

Religious Freedom: Jehovah's Witnesses

- More than 470 JWs under investigation, on trial, or convicted for continuing to meet for prayer and Bible study after 2017 Supreme Court ban
- Forum18 (6/25/21): 108 people have received sentences (10 fines, 70 suspended sentences, 28 prison terms)

Religious Freedom: Jehovah's Witnesses

- After being kept under FSB security service or police surveillance for some months, most targeted Jehovah's Witnesses are prosecuted for "organizing" (Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1), or "participating in" (Part 2), "the activity of a social or religious association or other organization in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity".
- The activities prosecuted include meeting in each other's homes to pray and sing together, study sacred texts, and discuss shared beliefs.
- Possible punishments are:
Part 1 – six to 10 years' imprisonment; or a 400,000 to 800,000 Rouble fine;
Part 2 – two to six years' imprisonment; a 300,000 to 600,000 Rouble fine; or one to four years' assigned labor.

Religious Freedom: Jehovah's Witnesses

- Several Jehovah's Witnesses have also been charged under Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1 ("Financing extremist activity"), apparently for continuing to collect donations for activities from fellow believers after the 2017 ban on Jehovah's Witness activity.

Possible punishments are: three to eight years' imprisonment; a 300,000 to 700,000 Rouble fine; or one to four years' assigned labor.

- Other charges have been brought under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1.1 ("Inclination, recruitment or other involvement of a person in an extremist organization").

Possible punishments are: four to eight years' imprisonment; a 300,000 to 700,000 Rouble fine; or two to five years' assigned labour.

- A fine of 300,000 Roubles represents about six months' wages for those in formal work at the average rate of pay across Russia. However, levels of pay vary widely from region to region. Such a fine represents about 20 months' pension for those on the average level of pension

Religious Freedom: Jehovah's Witnesses

- Suspended sentences (up to 7 years) now the most common punishment for JW's found guilty of "organizing" or "participating" in allegedly "extremist" activity such as continuing to meet for worship.
- Consequences of suspended sentences include inability to change residence, inability to travel or see relatives living in other regions, inability to secure employment, requirement to register regularly with probation authorities, and police visits to homes at any time to check that they are obeying night-time curfews and travel restrictions.

Religious Freedom: Jehovah's Witnesses

- Investigators can have people added to the Federal Financial Monitoring Service (Rosfinmonitoring) "List of Terrorists and Extremists" before they have been convicted or charged.
- Banks are then obliged to freeze an individual's assets, blocking all but small transactions.
- Being added to the list leads to a variety of problems in everyday life, e.g. being unable to receive salaries, pensions, or benefits, renew insurance policies, or purchase a phone SIM card

Organized Crime

- Money laundering and financial fraud are extraordinarily widespread among Russian political, commercial, and criminal elites.
- Criminal organizations throughout Russia continue to launder illicit cash through real estate, construction companies, or willing banks.
- Other schemes involve evading taxes and/or creditors by moving assets through Cyprus, the Seychelles, or the Caribbean to completely unrelated businesses in the United States.
- DOS Moscow sees Russians applying with St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Cypriot, and other passports obtained via investment programs, frequently with no connection but investment – holders often found associated with organized crime and money laundering.
- Most organized crime groups now have extensive legitimate business holdings and rely on corruption to advance their business empires. Accordingly, applicants involved in organized crime may appear simply as successful businesspeople.

Organized Crime

Characteristics to examine, particularly when more than one is present:

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Organized Crime

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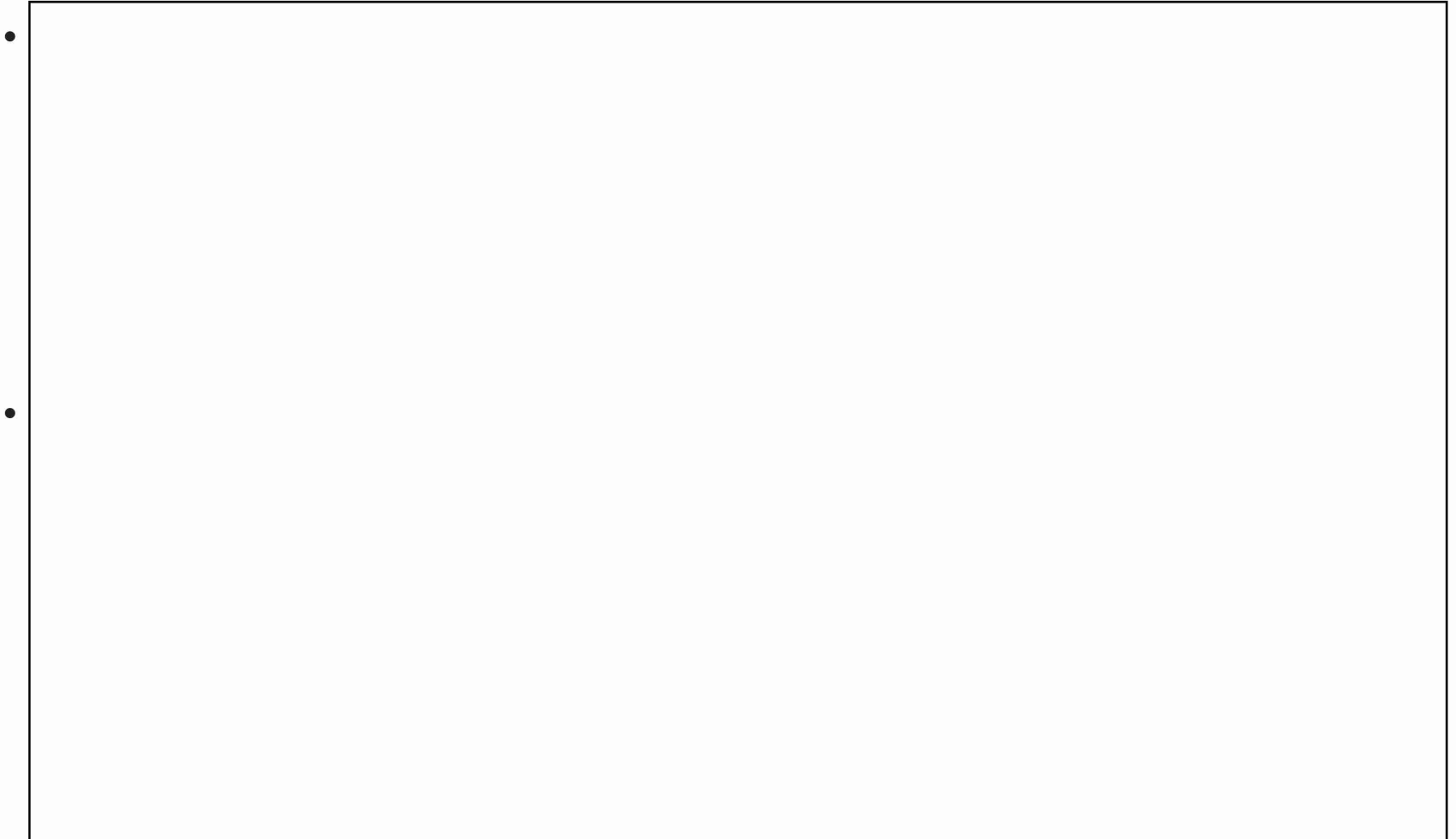
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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Organized Crime



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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Documents: Passports

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Documents: Internal Passports

Internal Passport:

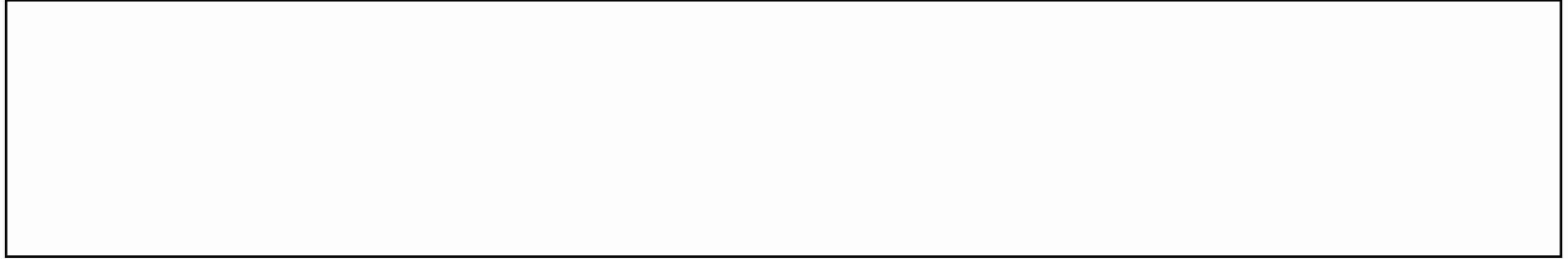
- These are **mandatory** and function as the main form of identification in Russia

From Department of State Visa Reciprocity and Civil Document Guide:

- All Russian citizens are issued internal passports at age 14, which is their National ID. Internal passports show where the bearer is legally registered, any marriages or divorces, any children under age 14, and information about military service, if applicable. It also shows information about any external (travel) passports issued to the bearer.
- Russian citizens are issued internal passports at age 14;
- New passports are issued at age 20, and again at age 45
- According to an interview with the Consular Section of the Embassy of Russia in Canada, it was indicated that missions abroad only issued **Foreign Travel** passports only.

Documents: DOS Guidance

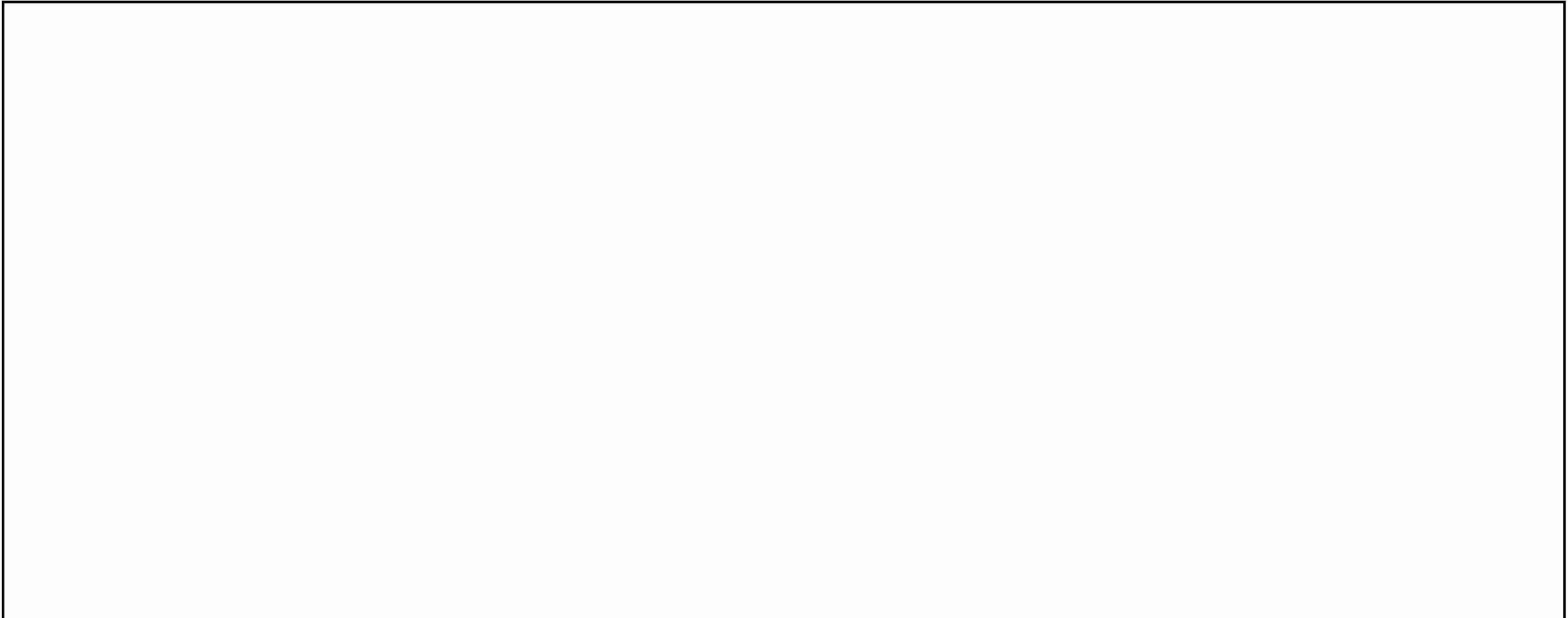
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RAIO Research Unit Resources

- [RU ECN](#) (Regional Links)
- [Russia Country Page](#)
- [Query Responses](#)
- ZLA Regional Specialization DOS Talks
- [Document Research Links](#)
- RAIO COI Bank on Teams (coming soon)

Citizenship Laws

Regional Citizenship Laws:

- LLOC Russia Kazakh citz 12-2016.pdf - Law Library of Congress response regarding Russian/USSR/Kazakh citizenship
- LLOC Query Kyrgyz Russia z 10-2014.pdf - Law Library of Congress response provides information on USSR/Russian citizenship; specifically addresses Kyrgyz citizenship but has general post-USSR CIS country information

Topical Sources

Religious Freedom:

- [Forum18.org](https://forum18.org)
- [Country Policy and Information Note Russia: Jehovah's Witnesses](#), UK Home Office, April 2021

Ethnic Minorities:

- [Minority Rights Group International](#) (use [Refworld.org](https://refworld.org) advanced search and restrict publisher field for easy access to specific groups)

Naming Conventions:

- [A Guide to Names and Naming Practices](#) (UK: March 2006)

Internet Freedom:

- Freedom House "Freedom on the Net" [annual report](#) for Russia

Topical Sources

LGBTI Resources:

- **Rainbow Europe by ILGA-Europe, Russia section:** <https://rainbow-europe.org/#8656/o/o>
- **Russian LGBT Network (national level):** reports until 2020 are here <https://old.lgbtnet.org/en/reptseng>, and from 2021 and on will be published here <https://lgbtnet.org/en/>
- **Coming Out LGBT group (St Petersburg and its region):** <https://comingoutspb.com/eng/publications/human-rights/>
- **Stimul LGBT group (Moscow and its region):** <https://www.msk-stimul.eu/library> (in Russian)
- **Resource Center for LGBT (Yekaterinburg and its region):** <https://center-r.com/work/monitoring-narusheniya-prav-v-sverdlovskoj-oblasti/> (in Russian)
- **Russian LGBT Network's report on the persecution of LGBT in the North Caucasus of Russia:** https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/chechnya_report_by_rus_lgbt_n_31_july_2017.pdf
- **Queer Women of North Caucasus' publications on the situation of LGBTQ women in the North Caucasus of Russia:** <https://www.nhc.no/content/uploads/2019/02/Violence-against-LBT-women-in-North-Caucasus.pdf>, and https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/Engl_QWNC.pdf

HIV:

- See RAIO Research Unit Query Response: ["Russia: Gay Men with HIV"](#), April 2019

Topical Sources

- PiX Today

(Need login; request through website using .gov)

September 2021 Legislative Elections in Russia

Politics and Governance in Russia

Criminal Law

- Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Jan. 1, 1961
- Russian Criminal Code (1996, amended 2012)

Russian Military Resources

- Organization of Russian Forces (1991-1996): Library of Congress Country Study, pp.524-41
- The Russian Way of War, Foreign Military Studies Office, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command G2, 2016.

Contact Information

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Religion in the Soviet Union

- Soviet Union was officially an atheistic State, but approximately 1/3 professed religious belief
- Marxism-Leninism provided for control, suppression, and eventual elimination of religious beliefs
- Soviet officials identified religion with nationalism; suppression efforts were tied to relationship with republics, a group's size, and willingness to submit to political authority
- Smaller groups or those with allegiance to a foreign authority (e.g. the Pope) attracted harsher efforts

Religion in the Soviet Union

Orthodoxy

Permitted to function openly but controlled:

- **Russian Orthodox Church** (largest at 50+million; over 4,000 of 7,000 registered active churches were in the Ukrainian Republic; Russian-language and name used but resented by many; tool for Soviet control; shifting government relationship throughout history including periods of deportations, clergy executions and replacements, church closures)
- **Georgian Orthodox Church** (2.5 million followers; tight government control; only permitted in Georgia Republic; forced to conduct service in Old Church Slavonic instead of Georgian language)

Forced underground:

- **Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church** (hostility from government, viewed as nationalistic; operated outside of State borders; believers harassed; leadership decimated)
- **Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church** (hostility; 2000+ clergy shot or sent to labor camps; believers harassed)

Religion in the Soviet Union

Protestants

- 5 million collectively
- All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists formed to control them, but many resisted
- **Evangelical Christian Baptists** (largest Protestant group; some registered but many functioned illegally)
- **Lutherans** (second largest; primarily Latvian and Estonian Republics, with focus on religious and national issues)
- Smaller groups: **Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, Mennonites, Jehovah's Witnesses**, others; with or without official sanction

Religion in the Soviet Union

Catholics and Others

- **Roman Catholic Church** (5.5 million in Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Latvian Republics; also Moldovan, Ukrainian, and Russian Republics; stood for Lithuanian religious and national rights; clergy imprisoned; police infiltration; churches closed)
- **Ukrainian Catholic Church (Uniates)** (4 million but hostility from Soviet regime; 1945 hundreds of clergy arrested, deported, killed; declared illegal and forced to join Russian Orthodox Church but survived underground)
- **Armenian Apostolic Church** (4 million; population of Armenia)
- Small number adhered to **Buddhism, Lamaism, and shamanism**

Religion in the Soviet Union

Islam

- 45 to 50 million adherents (second largest)
- All working mosques, schools, publications supervised by Soviets through four regional “Spiritual Directorates” for control
- More met informally in homes and tea houses with self-taught mullahs than in sanctioned mosques

Religion in the Soviet Union

Judaism

- Jewish section of Communist Party formed for control; community councils abolished
- Propaganda against Jewish clergy and religion
- Most of the 5,000 functioning synagogues were closed; training rabbis and religious practice impossible causing many to leave

Religion in the Soviet Union

KGB Infiltration

- KGB sought to control Church hierarchy
- Secret police recruited a network of informers, mostly by force or threats
- Their known presence sowed mistrust among the clergy and the congregation
- Informers couldn't be fully trusted, so KGB officers were placed beginning in 1950s
- Program was supervised by the KGB's Fifth Directorate (responsible for ideology) with support from the Second Directorate (which handles counterintelligence)
- By the late 1980s, the church had been fully penetrated.



Ukraine

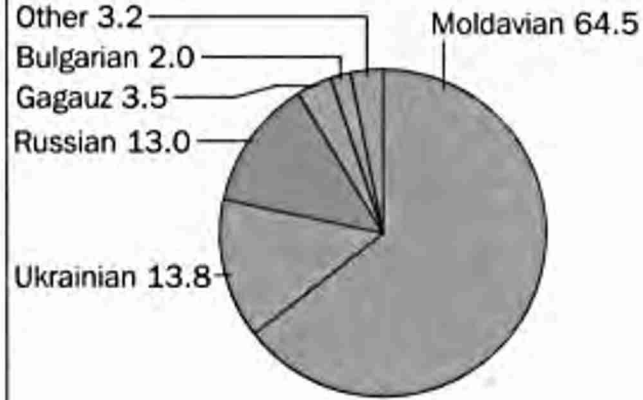
Percent



Population 52.1 million

Moldova

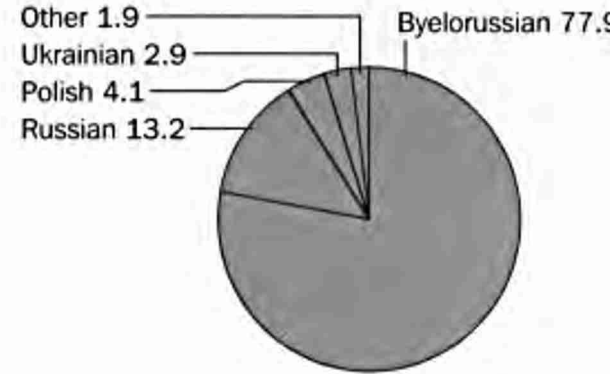
Percent



Population 4.4 million

Belarus

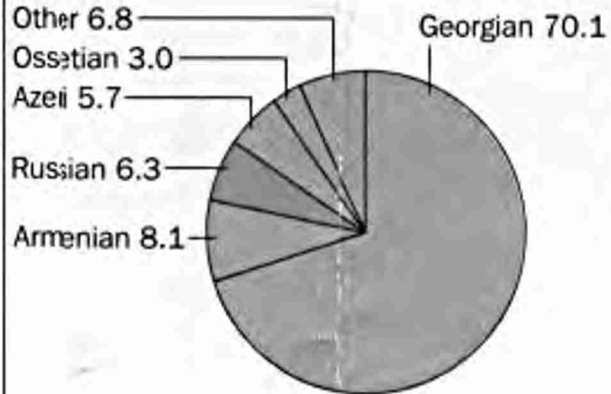
Percent



Population 10.4 million

Georgia*

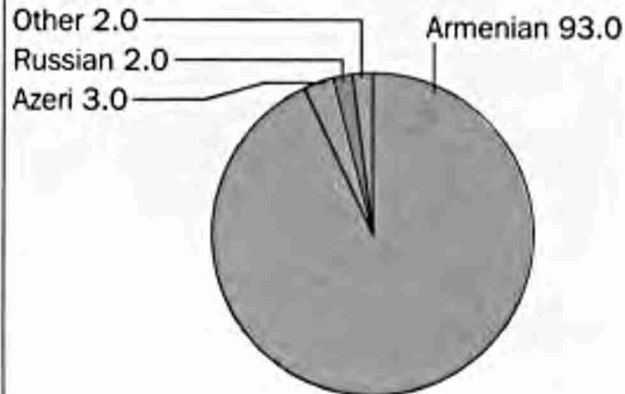
Percent



Population 5.4 million

Armenia*

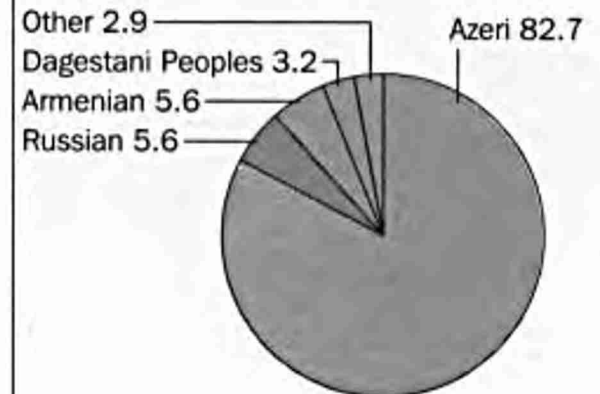
Percent



Population 3.7 million

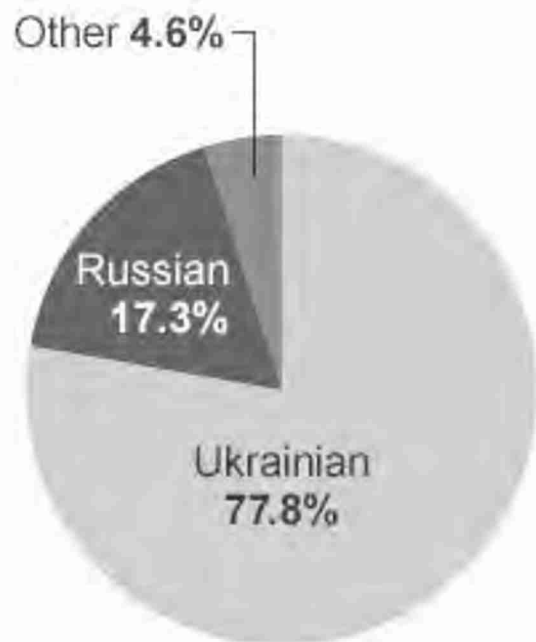
Azerbaijan*

Percent

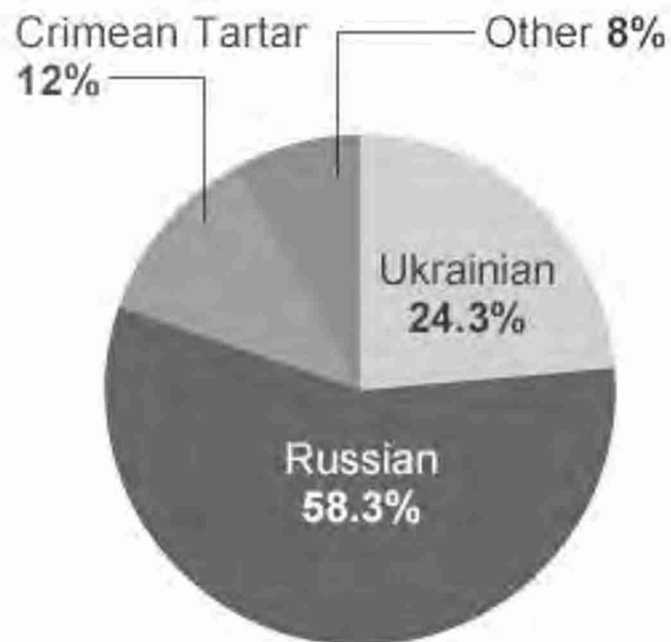


Population 7.4 million

Ukraine by ethnic identity



Crimea by ethnic identity



Note: Some totals may not add up due to rounding

Source: 2001 Ukraine census

Russia's flashpoints with Europe

■ Nato countries ■ Russia



Russian Aggression: Moldova

Transdniestria

- Separatist region of Moldova – a narrow strip of land between the Dniester River and the Ukrainian border
- Proclaimed independence from Moldova in 1990, and following a short civil war succeeded in establishing de facto independence in 1992.
- Russia has a strong presence and the region has stated that it wants annexation to Russia.
- The international community does not recognize its self-declared statehood



Russia

Georgia

Armenia

Azerbaijan

Turkey

Iran

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Kazakhstan

The Caucasus

200 Kilometers

200 Miles

Russian Aggression: Georgia

Abkhazia and South Ossetia

- Both regions have close ties with Russia, whose troops have operated there since the early 1990s
- In 2008 Moscow formally recognized both as independent states, following an armed conflict between Georgia and Russia that grew out of clashes between Georgia and Russian-backed rebels in South Ossetia
- Russia has effectively controlled the two breakaway regions since then; both heavily dependent on Russian aid
- Moves by Russia to formalize ties with both in 2014/2015 triggered fears that Moscow seeks annexation

Nagorno-Karabakh

- 1920's: Soviets established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region
- 95% of population is ethnically Armenian—within Azerbaijan
- Bolshevik rule kept conflict in check, but tense
- 1991: Officially declared its independence and war erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan - 30,000 casualties
- By 1993, Armenia controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20% of the surrounding Azerbaijani territory
- 1994: Russia brokered cease-fire which remains in place, but sporadic cross-border fighting
- Russia has promised to defend Armenia and Turkey takes the side of Azerbaijan

Between East and West

The strategic importance of Ukraine

Percentage of the population that is Russian

Up to 6% Up to 12% Up to 24% Over 24%

Source: 2011 census





Russian Aggression: Ukraine

Maidan revolution

- 2013 November - Tens of thousands protest President Viktor Yanukovych's sudden decision to abandon plans to sign an association agreement with the EU, blaming Russian pressure.
- 2014 February - Security forces kill at least 125 protesters in Kiev. President Yanukovych flees to Russia, opposition takes over.

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2014 March - Russian forces annex Crimea, prompting biggest East-West confrontation since Cold War. US and EU impose harsh sanctions on Russia.
- 2014 April - Pro-Russia armed groups seize parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions on Russian border. Government launches military operation in response.



Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2014 May – Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic declared by referendums. Leading businessman Petro Poroshenko wins presidential election on pro-Western platform.
- 2014 July - Pro-Russian forces shoot down Malaysian airliner over eastern Ukraine conflict zone, killing all 298 people on board.
- 2014 September - NATO confirms Russian troops and heavy military equipment entering eastern Ukraine.
- 2014 October - Parliamentary elections produce convincing majority for pro-Western parties.

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2015 February - Germany and France broker tenuous ceasefire (Minsk Accords)
- 2016 - Economy returns to fragile growth after two years of turmoil
- 2017 July - Ukraine's association agreement with the EU is ratified by all signatories
- 2018 May – Russia opens a bridge linking southern Russia to Crimea



Volodymyr Zelensky

73%

landslide win on 21 April

Comedian but trained
as a lawyer

Instagram star with
4.2m followers

Millionaire thanks to
his production company Kvartal
95

Linked to oligarch Ihor
Kolomoisky through show on TV
channel 1+1

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

October 2019: Zelensky signs on to “Steinmeier’s Formula”

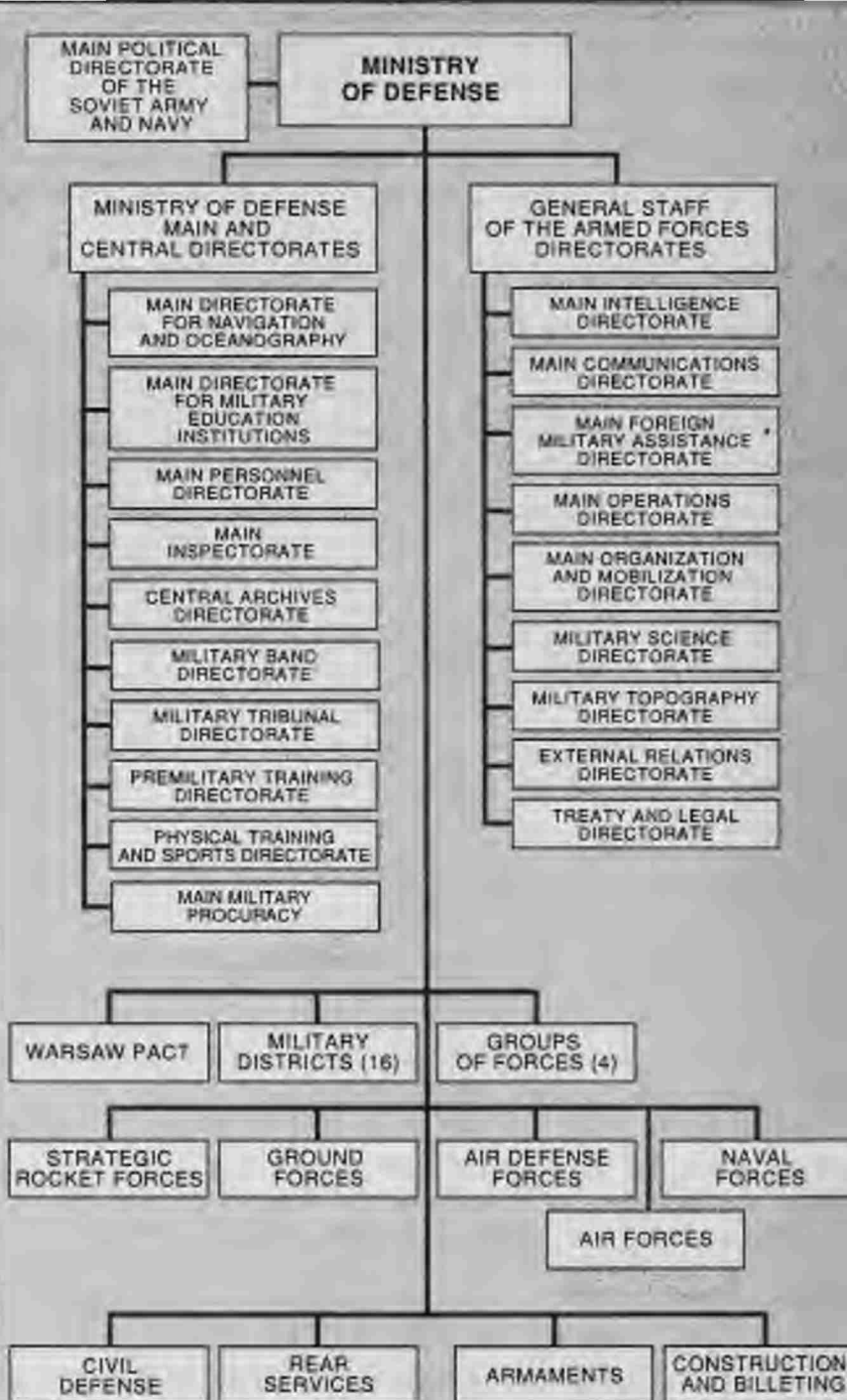
- Calls for (October 2020?) elections to be held in the separatist-held territories under Ukrainian legislation with OSCE supervision
- If OSCE judges the balloting to be free and fair, then a special self-governing status for the territories will be initiated and Ukraine will be returned control of its easternmost border
- Zelensky said local elections held only after Russian forces withdraw and Ukraine regains control of state border

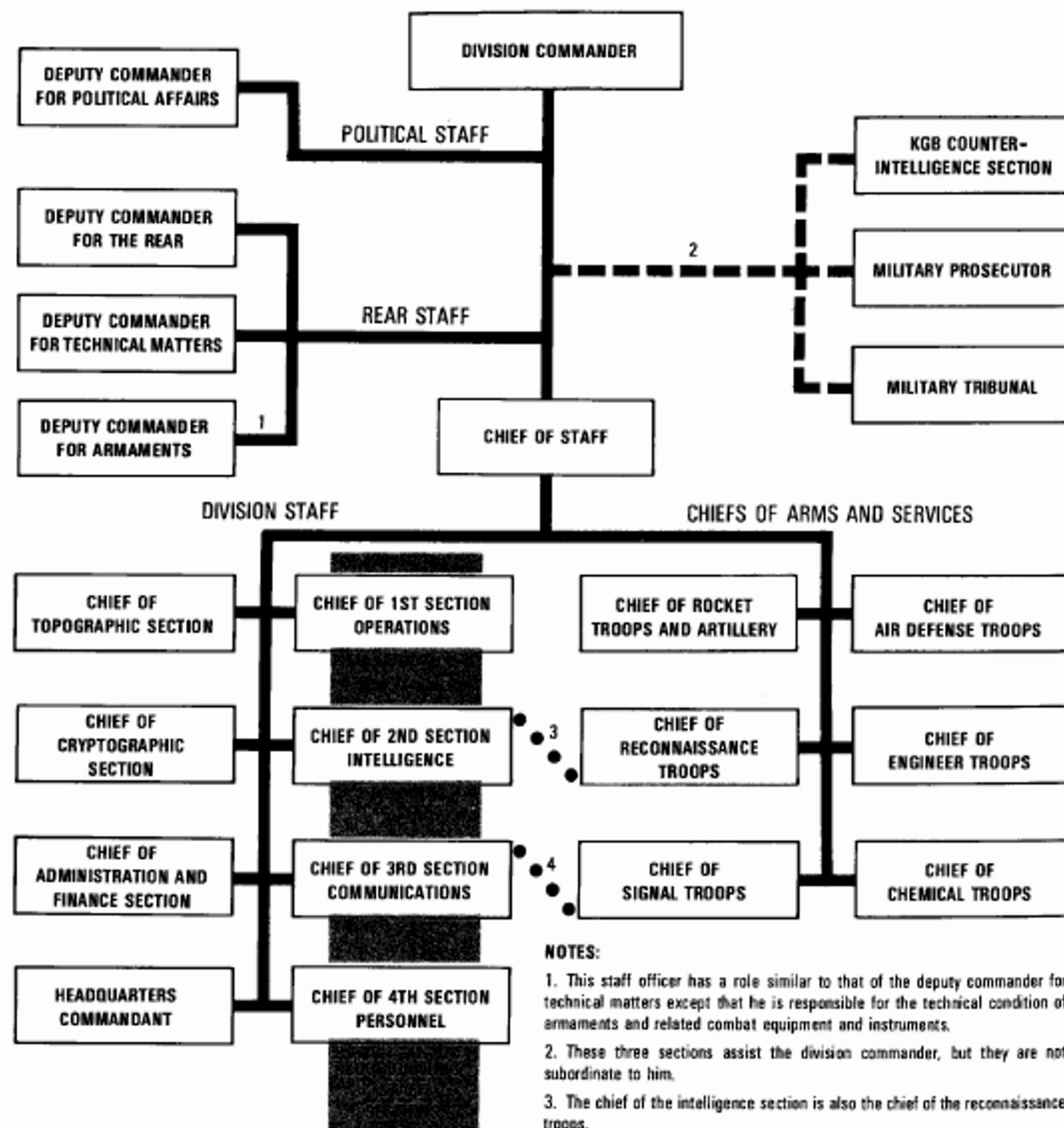
Soviet Union Military

- By 1989: Nearly 6 million troops in uniform
- Five armed services: Strategic Rocket Forces, Ground Forces, Air Forces, Air Defense Forces, and Naval Forces.
- Two paramilitary forces: Internal Troops and Border Troops.
- “One-fourth of the entire Soviet population in 1989 was engaged in military activities, whether active duty, military production, or civilian military training.”
- Many servicemen were assigned nonmilitary duties that in many other countries were performed by civilians.
- Conscription

Soviet Union Military Structure

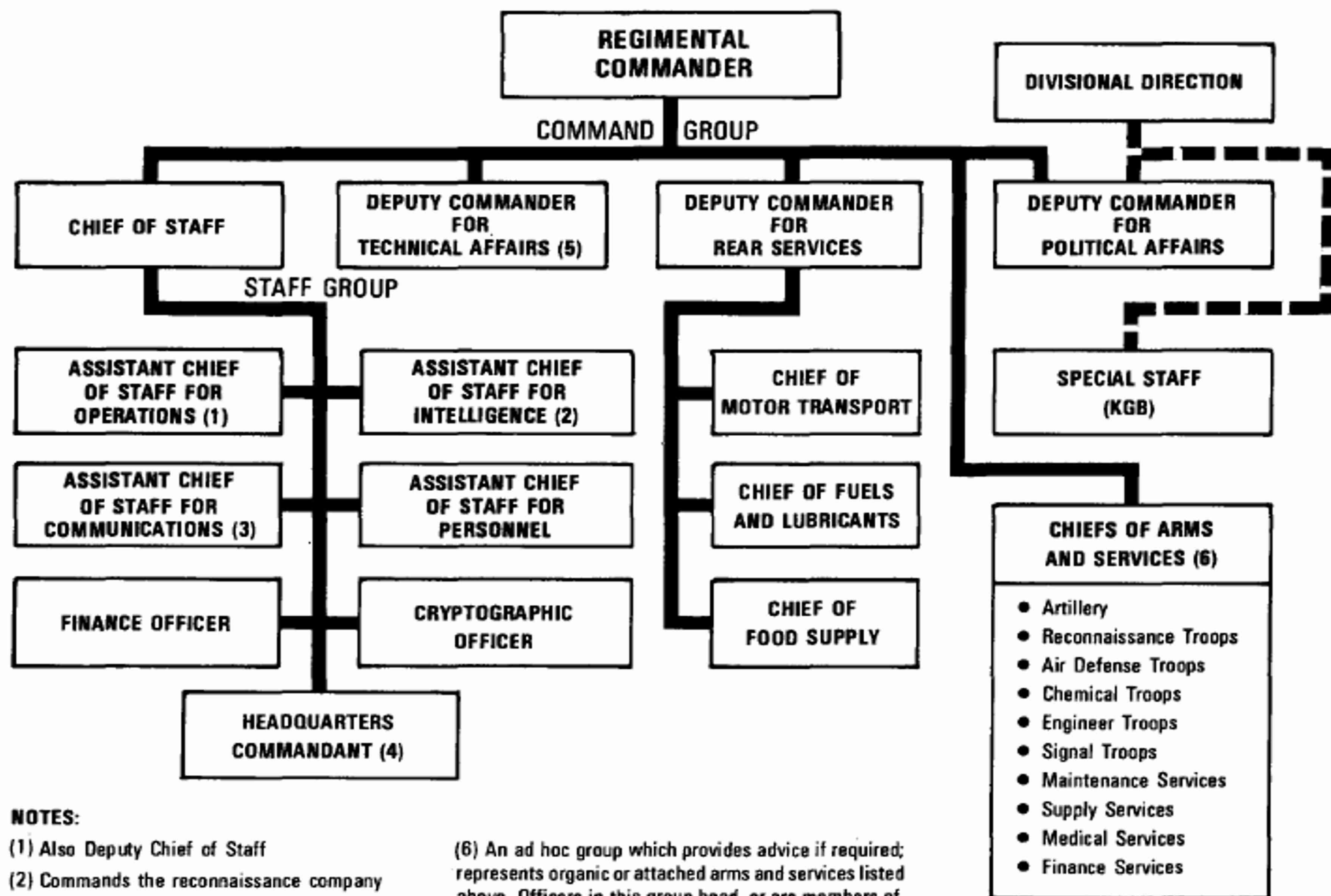
MARSHALS. GENERALS. AND ADMIRALS	
Marshal of the Soviet Union/Chief Marshal (of specific arm)	Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union
Amy General/Marshal(of specific arm)	Fleet Admiral
Colonel General (3-star)	Admiral
Lieutenant General (2-star)	Vice Admiral
Major General (1-star)	Rear Admiral
SENIOR OFFICERS	
Colonel	Captain 1st Rank
Lieutenant Colonel	Captain 2nd Rank
Major	Captain 3rd Rank
JUNIOR OFFICERS	
Captain	Captain-Lieutenant
Senior Lieutenant	Senior Lieutenant
Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Junior Lieutenant	Junior Lieutenant
WARRANT OFFICERS	
Praporshchik	Michman
SERGEANTS AND PETTY OFFICERS	
Master Sergeant	Ships Chief Petty Officer
Senior Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer
Sergeant	Petty Officer 1st Class
Junior Sergeant	Petty Officer 2nd Class
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS	
Private 1st Class	Seaman 1st Class
Private	Seaman





NOTES:

1. This staff officer has a role similar to that of the deputy commander for technical matters except that he is responsible for the technical condition of armaments and related combat equipment and instruments.
2. These three sections assist the division commander, but they are not subordinate to him.
3. The chief of the intelligence section is also the chief of the reconnaissance troops.
4. The chief of the communications section is also chief of signal troops.



NOTES:

- (1) Also Deputy Chief of Staff
 (2) Commands the reconnaissance company
 (3) Commands the signal company
 (4) Controls work of traffic regulators
 (5) Also commands the maintenance company

- (6) An ad hoc group which provides advice if required; represents organic or attached arms and services listed above. Officers in this group head, or are members of, other staff groups. Their primary task is to command the combat support and combat service support subunits.

Soviet Union Military Intelligence

- **Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU)**: secretive directorate with approximately 2,500 personnel collecting information on adversaries
- **KGB**: Under the direction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); vast monetary and technical resources, over 500,000 personnel, huge archival files containing political information of the highest sensitivity; maintained a network of officers and informers in the armed forces.

“KGB sections within military divisions investigated and interrogated espionage suspects, enforced the political reliability of division personnel, and participated in determining key assignments”

Soviet Union Military Operations

- **Hungarian Revolution**: Oct./Nov. 1956, U.S.S.R. forces crushed an anti-Soviet revolt; Over 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed in the conflict, and 200,000 Hungarians fled as refugees
- **Prague Spring**: Jan. to Aug. 1968 Soviet forces intervened to quash pro-Capitalist reforms in Czechoslovakia; 72 Czechs and Slovaks killed
- **Sino-Soviet border conflict**: 1969, several occasions of inconclusive armed conflicts; Soviets repelled a Chinese incursion into the Zhenbao/Damansky island
- **Afghanistan Invasion and Occupation**: Dec. 1979 to Feb. 1989; serious human rights abuses against civilians and detainees; see By All Parties to the Conflict: Violations of the Laws of War in Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch, March 1988.

Soviet and Russian Military Hazing

- Hazing (*Dedovshchina*) widely reported
- Brutalization of junior conscripts by more senior conscripts serving their last year of compulsory military service, as well as NCOs and officers
- A variety of subordinating or humiliating activities from doing the chores of the senior ranks to violent and sometimes lethal physical, sexual, and psychological abuse
- Cited as a major source of poor morale in the armed forces.

Soviet Union Military Resources

- Organization of USSR Forces (-1989): Library of Congress Country Study, pp.695-; Ranks/Insignia pp.737-; Internal Security pp.753-
- The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics, U.S. Dept. of the Army, Sec. 3-9, Jul. 16, 1984.
- The Soviet Army: Troops, Organization, and Equipment, U.S. Department of the Army, Jun. 1991.

Russian Military (1991-)

- Transition from USSR
- 1991 Belavezha Accords agreed by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), had its own supreme military commander until end of 1993
- March 1992 Yelstin established Armed Forces of Russian Federation – had over 2 million soldiers, most of old Soviet military under Moscow
- As of 1996, 670,000 officers and enlisted; shortfall and officer-heavy, trying to survive
- Attempt to transition to more modern force

Conscript and Contract Serviceman Ranks

Field Uniform

Duty Uniform

Senior
Warrant Officer



Senior
Warrant Officer

Warrant Officer



Warrant Officer

Starshina



Petty Officer
of the Ship

Senior Sergeant



Senior
Petty Officer

Sergeant



Petty Officer
1st Class

Junior Sergeant



Petty Officer
2nd Class

Private First Class



Senior Sailor

Private



Sailor

Ground Forces

Aerospace Defense Forces

Navy

		Officer Ranks			
		Field Uniform	Duty Uniform		
Marshal of the Russian Federation					
General of the Army					Admiral of the Navy
Colonel General					Fleet Admiral
Lieutenant General					Vice Admiral
Major General					Rear Admiral
Colonel					Captain 1st Class
Lieutenant Colonel					Captain 2nd Class
Major					Captain 3rd Class
Captain					Captain-Lieutenant
Senior Lieutenant					Senior Lieutenant
Lieutenant					Lieutenant
Junior Lieutenant					Junior Lieutenant
		Ground Forces	Aerospace Defense Forces	Navy	