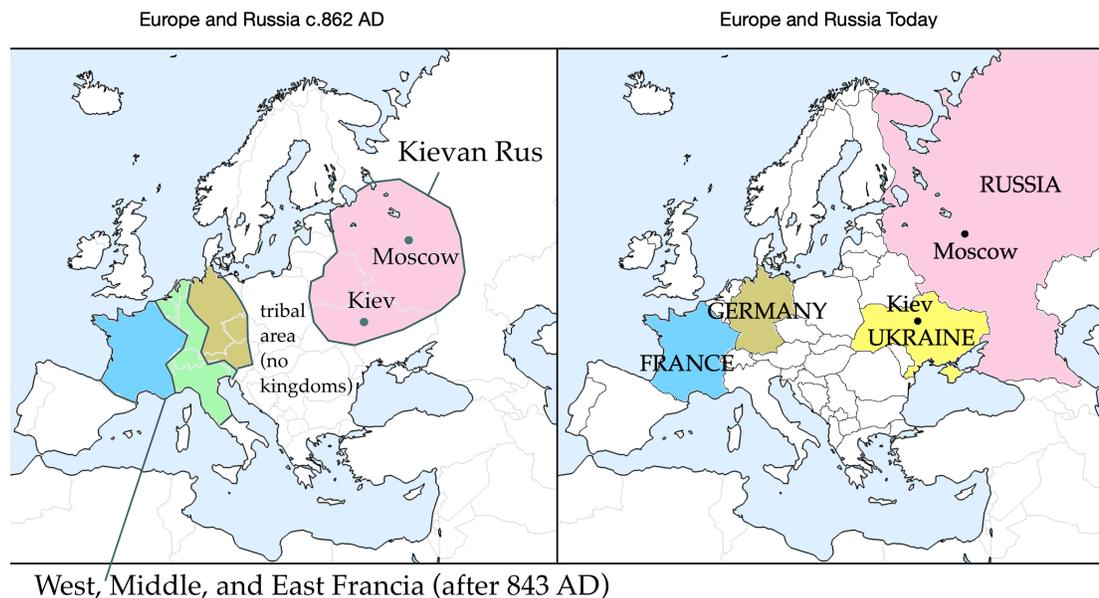


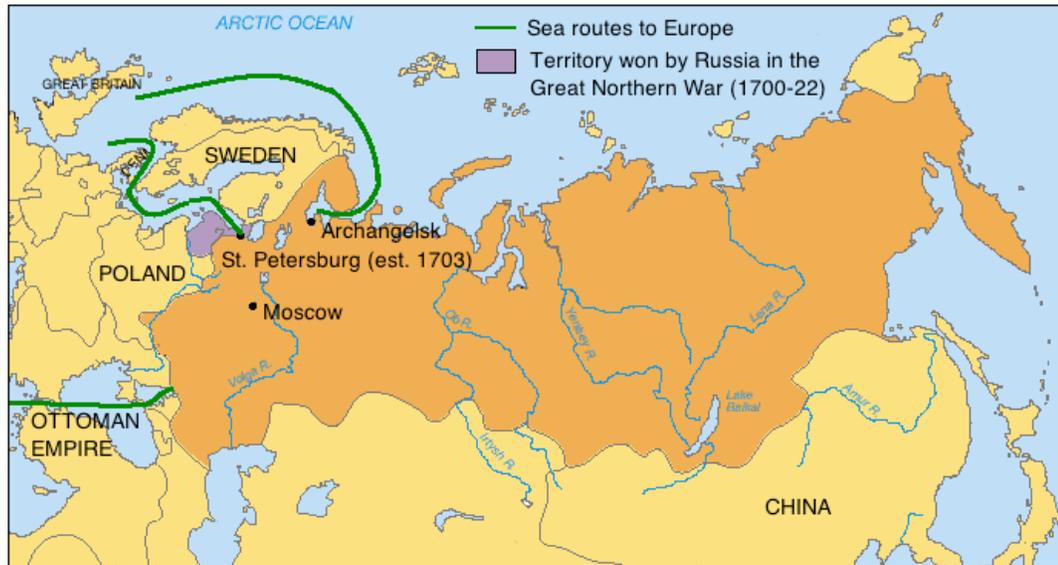
### C. The Rise of Mother Russia

1. The story of how Russia became the country it is today begins far to the east of the Europe of Charlemagne.
2. Around the year **862 AD**, land occupied by a tribal people known as as a Slavs was invaded and conquered by Vikings. The Viking leader Rurik established a new kingdom which he called “Kievan Rus,” with its capital at Kiev.
3. The result of the Viking conquest of the Slavs was a union of two peoples that succeeded over the long term, producing a “supernation,” in the sense of a combination of two peoples into one, with a large population, over a large area. (Europe might have been like Russia — one nation — if Charlemagne had succeeded.)
4. Russia and Europe were separate for centuries.



5. Russia’s isolation began to break down during the European period known as the “Age of Discovery” (known for the voyages of Christopher Columbus and others). Explorers seeking a “northern passage” over Asia to China arrived on the Arctic coast of Russia, and made their way to the city of Moscow, which had become the capital.
6. Trade between Europe and Russia remained limited after that, as the Arctic route was impassable much of the year due to ice. (Strangely, despite its large size, Russia was “landlocked” with regard to Europe, because the enemy kingdoms of Sweden, Poland, and the Islamic Ottoman Empire were blocking the sea routes to Europe.)
7. Russia’s isolation was eventually broken by its king (known in Russia as a “tsar”), Peter “the Great.” Peter admired European culture and wanted to make Russia into a

European country. Seeking a sea route to Asia, Peter believed that Sweden was Russia’s most vulnerable rival, and attacked that country in the **Great Northern War of 1700-22**.



8. Russia’s victory in the **Great Northern War** allowed the country to access the Baltic Sea. The new capital city of St. Petersburg was built there.
9. Being a part of Europe meant more trade and technology from Europe, but it also meant that Russia was entangled in the “balance of power” of Europe’s nations. This meant that Russia would have to pick sides whenever Europe’s nations would fight one another, like in the World Wars.
10. Here’s how we can summarize Russia history as a diagram:

