The Government of the United States vs. The Government of Russia

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The U.S. government constitution was formerly drafted for the first thirteen colonies in 1787. The purpose of writing it was to have a central government that can intervene and help states affairs, and protect the newly founded colonies. The constitution was written by James Madison and heavily influenced by George Mason, a delegate from Virginia who participated in the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.
Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

- There are 27 amendments to the US constitution, the original 10 are known as the Bill of Rights.
- The Constitution provides that an amendment may be proposed either by Congress with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate or by a constitutional convention called for by two-thirds of the State legislatures.
The Russian Constitution of 1993 is the final constitution drawn by Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 26, 1991. The main ones were the draft constitution drawn up by the Russian Supreme Soviet’s Constitutional Commission and the draft prepared by the Constitutional Conference convoked by decision of the President. The Russian regions, deputies, specialists and working groups were all involved in this process. The result was a draft constitution submitted by the President to the nation in a referendum. The referendum was held on the basis of the Provision for a Referendum on the Draft Constitution of the Russian Federation. A total of 58,187,755 voters, or 54.8 percent of the registered voters, took part in the referendum on the new draft constitution on December 12, 1993. Change constitution - The 1993 constitution made it the seventh time that Russia had changed its constitution.
Compare and Contrast the U.S. and Russia’s Government Systems

- Both constitutions provide Federal supremacy over states, regions, and territories.
- Both constitutions support a federal government with three branches.
- Bicameral legislature (Senate and House of Rep.).
- However, under Russian constitution, the federal government is granted a much more expansive role, for instance,
  - “federal power grids, . . . federal transport, railways, [and] information and communications;”
  - “law courts; the Procurator’s office; [and] criminal [and] criminal procedure . . .
  legislation[.]”
  - coordination of health issues, protection of the family, motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood, [and] social protection including social security;” just to name a few.
The Branches of U.S. Government

- To make sure power is evenly distributed, the United States government is split into 3 branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.
- The separation of power within the branches ensures that no branch has too much control.
- Each branch has its own powers and has the ability to work with other branches.
The System of Checks and Balances

- The overlapping power of branches distributes power equal so no branch has more control than the others.
- The legislative branch is made up of Congress (the House and the Senate). The main power of the legislative branch is to make laws.
- The executive branch consists of the President, the Vice President, and their cabinet. Their job is to carry out and enforce laws.
- The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and other Federal Courts. The judicial branch evaluates laws.
- Although these branches have main powers, their powers can as well overlap with other branches, keeping each other in “check”.
The Separation of Power and Checks and Balances

Separation of Power and Checks and Balances

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
(Congress)
- writes the laws
- confirms presidential appointments
- ratifies treaties
- grants money
- declares war
- may propose constitutional amendments to overrule judicial decisions
- may impeach Supreme Court justices
- may reject appointments to the Supreme Court
- may adjourn Congress in certain situations
- may declare laws unconstitutional
- may veto bills

EXECUTIVE BRANCH
(President)
- proposes laws
- administers the laws
- commands armed forces
- appoints ambassadors and other officials
- conducts foreign policy
- negotiates treaties
- may declare executive actions unconstitutional

JUDICIAL BRANCH
(Supreme Court)
- interprets the Constitution and other laws
- reviews lower-court decisions
- appoints judges
Russia’s Government system

- Russia is also known as the Russian Federation
- The Russian government is split into 3 branches: the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary
- The Executive: made of the chief of state (the President) and the head of government (the Premier or the Prime Minister). Behind them is the Cabinet (the President’s deputies and minister)
  - The Chief of State represents the country but isn’t truly involved with day to day activities, simply a figurehead
  - The Head of Government is involved with managing the daily activities of the government
  - The Cabinet included high ranked advisers
Russia’s Government System

- The Legislative is made up of two houses (bicameral), and upper house (the Federation Council) and the lower house (the State Duma)
- The Judicial Branch consists of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court - the highest courts
Compare and Contrast the U.S. and Russia’s Government Systems

**Russia**
- Executive: the Government is composed of the primer, his deputies and minister, all are appointed by President and are approved by the Duma
- Russia is a federation
- Judicial: Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court appointed for life by the Fed. Council recommended by the President

**United States**
- Executive: Cabinet appointed by President with Senate approval
- the U.S. is a constitution-based federal republic with strong democratic tradition
- Judicial: Supreme Court (nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and appointed for life)
Compare and Contrast the U.S. and Russia’s Government Systems

**Russia**
- Legislative: Bicameral Federal Embassy
- President elected by Popular vote for 6 year term

**United States**
- Legislative: Bicameral Congress
- President and Vice President elected on same ticket for 4 year terms and are eligible for second term
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