



Alexander I: the « savior of Europe »
The emperor who defeated Napoleon



Updated course outline

Alexander I: the emperor who defeated
Napoleon

Autocracy: the impossible reform

St. Petersburg: a new capital for the
Romanovs

Nicolas II: the last czar

Alexander I: a complex personality
"The Sphinx"

Abruptly taken away from his parents at the age
of 7

Raised at the Winter Palace

Catherine II's favorite grandson (*"Monsieur
Alexandre"*)





A solid education: a Swiss (Republican!) tutor – **Frédéric-César de La Harpe**

To help Alexander become “*an honest man*” and “*an enlightened citizen*”

The importance of **History**

The divine right of kings is unacceptable morally – **Laws and a constitution necessary**

Nikolay Saltykov: Alexander's military tutor

The traditions of **autocracy**

Autocracy comes from the Greek *autos* (self) & *kratos* (power, strength)

Autocracy: a system of government in which supreme power is concentrated in the hands of one person



1793: arranged marriage with Louise of Baden (Elisabeth Alexeïevna)



Maria Narychkina



Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna
(Alexander's sister): the confidante

"My little absurd thing"



Alexander and Napoleon: mutual admiration, fear & hatred

Alexander I on Napoleon: « *a transcendent talent* » and the « *nefarious* » genius of its time



1801: a wait-and-see attitude

1. Peace necessary to promote **reforms** at home
2. Russia's **expansionism** in **Western Georgia** (Black sea) – Multiple sources of tension to be avoided





The Expansion of Russia, 1500–1800

1462	Acquisitions to 1682
Acquisitions to 1505	Acquisitions to 1725
Acquisitions to 1584	Acquisitions to 1796



Napoleon's expansionist policy: a growing threat to Russia



The kidnapping of the Duke of Enghien in Ettenheim (**neutral** Grand Duchy of Baden)



Alexander I: a **military coalition** against Napoleon

A “European Federation” & system of collective security

Skepticism of the British, Austrians & Prussians: a military alliance only (1805)



Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz (2 December 1805) – A disaster for Russia



1806: the invasion of
Prussia

The Prussian army annihilated

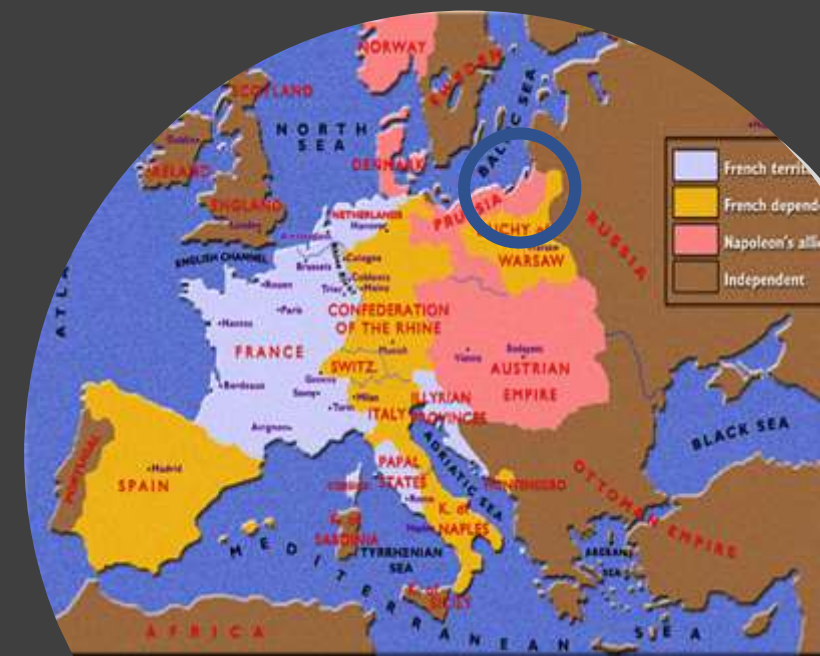
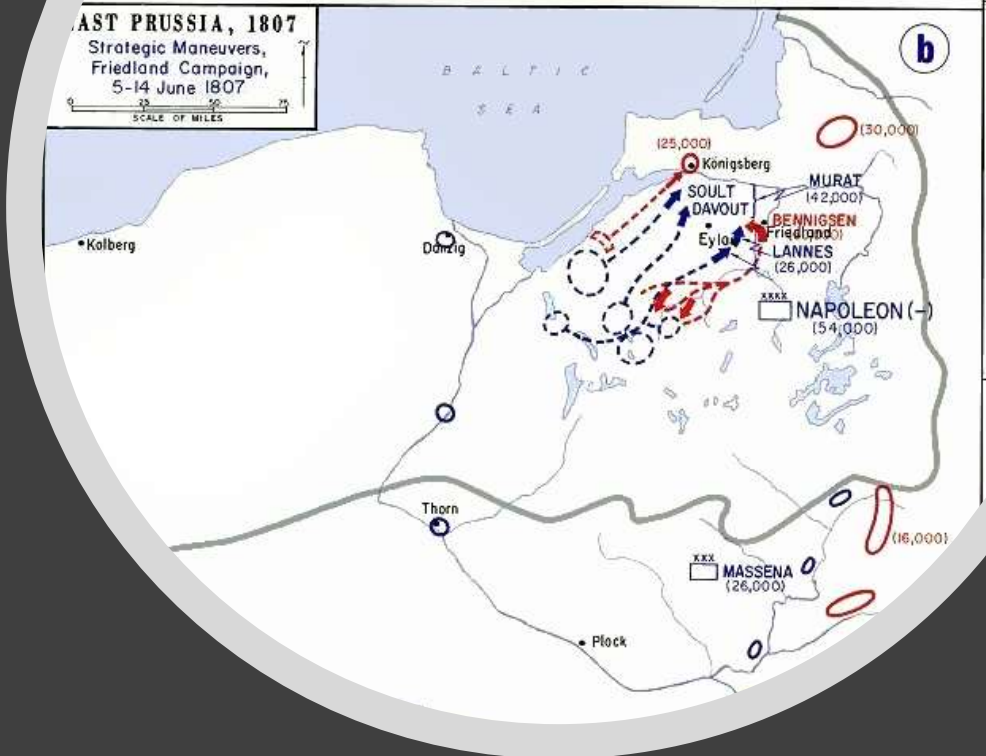
November 1806: the Orthodox
Church excommunicates
Napoleon

June 1807: disaster at Friedland

Alexander forced to negotiate



Alexander meets Napoleon (June-July 1807)



Alexander remains hostile to
Napoleon (*“the Corsican”*)

Napoleon has betrayed the ideals of the
Enlightenment & the French Revolution

Napoleon is a *“tyrant”*

Peace treaty to gain time



Alexander unhappy with peace treaty

French influence in Germany (Confederation of the Rhine)

A Grand Duchy of Warsaw under French influence

Franco-Russian alliance against Great Britain



Russia's main trading partner: Great Britain

The Continental System



1810-1811: renewed tensions

Napoleon invades the Duchy of Oldenburg

Alexander's sister married to the Duke of Oldenburg



1810: Napoleon marries
Archduchess Marie-Louise
of Austria

Russia does not respect the
continental blockade

Another conflict inevitable





1811: Napoleon has a son



Napoleon at the peak of his power

A Franco-European coalition
against Russia

A war against the "*Barbarians of
the North*"

**Napoleon's army of "twenty
nations"**

(680 000 men)

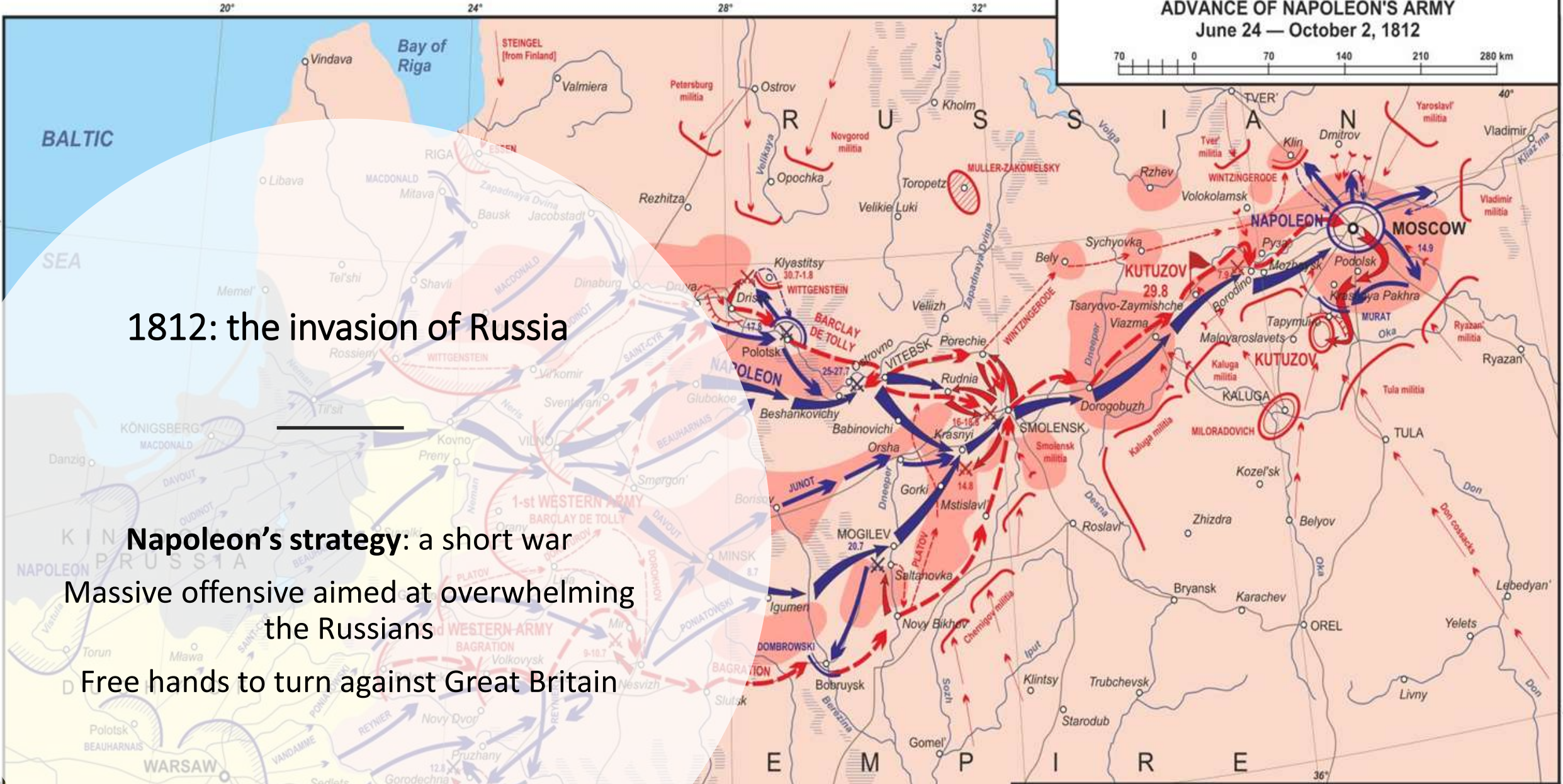
(French soldiers = half of the total)

115 000 Germans (Confederation of the Rhine)

- 79 000 Poles
- 36 000 Prussians
- 31 000 Austrians
- 20 000 Italians
- 10 000 Danes...



ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON'S ARMY
June 24 — October 2, 1812

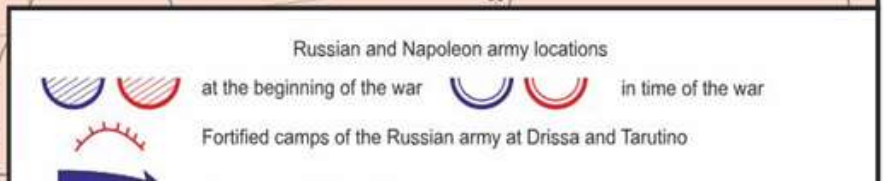


1812: the invasion of Russia

Napoleon's strategy: a short war

Massive offensive aimed at overwhelming the Russians

Free hands to turn against Great Britain



Alexander I and Barclay de Tolly
(Commander-in-Chief of Russian troops):
no direct contact with the French

To let Napoleon's Great Army advance deeper
into Russia

Russian winter

Long distances

Logistics

Successful **defensive strategy**





Napoleon's initial objective: Vilna (Barclay de Tolly's headquarters)



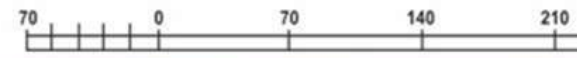
Barclay orders all warehouses & food / weapons supplies to be destroyed



29 August: Alexander I dismisses Barclay de Tolly & appoints **General Kutuzov** commander-in-chief

No change of strategy but Kutuzov is Russian:
“Patriotic War” against Napoleon



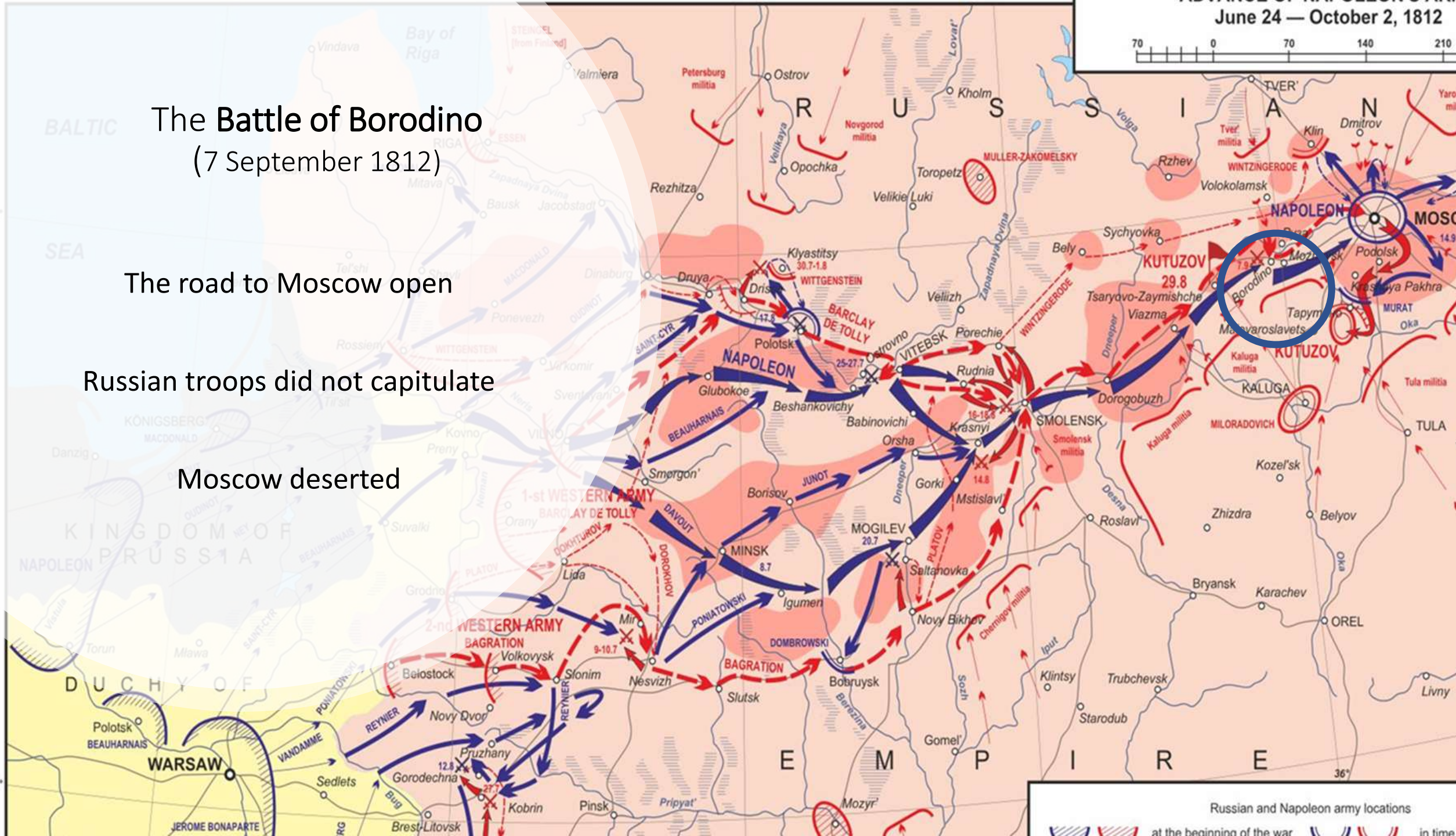


The Battle of Borodino (7 September 1812)

The road to Moscow open

Russian troops did not capitulate

Moscow deserted



Russian and Napoleon army locations
at the beginning of the war in time



14 September: Napoleon enters Moscow

Moscow's governor: Moscow set on fire (all water pumps evacuated)

Russia: political & social cohesion behind the czar
(Patriotic war)

Napoleon's Great Army: lack of discipline
(Looting – Nothing done to prepare for winter)







Napoleon convinced Alexander ready to negotiate

Alexander refuses to negotiate

Napoleon forced to leave Moscow with 120 000 men left

The retreat: a nightmare

Less than 20% of soldiers able to return





Extreme cold (-2/-30) + lack of warm clothes = a nightmare
Frostbite + gangrene



Every man for himself: the end of solidarity





The heavy cost of victory

Cities & villages devastated

300 000 dead

**Alexander: to continue to wage war until
Napoleon politically annihilated (security
for Russia and Europe)**

Campaign in Germany in 1813

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31 March 1814: Alexander I enters Paris

Key role in negotiations of first Treaty of Paris

2 lengthy visits (1814 & 1815 following Waterloo)

Why? 3 main reasons



Alexander: Napoleon's
responsibility vs. innocence
of French people

Clemency

Russian troops ordered to
behave

France to remain an important
power in Europe (balance of
power)



June 1815: Napoleon
defeated at Waterloo

Harsher conditions for France
(hefty war indemnity and loss
of territories) opposed by
Alexander

France not dismembered
thanks to Alexander



2. Operation to win over the French

To promote the image of a civilized czar & Russia

Napoleon's propaganda & the
"Barbarians of the North"

Russia belongs to Europe





3. To influence France's political future

A constitutional & liberal regime for France

No return to the absolute monarchy

Alexander to Louis XVIII: you cannot erase
25 years of history

Louis XVIII: a constitutional Charter



What about Russia?

To conciliate monarchy, reforms & liberalism

1815: a constitutional charter granted to Poland

Project of a global constitution for Russia



