Bruce Morrow is an American oil engineer who spent three frustrating years in Siberia. He worked for a joint venture of BP, the British energy giant, and some Russian investors at the Samotlor oil field. Morrow told a reporter with The New York Times in 2005 that he could never tell from the maps the Russians gave him just where he was. The maps showed no latitude or longitude, and their grid diverged from true north.

Morrow said he knew that these maps were the work of a special group of map doctors at his company. They were following a practice well known during the Cold War, but deeply rooted in Russian history. It’s called maskirovka: a Soviet military term for “deception, disinformation, and deceit,” the Times wrote.

During the Cold War, maps were doctored for security reasons—in this case, to protect the Siberian oil fields from missile strikes, according to the Times. The practice has continued in recent times, partly to keep some control over foreigners like Morrow, and partly to keep a special class of Russian cartographers employed. People know about mapping programs like Google Earth. But foreign workers like Morrow hear rumors of jail time for those who turn to it. Map doctoring also serves as a subtle trade barrier: It makes it harder for foreign firms to do business in Russia.

According to rules enforced by the Russian Federal Security Service (known by the Russian acronym FSB), or secret police, accurate large-scale maps are available only to those with a Russian security clearance, the Times reported. As the Kremlin tightens its control on strategic industries such as oil, it is not letting up on the map rule.
The Historic Relationship Between Russia and the United Nations

In Lesson 3 you read about Joseph Stalin’s efforts to get a separate seat at the United Nations for each of the Soviet Union’s republics. President Franklin D. Roosevelt countered that he should then get a separate seat for each of the then-48 United States. That apparently pushed Stalin to compromise on just three seats: one each for Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Since the Western Allies wanted the Soviets in the UN, they went along.
**The Soviet Union’s Role in Establishing the United Nations**

The Soviet Union had, in fact, a founding role in the UN. President Roosevelt wanted it that way. The United States had never joined the League of Nations, a forerunner of the UN established after World War I. Roosevelt saw the League’s weaknesses. But even in the early days of World War II, he also saw value in planning for an organization to pick up where the League had left off. Even before the United States had entered the war, it joined Britain in issuing a declaration that became known as the Atlantic Charter.

The charter outlined a vision for a new world order. It would be one built in part on a more effective world body than the League. This new group’s mission would be “to maintain international peace and security.” Roosevelt suggested “the United Nations” as its name.

In January 1942 the governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and China formalized the Atlantic Charter ideas. These four major Allies, plus 22 other states, agreed to work together to defeat Germany, Japan, and Italy. They committed in principle to set up the United Nations after the war.

The effort to launch the UN began in earnest at an organizing conference in San Francisco in April 1945. On 24 October 1945 the United Nations officially came into existence. The Soviet Union was one of its charter members.

**Russian Influence on the UN Security Council’s Veto Rights**

One of the problems with the old League of Nations was that it didn’t have ways to enforce its rules. Roosevelt wanted to be sure that the new United Nations had the power to make its decisions stick.

As the new world body took shape, the five major Allied powers—the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, China, and France—accepted important roles. These countries were the major winners of World War II. (Within a few years, they would be the five countries in the world with nuclear weapons.) They became the “permanent five” members of the 15-member UN Security Council. The council is the part of the United Nations that has the most power. The other slots rotate among all the member nations.

The UN founders were practical. They knew that to be effective, the power relationships within the UN had to match those of the real world. The special status of the “permanent five” was one way to ensure this.

The word “veto” doesn’t appear in the UN Charter. But the charter specifies that to pass, a Security Council resolution needs “the concurring votes of the permanent members.” In Washington, when the president vetoes legislation, Congress can try to pass it again. At the UN Security Council, a single veto sinks a resolution, with no second chances.
The Soviet Union insisted on this veto right in the Security Council. It also insisted that any changes to the UN Charter have unanimous approval of all five permanent members. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Roosevelt understood that veto rights were the price of Soviet participation in the new system. Along with membership for Ukraine and Belarus, it was a price they were willing to pay.

**How the Soviet Union Used Its Veto Power**

A turning point in Soviet policy at the United Nations came in January 1950. China had just gone through a revolution. Communists had taken over, and the Nationalist government had fled to Taiwan. As far as the UN was concerned, though, the government on Taiwan was the “real” China and entitled to a seat on the Security Council. The Soviet Union, unsurprisingly, felt differently. In a show of solidarity with the Chinese Communists, its envoys boycotted UN functions. (The Communist government was finally awarded the seat in 1971.)
In June of that year, North Korea attacked South Korea. With no Soviet representative at the table, the Security Council passed a resolution that the Soviets would otherwise have vetoed. It called for the intervention of UN military forces in Korea. The Soviets would not make this mistake again. Their return in August 1950 marked the beginning of a new period of active participation at the UN.

In the UN's first 10 years, the Soviet Union issued 79 vetoes. During that period China used its veto once and France, twice. Britain and the United States issued no vetoes at all. Soviet vetoes became so routine that Andrei Gromyko, the longtime Soviet foreign minister, was nicknamed “Mr. Nyet”—“Mr. No.”

Over time, the Soviets used their veto less. And post-communist Russia, as successor state to the Soviet Union, has used the veto scarcely at all. The Soviets understood the veto as a way to prevent UN action in areas they saw as properly within their sphere of influence. That’s why the Korean vote mattered to the Soviets. In hindsight, they realized they should have been there to block it. The veto was also a way to maintain their influence and to protect friends and allies. Since the end of the Cold War, the permanent members have tried to work out their differences before bringing resolutions to a vote.

**The Historic Relationships Between Russia and Neighboring European Nations**

To understand Russian behavior in more recent times, it helps to reach back a little further into the past. Russia's history with its European neighbors is one of invasions and counterinvasions. Poland and Lithuania, both Soviet satellites in the twentieth century, were relentless invaders of czarist Russia. So was Sweden, even though it’s known today as militarily neutral.

Russia played major roles as a US, British, and French ally during both world wars. During World War II, its participation was decisive in turning the tide against Nazi Germany.

Russia’s experiment with Soviet communism had repercussions across Europe. *Ten Days That Shook the World* was the name of one well-known book about the revolution that created the Soviet Union. It was an apt title. And the undoing of that revolution 70 years later would reverberate equally widely.

**The Centuries of European Invasions of Russia**

Students of twentieth-century history may not think of the Soviet Union as a victim. But for centuries, Russia was on the receiving end of invasions.

Consider the early years of the seventeenth century, for instance. In Moscow, this was a chaotic period known as “the Time of Troubles.” Rivalry among the nobility complicated a struggle over the throne. Then Poland and Sweden—serious regional powers—stepped in. A Polish garrison backed one claimant to the throne.
Another contender turned to the Swedes for support. Then a third claimant, allied with the Poles, appeared. He was proclaimed czar, and the Poles occupied Moscow. This whole period is also known as the Polish-Muscovite War (1605–18).

In 1707 King Charles XII of Sweden invaded Russia. He and Peter the Great attacked and counterattacked each other repeatedly. Peter eventually built his new westward-looking capital, St. Petersburg, on land he took over from the Swedes. He would have said it was land he took back from the Swedes.

In 1812 French Emperor Napoleon I invaded Russia. This episode ends rather better for the Russians. Czar Alexander I was at one point an ally of the French leader. But the alliance became strained. Alexander worried about the intentions of the Poles, whom France controlled. Napoleon worried about Alexander’s plans for two vital straits between the Black and Mediterranean Seas, the Dardanelles and the Bosporus.

Napoleon decided to invade Russia with 600,000 troops—twice as many soldiers as the Russian army had. But the Russian winter turned out to be Alexander’s most important ally. Although Napoleon took Moscow, fewer than 30,000 of Napoleon’s men made the trip back home. And as Napoleon retreated in defeat, Alexander
pursued him—to the gates of Paris. When Russia and its allies, such as Britain and Spain, finally defeated Napoleon, Alexander was hailed as Europe’s savior and was given considerable say in redrawing the map of Europe at the subsequent peace conference.

The invasions did not stop with the dawn of the twentieth century. Germany invaded Russia during both world wars.

**The Russian Roles in World Wars I and II**

**World War I**

World War I was czarist Russia’s last war and formed the background for the two revolutions of 1917. Russia had allied with Britain, France, and Belgium against Austro-Hungary and Germany. Its large population meant it could field a large army. Its soldiers held up well against the Austrians, who were as poorly armed as the Russians were. The Russians had far less success against the Germans, however.

Through the war’s early years, the advantage seesawed between the Germans and the Allies. At first, Russia’s moves into the German state of East Prussia drew enough German troops from the western front to let the French, Belgians, and British stop the German advance. Then one of Russia’s armies was almost wiped out in the disastrous Battle of Tannenberg. And so it went.
By 1917 the new Soviet government was eager to get Russia out of the war. It agreed to a cease-fire. Peace talks began but then broke down. Fighting resumed, though the Russian forces were crumbling. Some in the Bolshevik government sought to prolong the war—all the better to stir up class warfare and provoke revolution in Germany, they argued. But Lenin insisted that Russia had to make peace at any price. On 3 March 1918 Soviet government officials signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

With this treaty, the Soviet government gave away an enormous part of what had been the Russian Empire. It handed Poland, the Baltic lands, Finland, and Ukraine over to German control. It also gave Turkey part of the Caucasus. Moreover, the new borders came dangerously close to Petrograd—the new name for St. Petersburg. The government moved the capital back to Moscow for safety. All in all, it was a package of desperate measures. But Lenin saw no other way to ensure the new Soviet state’s survival.

After the Bolsheviks won the Russian civil war, they began a campaign to retake lands that had been lost through the treaty. By 1940 they had regained everything except Finland. Soviet troops attacked Finland, but the Finns’ heroic resistance kept their country independent—although they did surrender some land in the east.

**World War II**

Meanwhile, World War II had begun with Germany’s invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939. The Soviets thought their nonaggression pact with Germany—the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact you read about in Lesson 3—would keep the same fate from befalling them. They were wrong, however. All it would really do was buy them some time.

By the summer of 1940 Hitler’s forces had overrun much of Europe. As Hitler was advancing, the Soviet Union sought to protect itself by seizing territory within its sphere of interest—such as eastern Poland and the Baltics—and attacking Finland.

Stalin kept trying to calm Hitler in the hope of avoiding war. But early in the morning of 22 June 1941, 180 German divisions swept across the border into the Soviet Union. The invasion, code-named Operation Barbarossa, nearly broke the Russians. By November the Germans had taken Ukraine. They had besieged Leningrad, as Peter the Great’s city was then called. And they threatened Moscow itself.
By the end of 1941, however, the German forces had lost their momentum. Like Napoleon, the Germans struggled against the bitter Russian winter. And the Red Army had regained its footing. It was beginning to strike back.

There was a lull in the fighting over the winter of 1941–42. Then the Germans renewed their offensive. To gain control over the lower Volga River region, they decided to try to take Stalingrad, on its west bank. The Soviet forces put up fierce resistance even after the Germans had turned the city to rubble. Soviet troops finally surrounded their attackers and forced them to surrender in February 1943. It was a decisive victory. Afterward, the Soviet Union had the upper hand for the rest of the war. By January 1944 the Red Army had broken through the siege of Leningrad. By May 1945 the Soviets made it all the way to Berlin, and the war in Europe was over.

It was a great victory for the Soviet Union—one generally unappreciated in the West. World War II was also important, from a Russian perspective, in that it brought about a temporary alliance with two great powers, one new and one old—the United States and Britain. Mutual mistrust ran deep between them. But they had to cooperate to defeat Hitler. The Soviets benefited from weapons and equipment from the Western allies. By tying the Germans down and eliminating hundreds of thousands of German troops, the Soviets gave the British and Americans time to prepare to invade German-held Western Europe.

**The Effect of the Cold War and the Warsaw Pact**

This temporary alliance began to sour even before the Allies had won the war, however. In February 1945 Stalin met with Roosevelt and Churchill in the Ukrainian city of Yalta, on the Black Sea. They clashed over Stalin’s plan to extend Soviet influence to Poland. By August of that year, Japan had surrendered. There was nothing left to hold the alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies together.

The war had been devastating to victors and vanquished alike. Many survivors were just grateful to be alive. And many in the West were grateful for Soviet contributions to the war effort. But quite quickly, things began to change. More and more territory was falling under Soviet control. Cease-fire lines began to harden into de facto new international frontiers, as in Korea and Germany. Communist governments seized power. Churchill was one of the first to notice. Measures that had seemed merely defensive when the Soviets had taken them to hold Hitler at bay suddenly seemed aggressive instead.
As Churchill memorably put it in a speech he gave on 5 March 1946, at a small college in Fulton, Missouri, “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.” He ticked off the great European cities that lay behind that curtain “in what I must call the Soviet sphere.” He noted that they were subject to an “increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

The Cold War was a period of tension and hostility between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. Fortunately it never led to direct all-out conflict between the two sides. But there were many nervous moments along the way. The two did fight one another indirectly in a number of smaller, costly, and bloody wars in faraway places like Korea and Vietnam, however.

Because of Russia’s long history of invasion from the West, Stalin tried to create a buffer zone of compliant “allies” around the Soviet Union. The Red Army had occupied many of these countries during the war. Afterward, taking advantage of its position as an occupying power, the Soviet Union actively helped local communist parties take power. By 1948 seven East European countries had Communist governments.

In 1949 the Western allies established the North American Treaty Organization, or NATO, a defensive alliance to protect against Soviet attack. In 1955 West Germany became a NATO member. This was an early step in the rehabilitation—restoring one’s good reputation—of Germany back into the family of nations. The Soviet Union responded to this step by establishing the Warsaw Pact that same year.

Up until that point, the Soviet Union had bilateral relationships with each of its “satellites.” This word was much used to describe Eastern European nations in the Soviet “orbit.” The Warsaw Pact essentially took all those one-to-one relationships and merged them into one big alliance. It was supposed to be a defensive alliance. But actually it was a way for the Soviets to keep the other members under their control. The pact used the terms “collective action” and “mutual support” as cover for Soviet domination and sometimes even military intervention into its allies’ internal affairs.

Warsaw Pact forces were even used against its member nations. Soviet troops put down the Hungarian uprising of 1956. And when the Kremlin decided that Czech leader Alexander Dubček had gone too far in a wave of liberalization known as “the Prague spring” of 1968, Warsaw Pact tanks rolled in to bring things to a stop.
CHAPTER 4  Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

The Effect of Perestroika and Glasnost on Russia’s Neighboring European Nations

As you read in earlier lessons in this chapter, everything changed when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. He dropped Marxist-Leninist talk about irreconcilable conflict with the West. Instead, he stressed common moral and ethical principles.

In December 1987 he and US President Ronald Reagan signed a treaty—the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (or INF)—eliminating mid-range nuclear missiles from Europe. This was an immense relief to Europeans, east and west. It led to better relations between the Soviet Union and Europe generally. But Gorbachev’s new approach offered more than just relief. His policies of perestroika and glasnost—“restructuring” and “openness,” respectively—set in motion big changes in the satellite nations. In fact, change came to the Eastern European countries before it came to the Soviet Union.

In June 1989 Poland’s Communist government held relatively free parliamentary elections. The Communists lost every seat they contested. Hungary, meanwhile, pursued reforms, too. It also restored the reputation of Imre Nagy, the reformist leader whom the Soviets had executed after they crushed the 1956 uprising. In the summer of 1989 Hungary took down the barriers along the border with officially neutral Austria.
By the end of the summer, vacationing East Germans were pouring through this tear in the Iron Curtain. Others sought escape at the West German embassy in Prague, Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic. (An embassy is considered sovereign soil of the country it represents. During the years of division, West Germany offered citizenship to all Germans who reached its soil by whatever means. Once within the embassy gates in Prague, East Germans were literally home free.) Thousands temporarily camped on the embassy grounds.

It was big enough news that East Germans were voting with their feet for another life. Their country had long been held up as the big success of the Soviet bloc. But change didn’t stop there. One night in November 1989 East German authorities almost absent-mindedly opened the Berlin Wall—a concrete barrier the Communists had built through the middle of Berlin in the early 1960s. That same night the Bulgarians deposed their longtime Communist leader, Todor Zhivkov. Two weeks later Czechoslovakia deposed its Communist leaders in what’s known as the Velvet Revolution. At an impromptu summit in Malta in December 1989, Gorbachev and President George H. W. Bush declared an end to the Cold War.

The Historic Relationships Between Russia and China, Japan, and Korea

While much of Europe was gladly shedding its communist ties—and had tried to for decades—some forces in Russia and China were more wedded to their “red” ways. In fact, the Sino-Soviet relationship during most of the twentieth century turned on the question of whether the worldwide communist movement was big enough for both of them. The answer often appeared to be no.

In another corner of Asia, Russia’s relationship with Japan got off on the wrong foot at the beginning of the twentieth century. That association is still hobbled by territorial disputes, despite the strong and growing trade ties between the two. For much of the past century, Russia’s partner in Korea was the Communist North. But with the collapse of communism, Moscow has changed its mind about South Korea. It no longer dismisses Seoul as a US puppet.

Russia’s Early Support for Communist China

The Communists under Mao Zedong took control of China in 1949. They had defeated the Nationalists (Kuomintang or Guomindang) with help from the Soviet Union. In 1950 China and the Soviet Union made a mutual defense treaty to protect themselves against the United States and Japan. The two communist giants were partners. But Mao drove a hard bargain in his dealings with the Russians. He signaled that, with its own Communist Party and its immense population, China would be no mere “satellite” following Moscow’s dictates.
For a time, though, the two countries were quite close. As the People’s Republic of China was getting established, its leaders had a pressing domestic agenda. And with so much to do, they felt that their best approach to foreign policy was to stand with other communist countries against the United States and Japan. China had no choice, Mao declared, but to “lean to one side” in international relations. By that he meant the Soviet side.

**The Break Between Soviet Leaders and Mao Zedong**

During the late 1950s, though, strains emerged in the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Soviets didn’t do enough, in Beijing’s view, to help China regain what it considered the breakaway province of Taiwan. When tensions flared along the Sino-Indian border, the Soviet Union remained neutral. That displeased China.

What’s more, Nikita Khrushchev’s moves toward de-Stalinization alarmed the Chinese. So did his efforts on behalf of peaceful coexistence with the West. The Chinese under Mao considered that this violated communist doctrine.
In 1957 Moscow’s successful launch of the Sputnik satellite was an immense boost to the prestige of the Soviet Union, and of communism generally. It strengthened Mao’s view that the winds of history were blowing in the Communists’ favor. “The east wind prevails over the west wind,” he said. So why, then, the Chinese wondered, was the Kremlin so interested in coexistence with the West?

Finally, in 1960, after Mao introduced the radical economic policies of the “Great Leap Forward,” Moscow withdrew its advisers from China. And China did not object. Mao and his colleagues had reached the point where the benefits of its Soviet alliance no longer outweighed the limits it placed on Chinese independence. In 1966, as China moved into its Cultural Revolution, the two countries’ Communist Parties broke off relations. A deep freeze remained until well into the 1980s.

Current Economic Relations Between Russia and China

In more recent years, Russia and China have strengthened their ties. China takes part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, along with Russia and four of the Central Asian republics. A November 1997 agreement resolved almost all outstanding border issues between Russia and China. China is a major market for Russian exports, notably oil. China has overtaken Japan in recent years as the No. 2 consumer of primary energy, after the United States. Construction began in the spring of 2009 on a pipeline to carry Russian oil to China. It is expected to be up and running in 2010.

This Russian missile factory is located in Samara, along the southern Volga River. 
Photo by P. Norman Matheny / © 1993 The Christian Science Monitor

China is a major market for Russian exports, notably oil. Arms sales have also been an important element of Russia’s economic relations with China.
Arms sales have been an important element of Russia’s economic relations with China. Between 2001 and 2009, Russian arms sales have brought in $16 billion from China. But by the end of that period, Russia was selling only about $1 billion worth of weapons to China annually.

As the network of international relations continues to expand, Russia and China work together in many different forums. By some accounts, though, their economic relations are less effective than their political ties.

**Military Encounters Between Russia and Japan, 1900–45**

In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, Czar Nicholas II’s forces faced off against those of imperial Japan. Not long before, European powers had forced Asia open to foreign trade. Many major powers were seeking to carve out a sphere of influence for themselves in Asia as they had done in Africa.

The issue between Russia and Japan was control of Korea and Manchuria (part of China today). The Russians wanted a *warm-water port*—*a port that does not ice up during the winter*. They had their eye on Port Arthur, in Manchuria. Unfortunately for them, so did the Japanese.

Diplomatic messages went back and forth between the two camps. The czar’s more progressive-minded envoys tried to get him to accept a compromise. But his reactionary cabinet ministers kept squabbling among themselves. As a result, he had trouble putting together a coherent policy for the Far East. As the Russians dithered, the Japanese prepared to attack. And when they did, they astonished the world with their military success.

Financially, though, the war was a strain for Japan. Eventually both sides accepted President Theodore Roosevelt’s offer to mediate. This led to the Treaty of Portsmouth, named for the US Navy facility in New Hampshire where it was negotiated. Among other things, the treaty awarded the use of Port Arthur to the Japanese and recognized Korea as a Japanese sphere of influence.

People remember the Russo-Japanese War as the first major military defeat of a European power at Asian hands. It was a humiliation for the Russian government. And it helped push the Russian people toward revolution.

This defeat of Russia marked the beginning of a period of poor relations with Japan. After World War I, Japan took over the key Russian port of Vladivostok for four years. The Soviet Union had a neutrality pact with Japan during much of World War II. But as the war was winding down, Stalin declared war on Japan at the Allies’ request and moved to occupy vast tracts of East Asia that Japan had occupied. This led to the incorporation of the Kuril Islands and the southern half of Sakhalin Island into the Soviet Union. These moves created an issue that kept Japan and the Soviet Union from signing a peace treaty to bring the war to an official end. The issue froze Russo-Japanese relations for decades.
Russo-Japanese Economic Relations Since the Cold War

Gorbachev’s ascent to power changed much in the Soviet Union. It didn’t, however, change the stalemate in his country’s relations with Japan. Nor did the Soviet Union’s collapse erase strains between the nations. So the two countries are still technically at war, although they don’t behave that way.

Russia continues to hang onto the Southern Kurils, seized by the Soviet Union as World War II was winding down. The United States considers the islands Japanese. Russian Coast Guard boats still harass or even seize Japanese fishing vessels in waters surrounding the disputed territory. In August 2006 a Russian patrol even fired on a Japanese vessel, killing a crew member. Even so, Japan and Russia find ways to work together. They are building two large energy projects on Sakhalin Island, for instance.

In addition, the volume of trade between the two has risen sharply in the first decade of the twenty-first century. According to figures from the Russian Federal Customs Service, the total value of Russo-Japanese trade increased between 2003 and 2008 from less than $5 billion to more than $50 billion. Russia buys cars (new and used) and other vehicles, as well as various types of electrical-engineering products, from Japan. Japan buys oil, timber, metal, and metal products from Russia.
Russian Support of North Korea
During the Korean War and the Cold War

The division of Korea at the 38th parallel began as an administrative matter at the end of World War II. Japan had occupied Korea. When Japan went down in defeat, someone had to be there to accept the surrender of its forces in Korea. US and Soviet forces took on this duty. When the United States asked Stalin to limit his occupation to the 38th parallel, he agreed. At that point he did not have time to devote his attention to Korea. And neither side was interested in another war.

Within a few years things had changed. The US-Soviet alliance had fallen apart. Each country was arming the military forces of “its” part of Korea—Kim Il-sung in the North, and Syngman Rhee in the South. Stalin was beginning to see an opportunity to build up communism in Asia.

According to historian Mark O’Neill, in April 1950 Kim Il-sung begged Stalin for the chance to invade the South and unify Korea. It would all be over in three days, he said. Stalin agreed, as long as the Chinese promised to provide troops. Mao was desperate for Soviet aid at that point and readily agreed. He turned 60,000 ethnic Koreans in the (Chinese) People’s Liberation Army over to the Korean People’s Army, the North’s fighting force. The invasion began 25 June 1950.

The Korean War took much longer than three days. The United States and other nations rallied to South Korea’s defense. As you read earlier in this lesson, when the Korean issue came up before the United Nations Security Council, no Soviet representative was there to block a resolution. So the council authorized a “police action” to defend South Korea.

After three years of fighting, and Stalin’s death, all parties agreed to an armistice, signed on 27 July 1953. No peace treaty has ever been signed. In fact, on 27 May 2009 North Korea, under the leadership of Kim Jong-il, unilaterally withdrew from the armistice.

As the split between the Soviet Union and China widened during the Cold War, North Korea leaned closer to China. Currently both Russia and China are participants in the Six-Party Talks meant to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

Economic Relations Between Russia and South Korea Since the Cold War

For decades, South Korea was an object of scorn for the Soviet Union, which considered it a creature of “US imperialism.” The Soviet Union didn’t even have diplomatic relations with Seoul until Gorbachev established them.

But since then Russia has worked to improve its ties with South Korea in many different forums, including the Six-Party Talks. With links to Japan hampered by a territorial dispute, and with China as a potential rival, Russia can look to South Korea as a new partner with which it has a less unhappy history.
Trade between Russia and South Korea was worth about $20 billion in 2008. The two countries cooperate in such sectors as energy, transport, and construction. Russia needs South Korean support in its bid to join the World Trade Organization. South Korea wants Russian energy. The two countries are also trying to link the Trans-Korean and Trans-Siberian railways.

**The Historic Relationship Between Russia and the United States**

In 2007 the US Embassy in Moscow celebrated 200 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia. The first US minister to Russia was John Quincy Adams. In 1823, as secretary of State, he wrote the Monroe Doctrine. This historic foreign policy statement dictated that Europe keep “hands off” the Americas.

People associate the Monroe Doctrine with Latin America. They see it as a warning to any European power that would seek to take over former Spanish colonies there. But the specific issue that prompted the Monroe Doctrine had to do with imperial Russia. Czar Alexander I wanted to pursue commercial fishing in the coastal waters off the US Pacific Northwest. In 1821 he had declared the waters above the 51st parallel north under the Russian American Company’s control alone. He was interested in ports as far south as San Francisco. President James Monroe would not stand for that. So he directed Secretary of State Adams to formulate the famous statement.

Another significant event in US-Russian relations took place in 1867, when Secretary of State William Seward bought Alaska from Russia for $7.2 million.

The story of US-Russian relations, though, begins in earnest in the twentieth century. Both the United States and Soviet Union fought on the Allied side during World War I, but the Soviets pulled out of the war not long after the US entry. The US-Soviet relationship during World War II was much more of a partnership.
The Relationship During World War II

Americans greeted the first Russian Revolution of 1917 with great enthusiasm. But that cooled when the Bolsheviks took power later that year. After all, the new Communist regime had not been democratically elected. Nor did it show much respect for human rights and private property. The United States, like many other governments, withheld diplomatic recognition. US policy finally changed when President Franklin Roosevelt established full relations with the Soviets in November 1933. The United States was the last major power to do so.

Within a few years, though, American opinion again turned away from the Soviets. Stalin was at that point invading Finland and seizing territory in the Baltics and elsewhere. Hitler's invasion in June 1941, though, changed American minds once more. The Soviet Union began to look less like a conqueror and more like a victim of fascism.

Under the Lend-Lease Act, the United States sent vast amounts of aid and war materiel to the Soviet Union. This was critical in helping the Russians withstand the Nazi onslaughts. Eventually, as you read earlier, the Soviet forces were able to regain the initiative against the Germans. The continuing Soviet battles with German forces in the east bought the Western Allies time to prepare for the invasion of German-held France. That Western front would eventually relieve pressure on Soviet forces.

Coordinating all this took long, intense diplomatic negotiations among “the Big Three”—Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin. In these talks, Roosevelt and Churchill granted Stalin some things he asked for. Others would later complain about their giving too much to the Soviet leader. But Roosevelt and Churchill thought it was necessary at the time. The Big Three also started laying the groundwork for a postwar world—one with a United Nations as a place where countries could discuss their concerns.

After a fierce battle, Berlin fell to the Soviets on 8 May 1945. The Soviets and their Western allies had met on the Elbe River in Germany beforehand to shake hands and congratulate each other on their anticipated victory. Months of fighting lay ahead against another Axis Power—Japan—however. Not until August 1945 did Japan surrender—and then only after the United States had dropped two nuclear bombs.

The US-Soviet alliance was born out of necessity. Each country knew it needed the other to defeat one of the most destructive forces of modern times. The Allies put ideology aside in the interest of winning the war against fascism.

The Soviet effort in World War II, still largely underappreciated in the West, cost more than 20 million lives. It destroyed towns and cities and laid waste to the country’s economic infrastructure.

US-Soviet cooperation was a brief moment in history. It would soon be replaced by the beginnings of the Cold War. But the significance of the US-Soviet wartime effort in winning World War II cannot be overestimated.
The Cold War’s Effect on Soviet-US Relations

The way the Soviets moved after World War II to assert control in the Eastern European lands they occupied angered the West—the United States in particular. But there didn’t seem to be much the West could do to stop it short of going to war.

One early crisis, the Berlin Airlift, demonstrated how the West could push back against the Soviets without getting into all-out war. In 1948 the Soviets tried to cut off outside supply lines to West Berlin. Under the Western Allies’ control, West Berlin nonetheless lay deep within the heart of the Soviet occupation zone in Germany. When the Soviets closed off road and rail links, the Western Allies responded by supplying the city wholly by air for nearly a year. On 12 May 1949 the Soviets lifted the blockade. The airlift became a symbol of Western resolve to stand up to the Soviets without having to engage in direct conflict.

The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was another critical point in the Cold War. US military intelligence discovered that the Soviets had installed nuclear missiles in Cuba. After several days of great tension, President John F Kennedy’s administration ultimately negotiated their removal from Cuba. But the period is widely regarded as the closest the United States ever came to nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Here, too, diplomacy, creative thinking, and a willingness to give the other side ways to “save face” helped avoid a disastrous confrontation.

Before the arrival of Gorbachev, the high point of US-Soviet relations came in May 1972. That’s when leaders from the two countries signed two important arms control agreements: the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. This marked a period of détente, or relaxation of international tension, between the two countries.

The Effect of Perestroika and Glasnost on Russian-US Relations

Americans were less hopeful about Gorbachev’s new ideas than were Europeans. After all, the Americans’ Cold War experience was different from the Europeans’. For Americans, the Cold War was largely a drawn-out nuclear standoff with an enemy who was distant—geographically, but also culturally and ideologically.

For Europeans, the Cold War divided countries that were at least neighbors, if not always exactly friends. Eastern Europeans had only limited travel opportunities. But Western Europeans could and did visit cities like Prague, Czechoslovakia, and Budapest, Hungary. West German Chancellor Willy Brandt had already introduced his Neue Ostpolitik. This was a “new Eastern policy” of dialogue with the East bloc. It was hugely controversial in some quarters. But it won him the Nobel Peace Prize of 1971.

Relations between the Soviets and the United States began to thaw, however, when it seemed that Ronald Reagan was hitting it off with Gorbachev. It helped that President Reagan’s friend Margaret Thatcher, Britain’s “Iron Lady” prime minister, had approved of Gorbachev. Her anticommunist credentials were never in doubt, and she had said, “I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together.”

LESSON 4  ■ Russia and World Relationships
And so, it turned out, could President Reagan. The Reagan-Gorbachev dialogue led to the INF Treaty. This accord, signed in 1987, was the ban on mid-range nuclear weapons you read about earlier in this lesson. It was the first arms-control treaty that actually called for destruction of existing weapons. Other treaties had merely set future limits on the deployment of weapons.

After Reagan left office, George H. W. Bush continued the dialogue with Gorbachev. It led, among other things, to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the astonishingly swift merging of East Germany and West Germany into, once again, a single, united Germany.

With the fall of communism and the election of Boris Yeltsin as president of the new Russian state, relations between the United States and Russia grew perhaps as close as they have ever been. President George W. Bush took office hoping for a close relationship with Yeltsin’s successor, Vladimir Putin. But Putin’s policies led instead to a cooling of relations between the two countries. These included a brutal invasion of the breakaway Chechnya region and moves to rein in Russian business, political opposition, and the free press. Russia has also undermined American interests in the former Soviet republics as it has tried to regain its influence in what it considers its backyard.

But the two countries continue to work together in many ways that were unthinkable during the Cold War. You’ll read about some of them in the next lesson.
Lesson 4 Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. When did planning for the United Nations begin?

2. Which countries make up the UN Security Council’s “permanent five” and how did they get this status?

3. Which countries have invaded Russia over the centuries? Name at least three.

4. What was the Warsaw Pact?

5. How did Russia get off to a bad start in its relations with Japan?

6. How has Russia changed its view of South Korea since Gorbachev?

7. What was the Lend-Lease Act and whom did it help?

8. What did British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher say about Mikhail Gorbachev?

Applying Your Learning

9. Was it a good idea to grant a veto to the UN Security Council’s permanent five members? Should more countries have permanent status and a veto?