**Materials for the website Chapter 1**

**Practice Questions.** Check your knowledge on some important terms, facts and opinions.

What are the two different translations and meaning of the word Russian in the Russian language?

What are the geopolitical reasons for Russia’s importance in global affairs?

What are the key Russian paradoxes?

With which religion do most Russian identify themselves?

Name four NATO countries with which Russia shares its land borders.

When did Russia acquire nuclear weapons and when did it reach nuclear parity with the United States?

What are the key components of Russia’s *soft power*?

What was the Katyn massacre and what were its lessons?

What is a hybrid state?

What is a “sovereign democracy” in the context of Russian politics?

Does Russia have food shortages today?

Russia’s recent history (after 1991) can be divided into three periods. What are these?

**Views of Russia and policy consequences:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Defining and Describing Russia** | **Explaining the causes of problems with Russia** | **Outlining policies toward Russia** |
| Russia is an authoritarian, non-democratic state pursuing an expansionist foreign policy. Russia is a challenge and potential threat to major democratic states. | Russian political elites are largely responsible for the creation of an anti-democratic system and for Russia’s confrontational policies. | It is necessary to recognize a new stage of confrontation with Russia and resist Russia’s aggressive actions. Cooperation is possible but only in limited areas. |
| Russia is largely an authoritarian state with a few democratic elements. It conducts a unilateral, expansionist foreign policy. More differences that similarities exist between Russia and major democratic states. | Although Russian political elites are largely responsible for their country’s policies, western powers too should realize some of their own mistakes in dealing with Russia. | It is necessary to put aside some differences and focus on similarities between Russia and major democratic powers. Both sides should pursue selective engagement and cooperation in several critical areas. |
| Russia has most features of a typical state in transition. It is a “hybrid” state combining both democratic and nondemocratic features. Russia has achieved success in some areas such as the free market but not in others, such as democracy. | Although Russian political elites are responsible for what is happening in this country, most western powers have overlooked Russia’s success and placed too much attention on Russia’s setbacks and mistakes. | The focus of attention should be on mutual possibilities rather than disagreements. Reconciliation is possible but substantial effort is needed from both sides. |
| Russia is a sovereign, democratic country that pursues its own national interests and conducts polices that are no different than policies of other countries. | From the inception of independent Russia, major western powers and their allies undermined the process of Russia’s rebuilding and revival. | To restore good relations, western powers must radically change their policies toward Russia before expecting Moscow to change its behavior. |

**Additional study resources:**

**Russia Profile** is an English-language information service and community platform consisting of a daily-updated Web site and a quarterly special report, geared toward a wide range of readers with a professional interest in Russia. It offers a comprehensive and concise view of business, economic, political and cultural trends and processes underway in Russia:

<http://www.russiaprofile.org>

**Experts’ Assessments of Russia**. Check Russia’s contemporary rankings on different aspects according to expert surveys:

Freedom House: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)

Transparency International: <http://www.transparency.org/>

**Facts about Russia.** The main objective of the Federal State Statistics Service is to meet the requirements of the bodies of state authority and administration, the media, the general public, the scientific community, and commercial and international organizations to present diverse, objective and exhaustive information. The system of state statistics covers district, regional and federal levels, as well as Moscow and St. Petersburg. It comprises 89 regional committees and 2,200 district departments. The Federal State Statistics Service employs about 30 thousand staff:

<https://eng.gks.ru/>

**Useful resources:**

**Legal Acts of the Russian Federation:** <http://www.interlaw.ru>

(in Russian)

**Russian Center for Public Opinion:** <http://wciom.ru/>

(In Russian and English)

**Statistical Facts about Russia:**

<https://www.statista.com/topics/2675/russia/>

**Demographics and statistics:** <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/russia/index.php>

(In English, Spanish or German)

**World Bank data on Russia**: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/russian-federation>

**World Health Organization data on Russia:**

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/russian-federation/data-and-statistics>

**US News and World Report data and analysis on Russia:**

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/russia>