

## Chapter 6

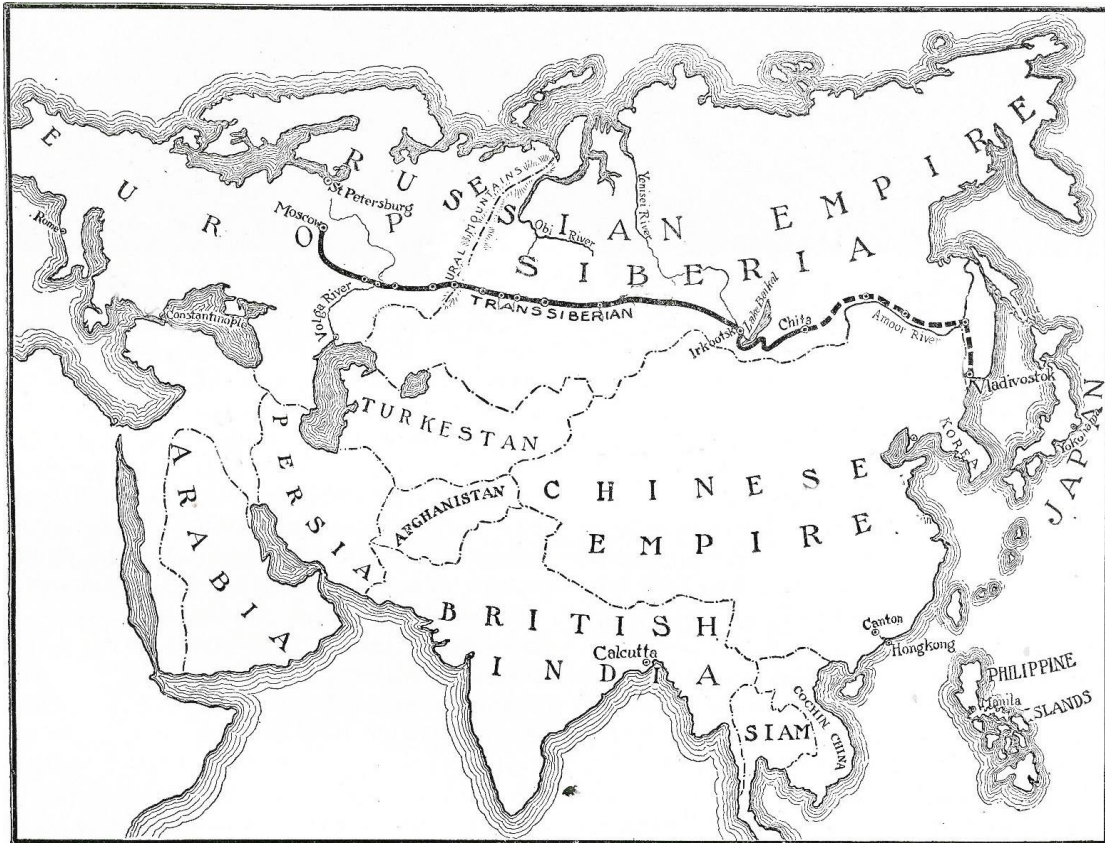
# Area (size): a geographic “big idea” and some consequences in Russia

Size is important,  
because large countries are likely to have plenty of resources,  
but they also have high costs for transportation and communication.

These facts have consequences that can be seen  
when you look at many maps of Russia and its neighbors-  
e.g., maps that show permafrost, growing season, nomads,  
farmland, minerals, railroads, cities, military invasions,  
and political control at different times in history.



Building the Trans-Siberian Railroad Photo from the Paris Exposition, 1900



This map came from an 1894 story about a train ride.

The ride was not expensive. Even today, a ticket costs only a few hundred dollars. You get to ride in a small room with four bunkbeds. The train stops for 20 minutes every few hours.

There may be people selling sandwiches and drinks at the stops, but don't count on it. To save money, take a metal bowl, a spoon, and some packets of oatmeal, dried potatoes, or spaghetti. Every car on the train has a *samovar* that makes hot water for cooking.

Take a flashlight and something to read. This is far from the equator, and sunset is about 4 in the afternoon in winter. Sunrise is at 8 a.m. That leaves 16 long hours of darkness every day.

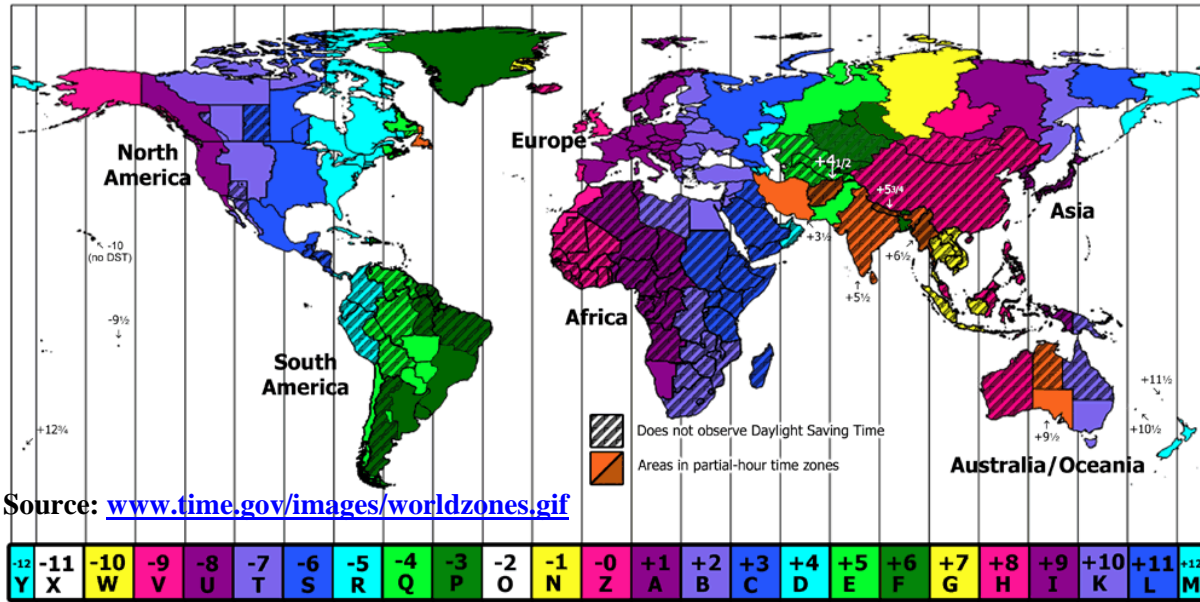
The train averages about 40 miles an hour, if there are no problems. That means the trip will take at least a week. If there are no problems!

This is Russia, and Russia is really big and really cold.

**How big is Russia?** It is by far the largest country in the world. Russia extends nearly halfway around the globe and has 10 time zones. When it is noon in western Russia, it is nearly midnight in eastern Russia. (The lower 48 states of the United States are divided into only four time zones.)

**How cold is Russia?** Its capital and largest city, Moscow, is more than a thousand miles farther from the Equator than New York is. In fact, nearly all of Russia is much closer to the North Pole than any part of the United States except Alaska. As a result, the ground in more than half of Russia is permanently frozen.

These two geographic facts – size and northern position – help us understand many other facts about Russian history. They also shed light on some key issues in modern Russia.



**A geographical “laboratory” to investigate some consequences of size.**

Russia is a good place to study the effects of size. It is by far the largest country in the world.

Why is Russia so large? One reason is that few people want to live in a cold place. Many times in history, rulers from warm places claimed parts of this nearly empty territory. The challenge was to find people who actually wanted to live in this cold land.

Nearly every country that is far from the equator has large areas with few people. Many of the statements in this chapter, therefore, also apply places like Greenland, much of Canada, and the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland (and most of Alaska!)

The southern hemisphere has no land like this. Australia, Argentina, and South Africa are warmer because they are not so far from the equator. Antarctica is located right around the South Pole. It has no permanent inhabitants, because it is even colder than Russia.

This chapter will use Russia as a “laboratory” to explore several consequences of large size.

- **Large areas usually have plenty of mineral resources.**  
They are likely to have a variety of geologic structures of different ages.
- **Large areas have expensive transportation.**  
It costs a lot of money to build long roads, railroads, or pipelines. It costs even more if the land is frozen for much of the year. It is especially expensive *per person*, because there are few people to pay for the roads.
- **Large areas usually develop late.**  
Russia did not become a country until the ninth century. That was thousands of years later than warmer places such as Egypt, India, China, or Mexico.
- **Large areas can survive military invasions.**  
Some of the most powerful armies in history tried to conquer Russia. They failed.
- **Large areas can be hard to govern.**  
Communication across great distance is difficult. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Communist leaders had trouble making plans for such a large area. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Russian government has sent troops to deal with independence movements in several regions.

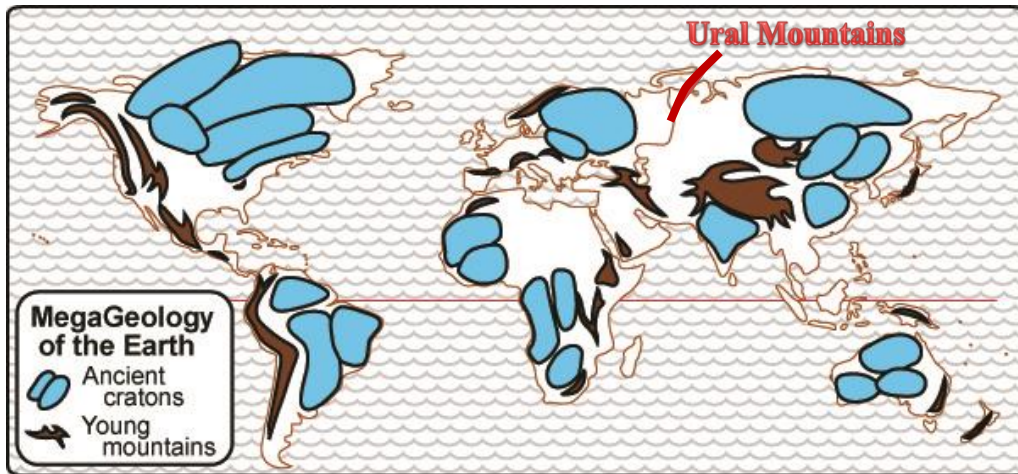


**Consequence #1: Large size means plenty of mineral resources.**

Russia has nearly one eighth of all the land on earth. If resources were spread evenly, Russia would have one-eighth of the mineral resources. That is more than 25 times as much as the average country. But that is not the whole story. When people did geologic surveys in Russia, they found that things were even better than they expected.

The geologically active areas of Eurasia are around the edges of the huge continent. That is where volcanoes, earthquakes, and mountain-building are going on today. Most of the young mountains in Eurasia are near Japan, north India, and southern Europe (see map).

The modern map, however, is just the latest chapter in the long story of Asian geology. Several times in the geologic past, pieces of old rock (called *cratons*) slid together to form larger continents. The Ural Mountains, between European Russia and Siberia, are the result of one of those “collisions.” This happened long before the collision that formed the Rocky Mountains in the United States. East of the Urals, in Siberia, several areas of low mountains are the worn-down “stumps” of at least three even older collisions. (The details are not well known, partly because it’s hard to study geology in a large and cold place like Siberia!)



Geologists do know enough to realize that Russia had two really lucky breaks.

Lucky break #1: Metal ores are formed by the same forces that make mountains. Russia has many of the world’s largest deposits of gold, silver, nickel, iron, lead, chromium, and many other metals. Selling these metals to other countries can make a lot of money.

Lucky break #2: The ancient mountains were surrounded by shallow seas at just the right times in geologic history. These were the times when coal, oil, and natural gas were being formed. You can get the details from an earth science class or website. Here, we just note that Russia is one of the top oil producers in the world. Let’s make a simple comparison. The United States spends nearly 300 billion dollars a year to buy oil from other countries. Russia makes more than 200 billion dollars a year selling oil and gas to other countries.

Warning: numbers like this can change over time. Go to the CIA Factbook on the web to get new data. For now, we will just repeat the main point. Russia makes a lot of money selling gas, oil, and metals to countries like Germany, Japan, or China.

**Conclusion.** As long as people want things made from minerals, people in large countries like Russia can make money by mining. In fact, their main problem is another consequence of large size. It can cost a lot of money to haul minerals out from the middle of a huge country.

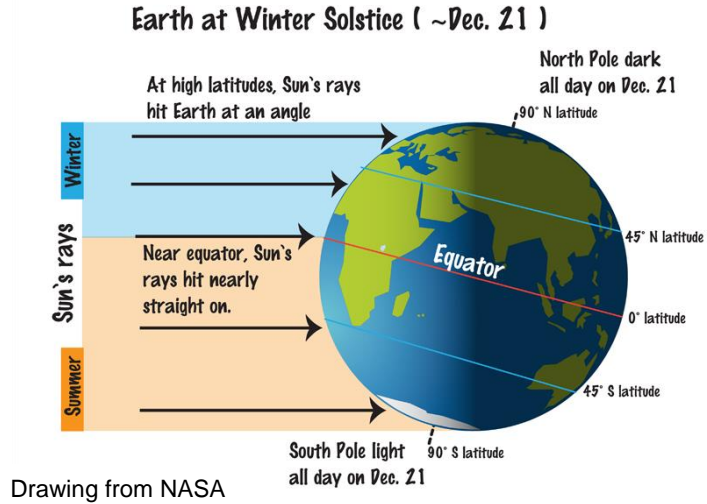
**Consequence #2: The high latitude of Russia means a low amount of solar energy to warm the ground or promote plant growth.**

In the chapter about Africa, you learned that the sun rises high in the sky every day near the Equator. This provides plenty of energy to warm the ground and grow tall trees. It also starts the global wind system.

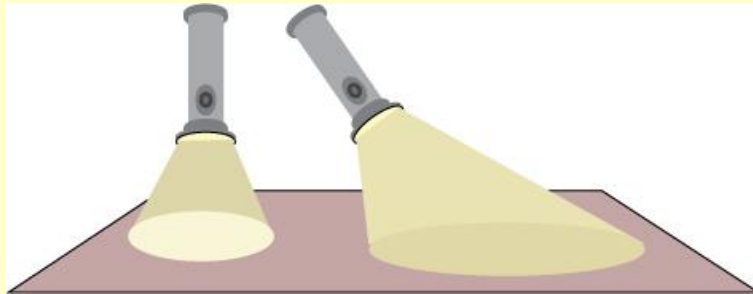
Russia does not get much sunlight, because it is far from the Equator.

Even in mid-summer, the noon sun in Russia does not get very high above the horizon. As a result, the temperature on a “hot” summer day in central Russia is usually lower than on any day in central Africa.

In winter, things are even worse. The sun doesn't come up at all in northern Russia. As a result, temperatures can be 100 degrees below the lowest ever recorded in central Africa.



Demonstration: Hold a flashlight about a foot above a table. Shine it directly down. Notice how all the light is concentrated in a fairly small circle. Now aim the flashlight diagonally down. Notice how the same amount of light is now spread out over a much larger area.



This is exactly how sunlight works. The high sun at the Equator sends a lot of energy to each square foot of the surface. Meanwhile, the low sun over Moscow spreads the energy over a large area. Each square foot of surface therefore gets much less energy.

This low sun is an important geographic fact. It means that plants cannot grow fast in Russia. A typical atlas map of Russia shows millions of square miles of forest. This, however, can be misleading if you do not understand how tree growth depends on sunlight:

In a warm place like Alabama, a tree can grow 60 feet tall in 30 years. As a result, you can get enough wood for a small house from a couple dozen 30-year-old Alabama pine trees.

In central Russia, trees can grow for a century and still be less than 30 feet tall. It might take hundreds of these trees to make enough wood to build a small house. What happens if you try to heat the house with a wood-burning stove? It might take hundreds of trees each year to keep the house warm.

This fact leads us directly to the next consequence, about the growing season for food crops.

**Consequence #3: The growing season in most of Russia is too short for food crops.**

The low angle of the sun is also a big problem for food production. Nearly all of Russia is colder than anywhere in the United States (outside of Alaska).

**History fact:** During the Cold War, some politicians noted that the Soviet Union had to import millions of tons of food. Then they said: “This proves that the American economic system is superior. With our system, farmers can grow much more food than Soviet farmers are able to grow under Communism.”

**Question:** is this a fair statement about the reason for low food production in Russia?

Here are four scientific facts.

- 1) The sun does not rise very high in the sky in Russia.
- 2) A low sun does not provide much energy to warm the ground.
- 3) Temperatures in most of Russia are low, even in summer.
- 4) The growing season for food crops is short.

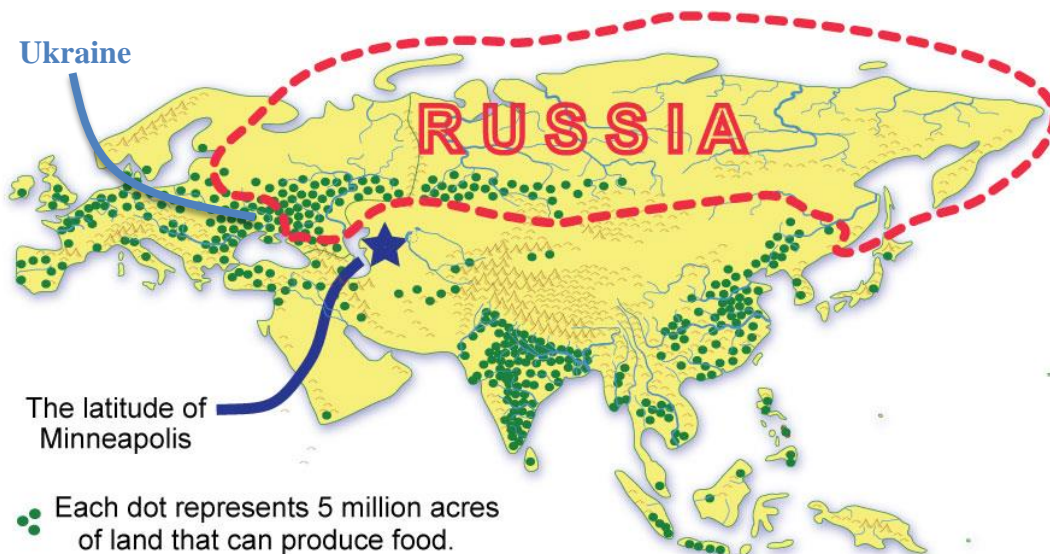
And here the geographic consequence:

- 5) Russia is a huge country, but food production is difficult or impossible in most of it.

Southwest of Russia is the country of Ukraine. It has a much better climate for farming than Russia. This area was the main food-producing part of the former Soviet Union. This might be part of the reason why Russian soldiers were invading Ukraine while I was writing this!

The situation is summarized on the map below. The dots represent acres of land that can be used to grow food. You can “count the dots.” They show that Russia has millions of acres that can produce food.

The star, however, shows the latitude of Minneapolis, Minnesota. This city is located right at the northern edge of the Corn Belt – the area of really good cropland in the United States. The map clearly shows that **all** of the cropland in Russia is farther north than Minneapolis. That means that the land in Russia is probably too cold to grow much corn. Farmers often have to settle for planting a lower-value crop such as wheat, rye, or potatoes. Even then, the yields are low. Grain production per acre in Russia is typically less than half of the average in Europe or the United States.





**Consequence #4: Transportation is difficult in much of Russia.**

In addition to low crop yields, Russian farmers have another huge problem. Many of their fields are located thousands of miles away from the places where people need food.

It takes a lot of money to build a long road or railroad. It takes even more money to build in a place where the ground freezes deeply. This is because of a very simple fact: *Water expands when it freezes*. Freezing water can crack building foundations. It can cause potholes in roads. It can even break rocks apart.

Old photo of a railroad in a place that has *permafrost*. Freezing water expands and pushes the rails out of line.

Definition: **Permafrost** is ground that is always frozen below a surface layer that often thaws and then freezes again.



People have invented ways to prevent this kind of damage, but the solutions are expensive. Basically, you have to replace all of the soil under the track with sand or crushed rock. Then you have to make sure that water from rain or snow does not stay in the sand and freeze. This is hard to do in any environment. It is especially difficult in a vast swampy plain, like much of Siberia. (Siberia is the northern part of Russia, east of the Ural Mountains. It is a huge area, almost as large as the entire United States).

If people want a road or railroad, somebody has to pay to build it. This is a problem in cold places. If crop yields are low, farmers do not have much money. Moreover, farmland that has low yields is not worth much. As a result, property taxes cannot raise much money. This makes a vicious cycle:

- Low population makes it difficult to build roads or railroads, because there are very few people to help pay for the road.
- Bad roads help keep population low, because it is hard to make a living in a place where it is expensive to travel or to ship products to customers.

Many Russian rulers tried to solve this problem. They used government money to build roads or railroads. Sometimes, they even paid people to move to Siberia and other places with long, cold winters. These building projects and payments, however, took money away from other projects. Those projects might have been more profitable. In this way, using money to build railroads in Siberia could hurt the rest of the Russian economy.

Problems caused by bad roads and railroads are not just ancient history. They still affect life in Russia today. You already know that some of the world's richest deposits of oil and metals are located in central Russia. Building pipelines and railroads, however, is expensive. Then you have to pay to move the products through the pipelines and on the railroads. As a result, the mines and oil wells are less profitable than they would be if they were located closer to their customers.

**Consequence #5. In the past, people in many parts of Russia lived as nomads in order to gather enough food to survive.**

People often move to get resources. It is an ancient way of life. Many early humans did it. In other chapters of this book, you see that people still do this in many parts of the world. For example, people in the dry grasslands of Africa often live as *nomadic herders*.

Definition: a **nomad** is someone who does not live in the same place all the time.

Nomadic hunters move in order to follow animals that migrate from place to place. Nomadic herders move to find new grass after their animals have eaten most of the grass where they are.

1890s photo of reindeer herders near the Arctic Ocean. Do an internet search to see what may have changed in the lives of these people.



Still other nomads move up onto high mountains when plants start to grow in spring. When winter comes, they move back down to lower land.

Even in the United States, some people live like nomads. For example, some farmers run two or three farms in different areas. They might plant some fields in Kansas. Then they move north and plant in North Dakota. Still later, they might cross the border and plant in Canada. Later, the farmers repeat the trip to harvest the fields. In this way, they spread their risk. If one area has a bad drought or hailstorm, they can still make money from their other fields.

Traveling salespeople, doctors, and musicians are other kinds of modern nomad. By moving among several places, they can get enough customers for their company, clinic, or concert.

In short, nomadism is a way to deal with a less-than-ideal environment. This statement brings us back to the main point. Much of Russia is cold, dry, or both. It is therefore not surprising to find that modern Russia still has many people who live as nomads.

Nomadism was important for thousands of years in Asia. You may have heard of the Huns and Mongols, or leaders like Attila and Genghis Khan. These nomadic armies could attack people on farms or in small towns. This fact helps explain why many people built protective walls around their cities and fields. One famous example is the Great Wall of China. This wall was built to protect the farming regions of China from the nomads who lived on the cold grasslands to the north.

**Question:** What can change the balance between nomadic armies and small towns?

**Answer:** One important change was the invention of gunpowder. Guns gave people in a town a better way to defend against attackers who had horses, bows, and arrows. In short, the military success of nomad armies depends on the available technology.

This history of nomadism can help us understand why Russia had no strong central government until fairly recently. It also helps explain the next consequence in our list.



**Consequence #6. Russian rulers often moved people for defensive purposes.  
Forced migration was especially common in cold or dry areas.**

In Lincoln, Nebraska, there is a museum about the Volga Deutsch people. These people originally lived in Germany. They were invited to move to Russia when the Russian czar married a woman from Germany. (Marriages between ruling families were common in the 1600s and 1700s. It was one way for rulers to form alliances between countries.)

Russian rulers asked the Germans to live between the Russian homeland and the nomads in the grasslands of central Asia. They wanted the German farms and towns to be a *buffer*.

Definition: a **buffer** is a protective area between one area and a different one.

In short, the German settlers were like a front line of defense against attack by nomads.

Using people as buffers actually happened in many places. The Volga Deutsch are an especially good example because of what happened during the World Wars. When German armies invaded Russia, the Russian rulers were afraid. They thought the German-speaking people might fight for the invaders. At first, they passed laws to restrict travel by all German people. Then, they taxed their crops in order to pay for guards to watch them. Later, they took their land and forced the people to move east into Siberia. They killed thousands who resisted.

Many Volga Germans chose to leave, often as illegal migrants. Here is one result: Argentina, Brazil, and the United States each have more than a million Volga Germans, children of people who moved from Russia.

Our goal is not to focus on the history of one group of people. We told the story about the Volga Germans in order to make three related points:

1. Rulers in the past often encouraged and sometimes even forced people to migrate.
2. Forced migration was especially common in places that have cold or dry seasons.
3. Forced migrations often cause problems, because the “new land” may not be empty. Nomads may be using the land, even though they do not have permanent houses. (Remember, this was one reason for the German-Russian settlements. They were supposed to be a buffer between Russia and the nomadic people of south-central Asia.)

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Soviet planners encouraged Russian people to move to distant parts of the Soviet empire. They offered higher pay and other benefits. One goal was to help develop resources in distant places. Another goal was to help unify the country.

Then the Soviet Union broke apart in the early 1990s. Some Russians moved back home. Many others, however, chose to stay in their new homes. As a result, many countries around Russia have large numbers of Russians living in them. Ukraine has the most – more than 8 million. Kazakhstan has 4 million. The tiny Baltic countries have smaller numbers. Latvia has half a million Russians. Estonia has 300,000. Lithuania has 180,000.

The impact, however, may be greater in these small Baltic countries, because their total populations are lower.

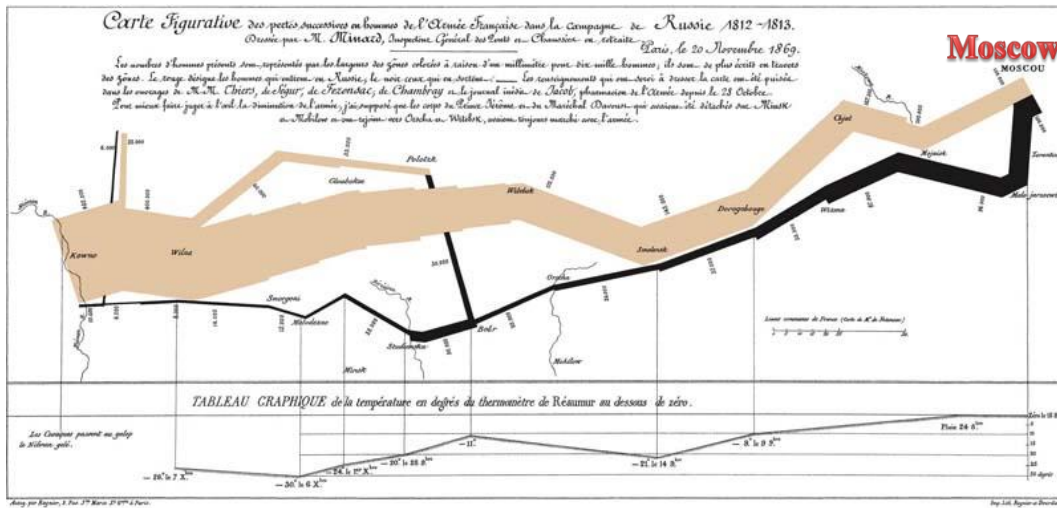
The rulers of all these countries are afraid that Russia might attack them. In 2014, Russian soldiers invaded part of the country of Ukraine. They said their purpose was “to protect the Russian people living there.” This is one reason why several former Soviet countries asked to join the European Union. These small countries want help from others in case of invasion.

The value of size as a defense against attack is the next consequence on our list.

**Consequence #7. It’s hard to attack a country that is huge and cold.**

Here is a small copy of one of the most famous maps ever made.

You can find a bigger copy on the Internet. Use “Minard Map” as keywords.



The year was 1812. A ruler named Napoleon led a French army to invade Russia.

**History comment:** 1812 was also a year of war between Britain and the United States. The British were willing to fight the Americans in 1812 because they knew that France was busy fighting in Russia. As a result, the French navy would be less willing to help the United States (as they had during the Revolutionary War).

The width of each line on the map shows the size of the French army at different times. As you trace along the brown line going east and then the black line coming back west, you can see how the army kept getting smaller. Some soldiers were killed in battles. Others died from diseases. Even more died of starvation or froze to death as the weather got colder.

The widths of the lines tell the story. More than 440,000 French soldiers went into Russia. Only one third of them reached Moscow. Fewer than 10,000 made it back to France.

It was one of the biggest military disasters in history.

130 years later, Nazi generals learned a different version of the same lesson. They learned that the Russian winter can help defeat even a modern army that has tanks, trucks, and airplanes. The Russians retreated away from the invading German force. The German supply lines were stretched thinner and thinner. Front-line troops started to run out of food and fuel. Eventually, they were no longer able to advance. As temperatures dropped, they became less able to fight.

Size and cold climate helped Russia survive invasions by two of the most powerful armies in history. The cost, however, was enormous. In World War II, nearly 11 million Soviet soldiers were killed. About the same number of civilians also died. Meanwhile, the United States lost “only” 418,500 soldiers and 1,700 civilians. In short, the Soviet Union lost nearly 50 times as many people as the United States did.

This loss had a huge impact on the Russian economy. One immediate need was to replace the houses, schools, and factories that were destroyed. Rebuilding was especially hard, because so many working-age men and women had been killed or wounded in the war.

To put this into perspective, imagine that the United States lost every worker in every state from Maine to Texas and then had to rebuild every city east of the Mississippi River.

**Consequence #8. Communist planners found it hard to manage a large, cold country.**

It is fairly easy to plan how to make money from a flat field in central Illinois. Basically, you plant corn and soybeans. When you harvest your crops, you get an average of 5 tons of corn per acre. The yields are high, because the summer is long, with plenty of rain. Moreover, the land in Illinois is fertile and easy to work. Your costs are therefore lower than in many places.

The Soviet planners had a much harder task. Because the climate is much colder and drier, corn yields on the best ground are barely 2 tons per acre. Unfortunately, it takes just as much effort to prepare land, plant seeds, and control weeds on cold or dry land as on good land.

The same story applies to many other crops. For example, farmers in the Netherlands or France get more than two tons of wheat per acre. By comparison, Russian farmers in southern Siberia are lucky if they get half a ton per acre. Moreover, crops that need a long growing season, such as cotton or rice, simply cannot be grown in most of Russia.

In short, the Soviet economic planners had to deal with five facts:

1. They had to gather information about climate and soil in a very large number of places.
2. They had to make decisions about where people would be encouraged to live.
3. They had to make decisions about making and shipping fertilizer and farm machinery.
4. They had to make decisions about where and how to build roads and railroads.
5. Yields per acre were likely to be much lower than in other countries.

These facts are linked together. If yields were higher (fact 5), there would be more money to pay for information (Fact 1), labor (Fact 2), supplies (Fact 3), and transportation (Fact 4). In short, the cold winters and vast distances made the job of Communist planners much harder. Planning is easier in a place that has plenty of rain, a long growing season, and good roads!

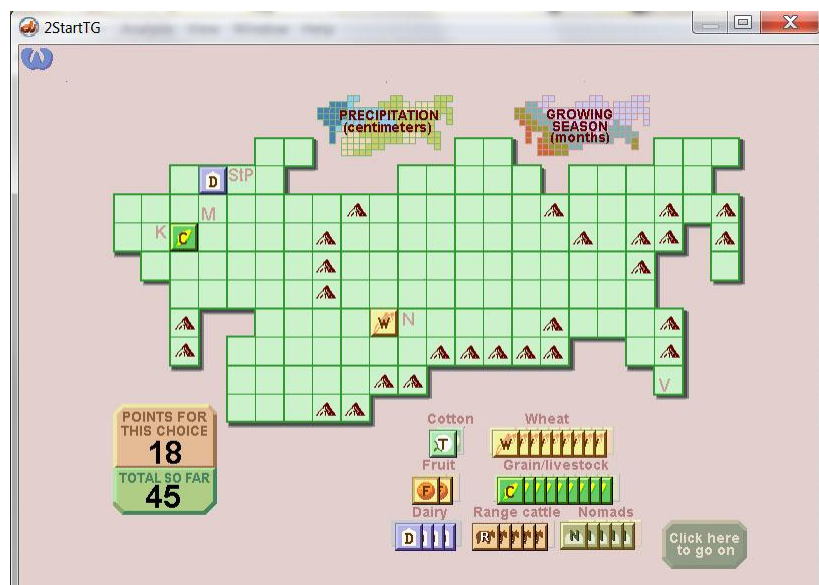
Over time, unfortunately, the government in the Soviet Union also became more and more corrupt. Government officials rewarded their friends. Ordinary people felt cheated. They refused to work as hard. The entire economy became even less productive, until it eventually collapsed.

Image from a simulation of a Soviet planner trying to decide where to locate different kinds of farms.

In this example, the planner just placed some dairy farms north of Moscow and received 18 points for that choice.

The planner already put wheat farms in southern Siberia and corn farms southwest of Moscow.

The planner has a total of 45 points so far.





**Consequence #9. A large country that was built by conquest is likely to have many ethnic minorities in distant regions. These can be difficult to govern from a capital city that is far away.**

Planning in Russia is complicated by another fact – the country was built by conquest. As a result, it still has many groups of “non-Russian” people inside its borders. These *ethnic groups* have a variety of different languages and cultures.

Definition: an **ethnic group** is like a very large family – a group of people who have common ancestors, speak the same language, and have the same religion.

In the Soviet era, the government allowed many ethnic groups to manage some of their own affairs. They called these self-governing areas “autonomous ethnic areas.”

(These autonomous areas are shown by diagonal lines on this map).



One result of that policy is a weaker sense of national unity.

In fact, some ethnic groups have tried to break away from Russia. They want to form their own country. The national government has sometimes responded with force. In an area called Chechnya, for example, the government sent troops to stop a revolt.

You can learn the details of these ethnic revolts in a political science book or internet site. Here, we just want to make an obvious geographic connection between four facts:

1. Transportation and communication are difficult in a large, cold country.
2. Many small ethnic groups can therefore keep their own languages, customs, and ideas. (It’s like they can “hide” in a remote part of a huge country.)
3. People in some areas might want more independence from the national government.
4. One possible result is a central government that tries to rule by force.

**Putting it all together: Russia is the country with the most area. It has a long border with China, the country with the most people.**

Here is a loaded question. *Can Russia and China get along?*

Consider these six facts – three about Russia and three about China:

**Russia Fact 1.** Russia has the largest area in the world. It has a lot of natural resources, but few people.

**China Fact 1.** China has the largest population in the world, but it is short of resources.

**Russia Fact 2.** Many parts of Russia have lost population in recent years. Population loss is especially obvious in the cold eastern and northern regions. These are places where people were paid to move during Soviet times.

**China Fact 2.** China's economy is expanding rapidly. This creates a demand for more energy and mineral resources. It also creates a demand for land – for farming, for manufacturing, even just to live on.

**Russia Fact 3.** Russia still has one of the world's strongest armed forces. It has spy satellites, nuclear bombs, and other modern weapons.

**China Fact 3.** China is catching up, especially in hi-tech research and manufacturing.

Now add one more fact: The long border between Russia and China goes through some of the emptiest land in the world. Most of the border area has fewer than 5 people per square mile.

Two other countries are located in the mostly empty area between the two large countries. Those two countries – Mongolia and Kazakhstan – have some of the lowest population densities in the world. (Population density is the big idea in the chapter about China.)

Definition: **Population density** is the number of people in a unit of area, like a square mile.

When you put all this together, you have a problem:

*Size and cold climate may make it hard for Russia to remain a major exporter of oil and natural gas.*

As noted earlier, Russia has some of the largest deposits of oil and natural gas in the world. Unfortunately, Russia is also huge and cold. As a result, Russian people use a lot of energy for transportation and heating. They use much more energy per person than the world average. Moreover, their use of energy is likely to increase if their economy grows. If that happens, they will have even less oil or gas to export.

This can affect places like China, Japan, Europe, or the United States. People should not assume that Russia will always be willing to export large amounts of oil and natural gas. The people of Russia might decide to keep their resources. They might figure that the resources are more valuable if used at home. They could use the resources run new railroads, heat new buildings, operate new factories, and run other parts of their economy.

If the Russians do that, however, people in places like China will have to look somewhere else to get the resources they need to run their economy.

**Conclusion – how can the big idea about size help us understand Russia?**

**Ultimate cause:** Land near the Arctic Circle is much closer to the North Pole than to the Equator. Few people want to live in this cold land. As a result, these cold regions became part of large countries that have population centers in warmer places.

**Big idea:** Size is important, because large areas can have many natural resources, but they also have high costs of transportation and communication.

**Study area:** Russia is a good place to study the effects of size.  
It is by far the largest country in the world.

**Consequence #1:** Large size usually means plenty of mineral resources. Russia “earns” hundreds of billions of dollars every year by selling oil, gas, and other minerals to people in other countries.

**Consequence #2:** Most of Russia does not get enough sunlight for rapid tree growth.

**Consequence #3:** The growing season in most of Russia is too short for food crops.

**Consequence #4:** Transportation is difficult in much of Russia. Distance is an obvious problem. Low temperatures and frozen ground add to the cost of building and maintaining roads, railroads, pipelines, even airports.

**Consequence #5:** In the past, people in many parts of Russia lived as nomads.  
Nomadism is one way to gather enough resources to survive.

**Consequence #6:** Russian rulers often moved people for defensive purposes.  
Forced migration to cold or dry areas was especially common.

**Consequence #7:** Russia’s size and climate helped defend it against invasions by richer nations with stronger armies.

**Consequence #8:** After the Communist Revolution, the central planners in Moscow found it difficult to plan the use of land in such a large country.

**Consequence #9:** A large country built by conquest is likely to have many ethnic minorities and regional groups. These may be difficult to govern from a distant capital city.

**Putting it all together:**

In this chapter, we used Russia as a “laboratory” to trace some consequences of huge size and cold climate. This huge country has always been difficult to govern, because distances are great and transportation is expensive. This, in turn, helps keep many distant areas poor. Their poverty makes it less likely that these areas would be successful as independent countries.

These geographic facts will continue to be important for people in the United States, because Russia is still a large country with a lot of resources. It will continue to have an impact on the worldwide availability and use of oil, natural gas, and many other key resources. Moreover, China, the country with the largest population, has a very long border with Russia, the country with the largest area and the most resources. This long border could be a focus for international disputes in the future.



