

THE RUSSIAN AWAKENING

A JOINT PAPER

Russian society is waking up and pushing back against Putin's brand of authoritarianism, which it had generally accepted in the previous decade. This awakening has the potential to bring about a transformation of the system into one based on the rule of law. But continued pressure for change from below, an inclusive political process, and responsible behavior at the top are needed before Russia can truly cross into modernity. In the end, a transformed Russia will not be pro-Western or necessarily liberal, but it may become a solid and equal partner of the United States and the European Union.

Russia's Crisis

- The political regime built by President Vladimir Putin has lost legitimacy in the eyes of the more dynamic, modernizing, and now politically active segments of society.
- In response, the Kremlin has made token concessions and resorted to targeted repression and restrictive and punitive legislation.
- The issue of values—from the role of religion to government accountability—is at the core of the tensions between the modernizers and the more conservative groups that accept the state's complete domination of society.
- Opposition parties in parliament have largely failed to increase their impact. The opposition outside parliament, which includes leftists, liberals, and nationalists, has begun to coordinate its actions but still lacks credible leadership and a realistic strategy.
- Russia's socioeconomic system of rent-based capitalism is cracking. Stagnant and possibly falling world oil prices put the Russian economy at risk, and the government struggles to meet its massive social obligations.
- The vertical of power with the elite promising fealty toward the Kremlin in exchange for a license to grow superrich is crumbling as Russia's leaders are seeking to discipline the elite in order to save the system.

What Western Policymakers Can Do to Help Russia's Transformation

Strengthen economic relations with Russia. Permanent normal trade relations between the United States and Russia should be expanded to create a common economic space between Russia and the European Union and to lead to Moscow's accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. These steps would bolster Russian economic and social evolution.

Cooperate with Moscow on regional issues. Working together on issues related to the Arctic and the North Pacific would benefit the United States and the European Union economically and geopolitically, accelerate Russia's development, and help create a genuine security community across the Euro-Atlantic space.

Reach an agreement on U.S.-NATO-Russian cooperation in the area of missile defense. Such cooperation would help transform U.S.-Russian strategic relations by finally overcoming residual Cold War animosity.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dmitri Trenin
Director

Alexei Arbatov
Scholar-In-Residence

Maria Lipman
Editor-In-Chief, *Pro Et Contra*

Alexey Malashenko
Scholar-In-Residence

Nikolay Petrov
Scholar-In-Residence

Andrei Ryabov
Scholar-In-Residence

Lilia Shevtsova
Senior Associate

CONTACT

Natalia Bubnova
Deputy Director of
Communications
NBubnova@carnegie.ru
+7 (495) 935-8904

CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER

Founded in 1994, the Carnegie Moscow Center brings together senior researchers from across the Russian political spectrum and Carnegie's global centers to provide a free and open forum for the discussion and debate of critical national, regional, and global issues.

Carnegie.ru

 [@CarnegieMoscow](https://twitter.com/CarnegieMoscow)

 [facebook.com/
CarnegieMoscow](https://facebook.com/CarnegieMoscow)

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

The world's first truly global think tank with operations in Washington, Moscow, Beijing, Beirut, and Brussels.

© 2012 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. All rights reserved.

The Carnegie Endowment and the Carnegie Moscow Center do not take institutional positions on public policy issues; the views represented here are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Endowment, its staff, or its trustees.