

# Russian Empires Old and New:

How does the New Russia reflect the Old Russia?

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“Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.” Winston Churchill

“Reimperialization—either by regaining lost territories or by maintaining influence and sometimes regaining it when it has been lost—is the end goal of Moscow’s policies.” Grigas, *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire*

“Russian foreign policy continues to employ the use of aggression and intimidation in its efforts to control the politics and foreign policies of its former republics and any nation it considers to fall under its *special interest* mantle.” D. McNabb, *Vladimir Putin and Russia’s Imperial Revival*

Russia is much in the news today, in ways that mirror old imperial Russia before communism. We will explore this connection. Our thesis is that the Old Russian Empires provide a lens through which to see modern Russia. Put another way, modern Russia attempts to recreate the authority and hegemony of the Old Russian empires. We will first consider the growth and flowering of the old Imperial Russia and then explore the changes and values of the new Russia since the fall of the USSR, paying less attention to the Soviet era in between.

## Topics

From Peter the Great until Catharine the Great (1682-1762)

Catharine the Great to Alexander I (1762-1801)

18<sup>th</sup> Century; Science, Economy, Social Life and Culture

Alexander I to Alexander II (1801-1855)

Science and Culture (1796-1855)

Alexander II to Alexander III (1855-1881)

Alexander III through Nicolas II (1881-1917)

19<sup>th</sup> Century Culture and Literature

Russian Peasants and Serfs

The Russian Orthodox Church

Gorbachev and the fall of the USSR

Yeltsin and transition

Privatization

Oligarchs

Putin’s rise

Putin’s wars

Television, information and propaganda in modern Russia

Russia, NATO, and the West

Life in Russia today

Cyberwarfare