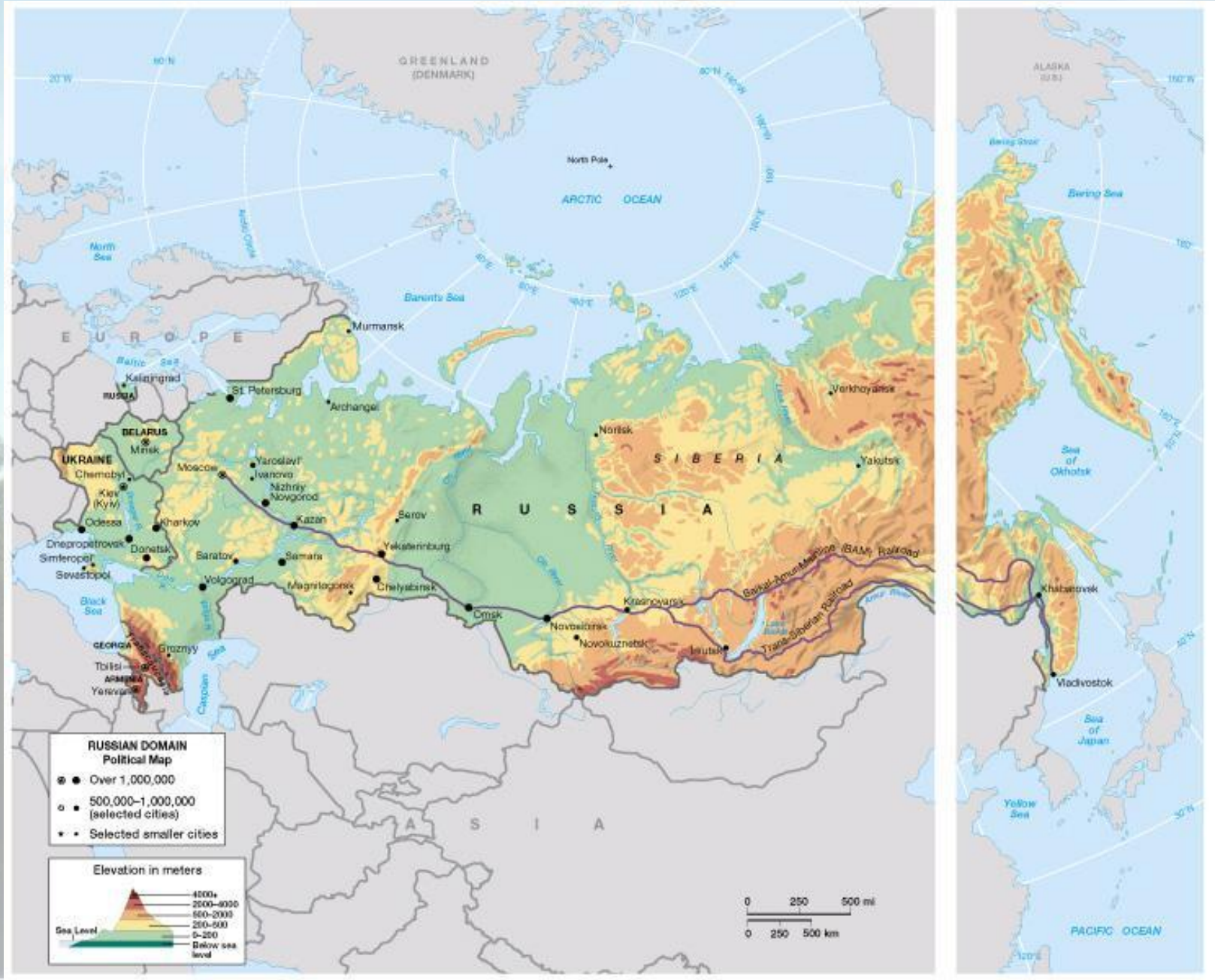
Russia – Chapter 9

Rowntree, et. al.
Modified by Joe Naumann, UMSL

Chapter 9: The Russian Domain (Fig. 9.1)



Learning Objectives

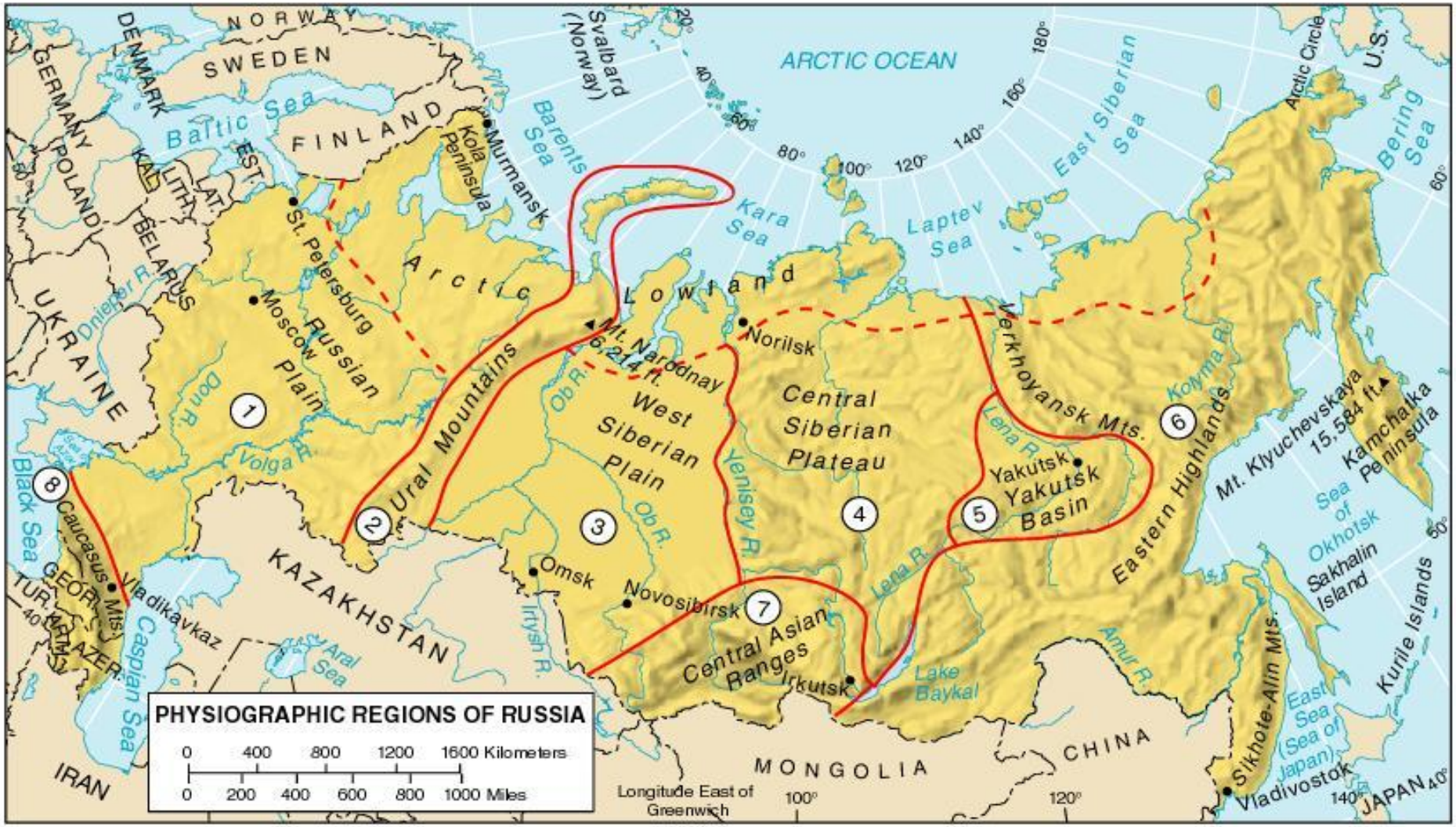
- Understand the challenges of cold, northern climate that affects this region
- Learn about the cold war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R./Russia (1945-1990)
- Know the difference between a political system and an economic system
- Students should become familiar with the physical, demographic, cultural, political, and economic characteristics of the Russian Domain
- Understand these concepts and models:

-Centralized economic planning
-Cold War
-Permafrost
-Autonomous areas
-Glasnost and Perestroika
-Russification
-Denuclearization

Introduction

- Russian Domain includes Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia (all were part of the U.S.S.R.)
- Russia is the largest country (in land area) on Earth; it spans 11 time zones
  - Rich in resources, but has one of the harshest climates
- The Russian Domain has had extremely rapid political and economic change since 1990
  - From centrally planned economy to capitalism
  - From authoritarian dictatorship to democracy
  - Region's economy is weak; commitment to democracy uncertain, nationalist movements threaten stability
  - Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia must build global relationships

RUSSIA-US SIZE COMPARISON



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Physiographic Regions – mountains & deserts & poor coasts on margins

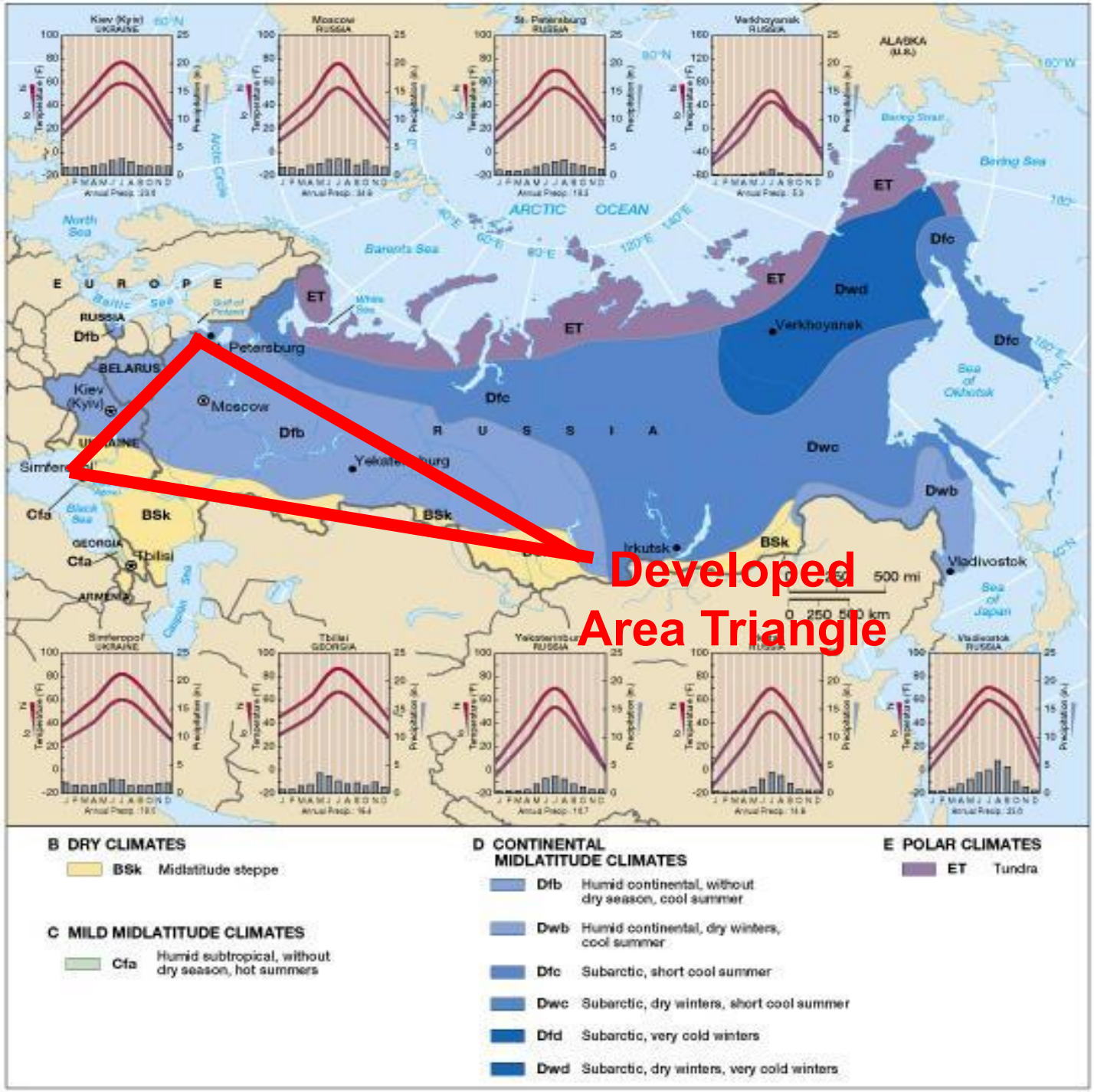
Environmental Geography: Vast & Challenging Land

- Russian Domain has "good farmlands," metal, petroleum, natural gas, and coal resources
- High latitude, continental climate, temperature extremes
- Cold climate and rugged terrain limit human settlement and agriculture
- Sturgeon (caviar-producing fish) nearly gone
  - Few domestic regulations to protect them
  - Poaching adds to the problem

Physical Geography of the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.2)

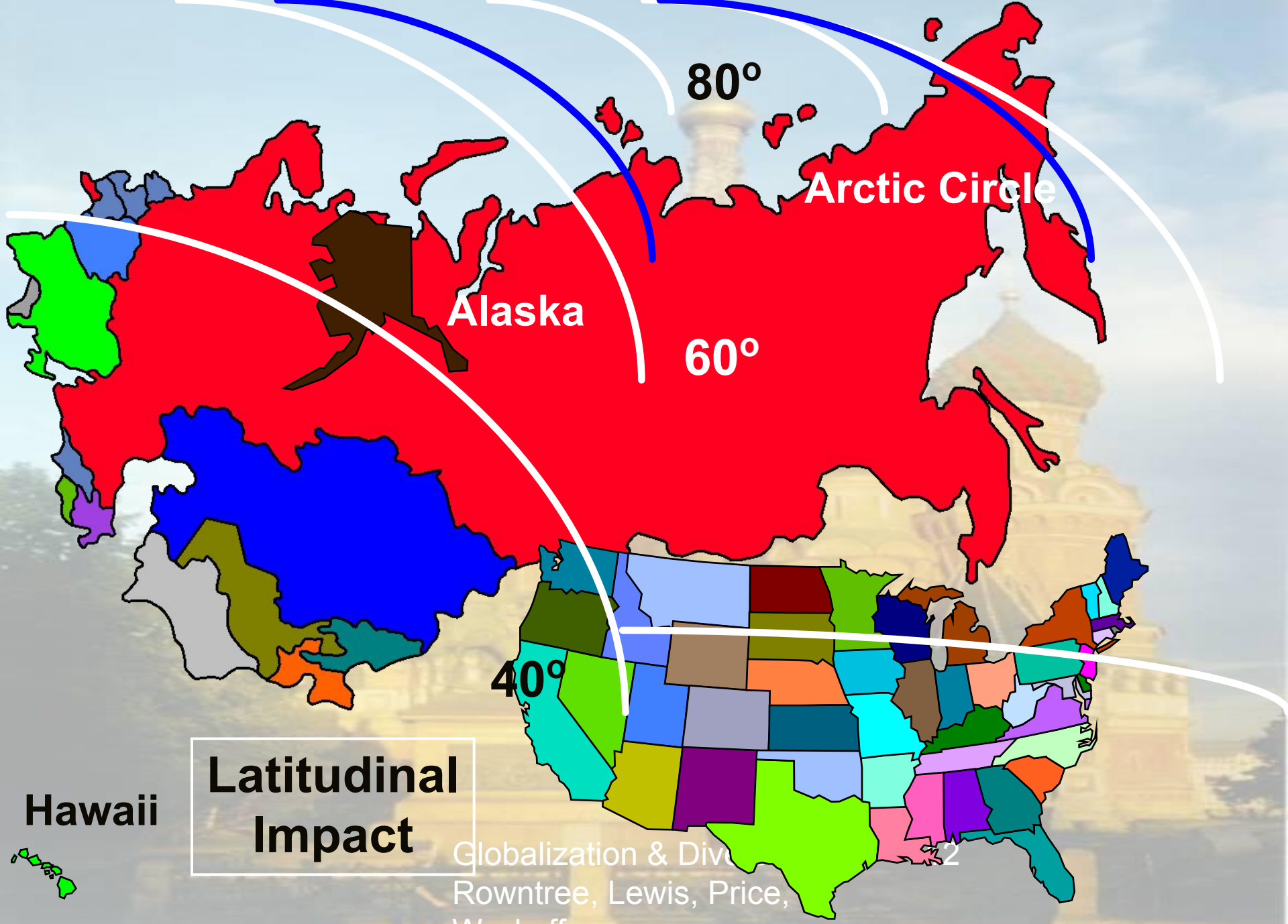
- **The European West**
  - **European Russia, Ukraine and Belarus on eastern European Plain**
    - 3 environments influence agriculture in this region
      - Poor soils, cold temps, forests N. of Moscow & St. Petersburg
      - Belarus and central European Russia have longer growing season, but acidic podzol soils limit farm output
      - South of 50 N Latitude, grassland and fertile soils support commercial wheat, corn, sugar, beets, meat production

- **The Ural Mountains and Siberia**
  - Urals separate European Russia from Siberia: low mountains with cold, dry climates
  - Siberia extends thousands of miles, cold climate, little precipitation
    - Lake Baikal (largest freshwater reserve in the world – 400 miles long, nearly a mile deep, with unique species)
    - **Tundra** (mosses, lichens) north; **Taiga** (coniferous forest zone) south
    - Farming possible only in southwest Siberia
    - **Permafrost** in Eastern Siberia – cold climate with unstable, seasonally frozen ground limiting farming and construction



Climate Map of the Russian Domain

(Fig. 9.3)

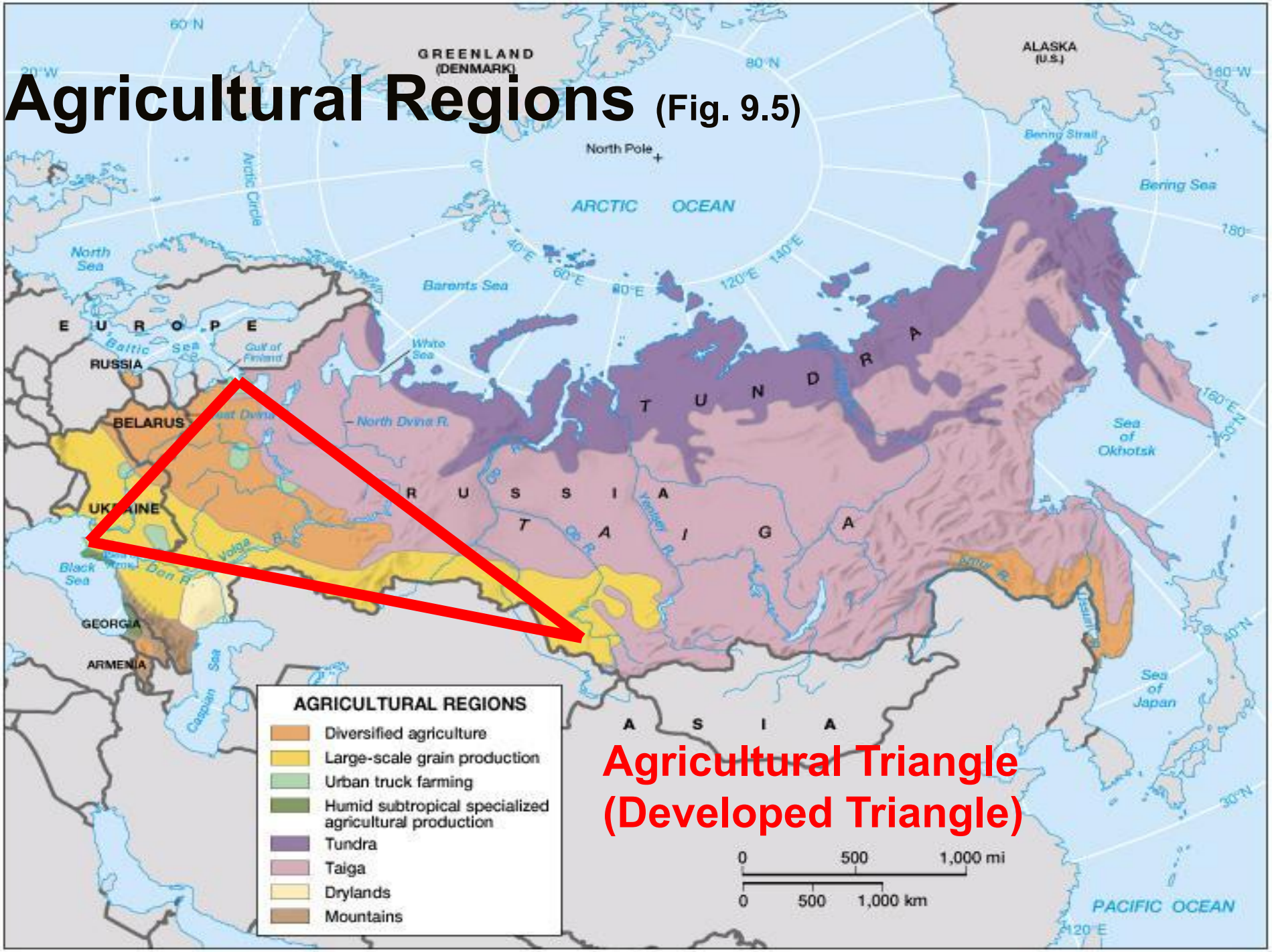


Latitudinal Impact

RUSSIAN CLIMATE

- **Affected by 3 natural conditions:**
  - **-- Latitudinal Position**
  - **-- Continental Position**
  - **-- Location of major mountains**

Agricultural Regions (Fig. 9.5)

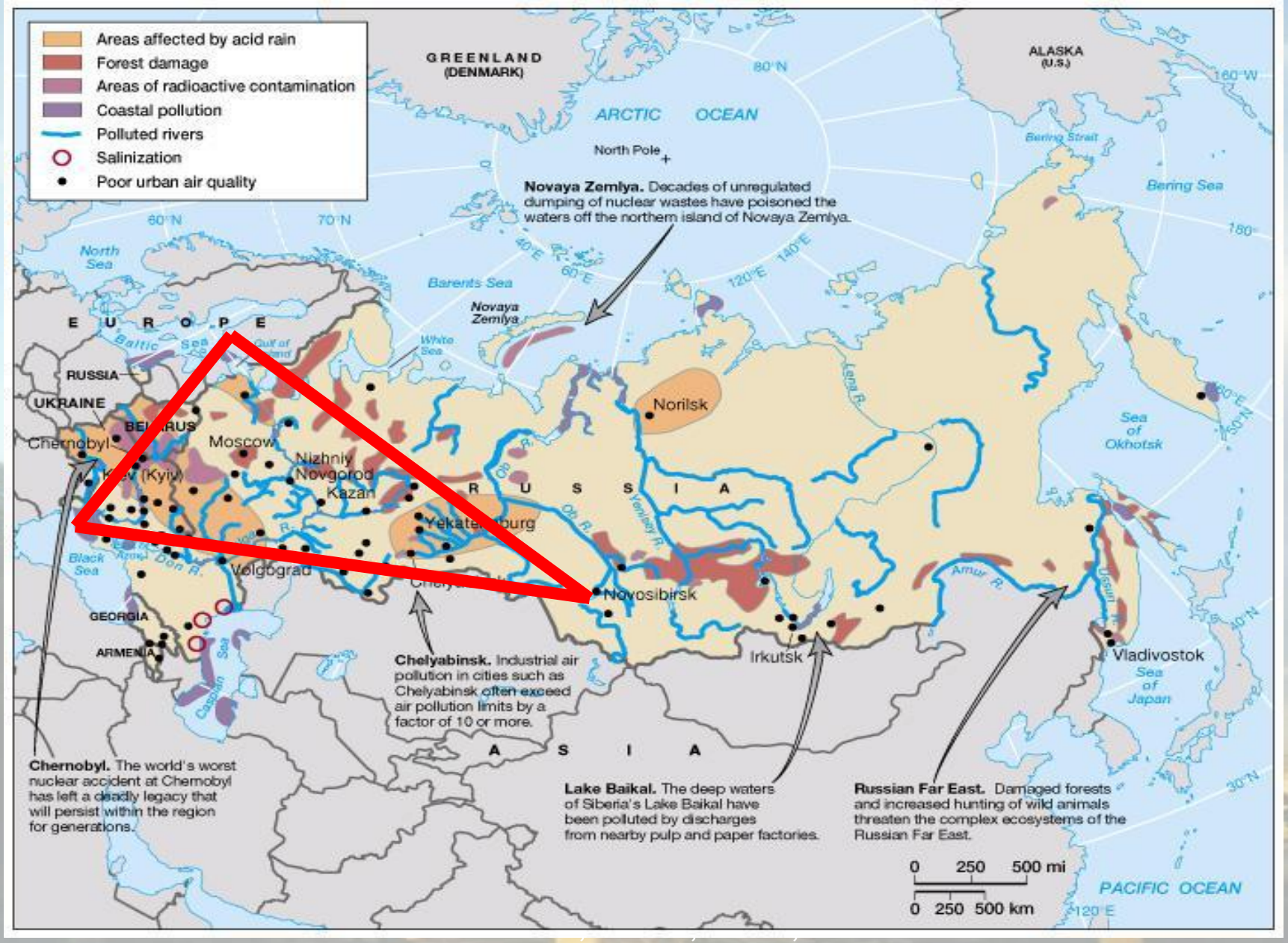


Environmental Geography: A Vast and Challenging Land (cont.)

- The Russian Far East
  - Near Vladivostok, about same latitude as New England (in N. America)
  - Longer growing seasons and milder climates than Siberia, seismically active
  - Ussuri and Amur River Valleys have mixed crop and livestock farming
  - Vegetation includes conifers, taiga, Asian hardwoods
- The Caucasus and Transcaucasia
  - In extreme south of European Russia, forms Russia's southern boundary, between the Black and Caspian seas
  - Highest peak is Mt. Elbrus (18,000 feet)
  - Georgia and Armenia are in Transcaucasia; Lesser Caucasus Mountains form border between Armenia and Azerbaijan
  - Climate: high rainfall in west, arid or semi-arid in east; good soils and farming

- A Devastated Environment (cont.)
  - Air and Water Pollution
    - Extreme environmental pollution, from industrialization, urbanization, careless mining, nuclear energy production; legacy of U.S.S.R.
    - Air pollution caused by clustered factories, few environmental controls, reliance on low quality coal
    - Water pollution caused by industrial waste, raw sewage, oil spills; pulp and paper factories polluted Lake Baikal (1950s-60s)
  - The Nuclear Threat
    - Former U.S.S.R. nuclear weapons, energy production caused pollution
      - Above-ground testing made radioactive fallout; nuclear waste dumped
      - Nuclear weapons used for seismic experiments, oil exploration, dam building
      - Russia has many old nuclear reactors; major nuclear accidents: 1986 meltdown in Chernobyl (Belarus); another in 1956
    - Construction of new nuclear plants
    - Possibility of warehousing of international nuclear wastes

Environmental Issues in the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.9)



Wyckoff

Population & Settlement: An Urban Domain

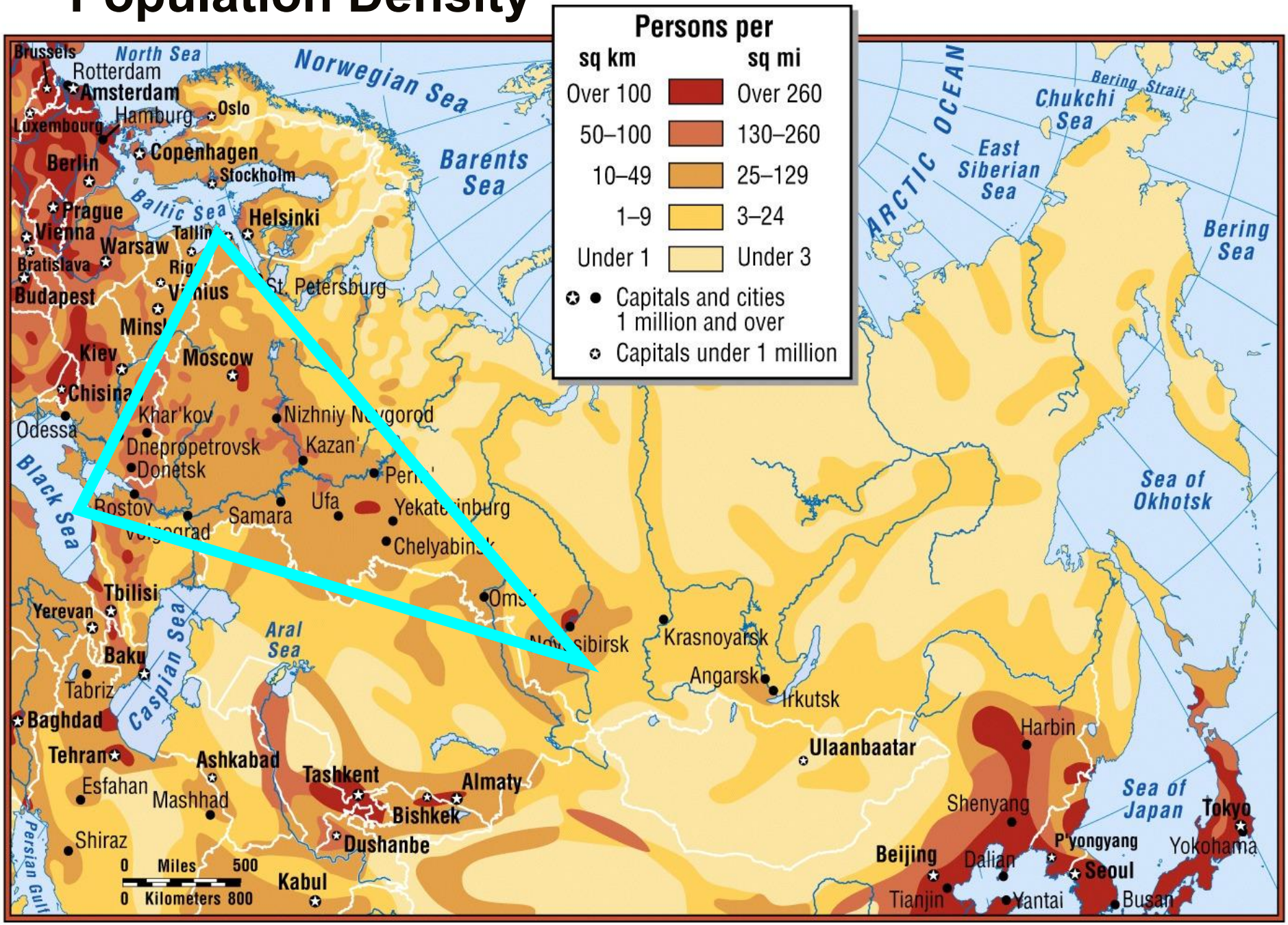
- Overview of the Russian Domain
  - More than 200 million residents, most in cities
- Population Distribution
  - Most people in best farmlands
    - European Russia; 110 mil.; Siberia: 35 mil.; Belarus & Ukraine: 60 mil
  - The European Core (Belarus; Western Russia; Ukraine)
    - Contains the Russian Domain's largest cities, biggest industrial complexes, most productive farms, higher population densities
  - Siberian Hinterlands
    - Relatively sparse settlement, with two zones influenced by transportation
      - Industrial cities along Trans-Siberian Railroad (1904)
      - Thinner settlement along the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) Railroad -- newer (1984)

Population Map of the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.12)

- Regional Migration Patterns
  - Eastward Movement (1860-1914)
    - Trans-Siberian Railroad speeded eastward movement
    - Almost 1 mil. settlers lured by farming opportunities in southern Siberia, more political freedom away from Tsars
      - » Tsars – czars; authoritarian leaders who dominated politics of pre-1917 Russian Empire (comes from “Caesar”)
  - Political Motives
    - Infill in Siberia has economic and political benefits
    - Political dissidents sent to Siberia (Gulags Archipelago)
    - Russification: Soviet policy moved Russians into non-Russian portions of U.S.S.R to increase Russian dominance in those areas; Russians are a significant minority in former Soviet republics

Recent Migration Flows in the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.17)

Population Density



- Regional Migration Patterns (cont.)
  - New International Movements
    - Russification often reversed in post-Soviet era
      - Citizenship, language requirements encourage Russians to go
    - Movement to other regions
      - “Brain drain” to other countries
      - Jewish Russians move to Israel or U.S.
      - Mail-order Ukrainian brides to the U.S.
  - The Urban Attraction
    - Soviet planners’ encouraged migration to cities
    - Soviets planned cities, limited population levels and regulated migration
    - Post-Soviet era, citizens have greater freedom to move; many older industrial areas are now losing population

- Inside the Russian City
  - Russian cities carefully in planned form and function, with circular land-use zones
    - Core has superior transportation, best stores and housing
      - » Core predates Soviets era
      - » Sotzgorods: work-linked housing (including dorms)
      - » Chermoyuski: apartment blocks from 1950s/60s
      - » Mikrorayons: Self-contained housing projects of 1970s/80s
      - » Dachas: country houses available only to the elite

- The Demographic Crisis
  - General population decline caused by low birth rates and rising death (mortality) rates, especially among middle-aged males
    - Causes
      - » fraying social fabric
      - » economic uncertainty
      - » declining health among women of child-bearing age
      - » stress-related diseases
      - » rising murder and suicide
      - » toxic environments
  - Russia's population could fall by 3 million by 25 million by 2030

The Legacy of Slavic Dominance

- The Heritage of the Russian Empire
  - Growth of the Russian Empire
    - Slavic “Rus” in power from 900AD around Kiev
    - Eastern Orthodox Christianity came in 1000AD
    - By 1400s, new and expanding Russian state after Tatar and Mongol rule
    - Expansion eastward in 16th & 17th centuries; westward expansion slow
    - Final expansion of Russian Empire in 19th Century in Central Asia
  - The Significance of Empire
    - 1900, Russians ruled from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok

Growth of the Russian Empire (Fig. 9.20)

- Geographies of Language
  - Slavic languages dominate in the Russian Domain
    - 80% of Russia's people are ethnic Russians
    - There are other language groups
      - Finno-Ugric (Finnish) in the north
      - Altaic (Tatars & Turkic peoples) middle Volga
      - Transcaucasia has many languages
      - Yakut (Turkic) in Siberia; Buryats near Lake Baikal
        - » Similar treatment to indigenous in U.S., Canada, Australia

- Geographies of Religion
  - Soviets prohibited religion, religious revival underway now
  - Eastern Orthodox Christianity most common
    - Other forms of Western Christianity practiced
  - Non-Christian religions
    - 20-25 million Sunni Muslims live in the North Caucasus
    - Over 1 million Jews, mostly in larger western cities

Languages of the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.22)

- Russian Culture in Global Context
  - Strong traditions, influenced by Western Europe
  - Soviet Days
    - Soviets promoted social realism: a style devoted to the realistic depiction of workers harnessing the forces of nature or struggling against capitalism
  - Turn to the West
    - Young Russians adopted consumer culture in 1980s
    - In post-Soviet era, globalism and consumerism came to Russia from the West and elsewhere (India, Hong Kong, Latin America)
  - The Music Scene
    - American and European popular music gaining fans
    - Home-grown music industry is evolving

The Remnants of a Global Superpower

- Geopolitical Structure of Former Soviet Union
  - Russian Empire collapsed abruptly in 1917
    - Briefly, a broad-based coalition of business people, workers, and peasants replaced tsars
    - Soon, Bolsheviks (faction of Russian Communists representing the interests of the industrial workers), led by Lenin, centralized power and introduced communism The Soviet Republics and Autonomous Areas
    - Soviet leaders designed a geopolitical solution to maintain the country's territorial boundaries, and theoretically acknowledged the rights of non-Russian citizens by creating Union Republics
      - Autonomous areas: minor political sub-units designed to recognize special status of minority groups within existing republics

Soviet Geopolitical System (Fig. 9.26)

Geopolitical Framework: The Remnants of a Global Superpower

- Centralization and Expansion of the Soviet State
  - Communism did not eliminate ethnic differences
  - In 1930, Soviet leader Stalin centralized power in Moscow, limiting national autonomy
  - Land added
    - Sakhalin, Kuril Islands from Japan; Baltic republics
    - Occupation of Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia
    - Exclave (outside Russia's contiguous land) added from Germany
- End of the Soviet System
  - Union republics encouraged ethnic identification
  - Glasnost: greater openness; Perestroika: economic restructuring
  - 1991: all 15 Union Republics gained independence

Geopolitical Framework: The Remnants of a Global Superpower

- Current Geopolitical Setting (1992-present) (Fig. 9.30)
  - Russia and the Former Soviet Republics
    - Formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – a looser political union that included all but three of the former republics; has no power, and is mostly a forum for discussion
    - Denuclearization (the return and partial dismantling of nuclear weapons from outlying republics to Russian control completed in 1990s; tactical nuclear weapons moved to Kaliningrad exclave
    - Military, political and ethnic tensions remain in parts of the region
  - Devolution and the Russian Federation
    - Devolution: more localized political control in Russia
    - Russian leaders fear other areas will secede

- Regional Tensions
  - Chechnyan Republic seeking independence
    - Russians sent military
    - Chechnya has metals and oil
- The Shifting Global Setting
  - Boundary issues between Russia and China
  - Dispute with Japan over Kuril Islands
  - Expansion of NATO concerns Russian leaders
  - Russia recently joined the “Group of Seven” (G-7)
    - Other members: U.S., Canada, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy)

Geopolitical Issues in the Russian Domain (Fig. 9.27)

An Era of Ongoing Adjustment

- After economic decline of 40% in the 1990s, Russia's economy stabilized in 2000 and 2004
- The Legacy of the Soviet Economy
  - Communists came to power in 1917, and instituted **centralized economic planning**: a situation in which the state controls production targets and industrial output
  - Soviets nationalized agriculture, but it was inefficient
  - Soviets expanded industrialization and transportation
    - Industrialization more successful than collectivized agriculture
    - Trans-Siberian Railroad, canal system
  - Improvements in housing and education after WWII
    - Literacy near 100%
  - But economic and social problems increased in 1970s-'80s

- Soviet industry more successful than agriculture
  - Soviets added major industrial zones (Fig. 9.31), many near energy sources and metals
  - Moscow had fewer raw materials, but had some of Russia's best infrastructure, large pool of skilled labor, and demand for industrial products
- Soviets developed a good transportation and communication infrastructure
- Soviets had a massive housing campaign in the 1960s
- Soviets made literacy virtually universal, and health care readily available; eliminated the worst of the poverty

- The Post-Soviet Economy
  - The region has replaced its communist system with a mix of state-run operations and private enterprise
- Redefining Regional Economic Ties
  - Independent republics negotiate for needed resources with Russia and each other rather than accept centralized control
  - Russia continues to dominate the region's economy
- Privatization and Economic Uncertainty
  - Russia removed price controls in 1992; sold state-owned business to private investors in 1993
    - Higher prices, lack of legal safeguards created problems
  - Agriculture still struggles, in part due to harsh climate, landforms
  - Many people see little economic gain from changes

Major Natural Resources and Industrial Zones (Fig. 9.30)

Rowntree, Lewis, Price, Wyckoff

– The Russian Mafia

- Russia Interior Ministry estimates that Russian mafia controls 40% of the private economy & 60% of the state-run enterprises; 80% of banks in Russia may be under mafia influence
  - Protection money, corruption result
- Russian mafia has gone global
  - Money laundering (Russia, U.K., U.S.); gambling (Sri Lanka); drugs (Colombia); legitimate Israeli high tech companies

- Social Problems
  - High unemployment, rising housing costs; lower welfare spending
  - Divorce and domestic violence increasing; prostitution increasing
  - Health care spending dropping
    - Vaccine shortages allow disease to return
    - Chronic and stress-related illnesses on the rise

- Growing Economic Globalization
  - Starting in 1970s, Soviets exported fossil fuels, imported food; ties now stronger
  - A New Day for the Consumer
    - Western consumer goods available (e.g., McDonald's, Calvin Klein; even some luxury items)
  - Attracting Foreign Investment
    - Region struggles to attract foreign investment
    - Most investment from U.S., western Europe (esp. Germany, U.K.)
      - Fossil fuels, food, telecommunications, consumer goods
      - Foreign investment growing by more than 14% annually

- Globalization and Russia's Petroleum Economy
  - Russia has 35% of the world's natural gas reserves
    - Mostly in Siberia
    - World's largest gas exporter
  - Primary destination for Russian petroleum products is western Europe
    - Former U.S.S.R. republics depend on Russia's energy
    - Foreign investment in new pipelines, other technology
- Local impacts of globalization
  - Vary from place to place
    - Investment in Moscow, Siberia (oil)
    - Pro-business Nizhny Novgorod and Samara attract investment
    - Local economic declines in older, uncompetitive industrial areas

Conclusions

- Russian Domain has seen great change, from empire, through revolution and break-up
- Ethnic & cultural differences continue to shape the region
- Russian Domain is rich in natural resources, but has limited agricultural potential and lingering economic difficulties
- Massive readjustments growing from the political and economic upheavals of the 1990s continue to affect the area
- Environmental devastation in the region and its effects continue to cause social and health problems
- More uncertainty lies ahead for the people of the Russian Domain.

End of Chapter 9: The Russian Domain