covers over 5,744 miles (9,244 km) between Vladivostok and the Ural Mountains.
Transportation and Communication
**Transportation and Communication**

- Most urban Russians rely on public transportation, although automobile ownership has risen.
- Many Airports have closed.
- **Transporting Energy** Russia is crisscrossed with pipelines that carry natural gas, crude oil, and other petroleum products.
- **Mass Communications**
  - Soviets use to control the media. Since the fall the media is now open.
  - Many people do not have land lines.
  - Cell phone and internet are growing.
Global Interdependence

- **Trade** Russia and the other former Soviet republics have expanded international trade relations.
- Russia exports energy and fuels and imports consumer goods, meat, and medicines.
People and their Environment

Section 2
Section Objectives

• Discuss how Russia manages its natural resources.
• Describe some of the effects of pollution on the people of Russia. ¶
• Identify some of the environmental challenges Russia faces.
Terms to Know

- radioactive material
- pesticide
- nuclear waste
A Geographic View

Steel plant in Siberia
Geographic Literacy

Chernobyl is not the only nuclear accident that has occurred in the world. At least six accidents have occurred in and around nuclear facilities in the United States. The most serious and best known occurred at the Three Mile Island facility in Middletown, Pennsylvania, in 1979. In 1999, a nuclear accident in Japan exposed people to high levels of radiation.
Managing Resources

- Russia possesses abundant natural resources.
- The environment, however, has been damaged by careless resource management.
- Russia must find a way to make use of its resources without repeating its past disregard for the environment.
- Russia is trying to improve the condition of its forests.
Managing Resources
Pollution

- By the 1990s, 40 percent of Russia’s land was “ecologically stressed”—heavily polluted. This damage resulted from Soviet-era disregard for the effects of industrialization on the environment.

- **Water Quality** Russia has one of the world’s largest supplies of freshwater, but much of it is polluted with industrial waste.
Pollution
Pollution

• **Soil and Air Quality**  Russia’s soil has been damaged by toxic waste dumps, oil spills, and *pesticides* sprayed on crops.

• Industries and fossil fuel emissions have polluted the air.

• **Nuclear Wastes**  Nuclear waste poses a great danger to Russia’s population.

• Between 1949 and 1987, the Soviet Union set off more than 600 nuclear explosions.

• The Soviets dumped some nuclear materials into the Baltic and Bering Seas.
At Chernobyl, a town in Ukraine, a 1986 fire in a nuclear reactor released tons of radioactive particles into the air. The wind carried this radiation over great distances, contaminating the environment in other countries. Eight thousand people eventually died of radiation poisoning. Many more have been made seriously ill.