

DISILLUSIONMENT AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: RUSSIAN-U.S. RELATIONS IN 2017

ANDREY KORTUNOV | FEBRUARY 2018

When Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was announced in Russia's lower chamber of parliament, the State Duma, the deputies' response was enthusiastic applause.

"I congratulate all of you on this," a smiling Vyacheslav Nikonov, a deputy for the ruling United Russia party, told his colleagues, announcing the news at a Duma session on the morning of November 9, 2016.¹

While the Republican victory in the race for the White House appeared to come as a surprise to most Russian political analysts and the political leadership, it was greeted with reactions ranging from cautious optimism to outright elation.

A number of factors contributed to these predominantly positive assessments of the new president-elect. First of all, by the fall of 2016, Russians had come to view Hillary Clinton as one of the most hawkish figures in Barack Obama's first administration. Clinton was believed to be a consistent advocate for the use of force in the Middle East, an avid supporter of emphasizing a human rights component in U.S. relations with Moscow, and a demonizer of Russian President Vladimir Putin as the chief opponent of Western democracy, liberal values, and globalization. You could say that the Russian political class had become infected with ABC syndrome: Anyone But Clinton.

Second, in late 2016, many in Russia recalled that Moscow had always had an easier time dealing with the Republican Party leadership than with the Democrats. This was true at the time of detente under Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon, and during perestroika under Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. In addition, despite all the problems in U.S.-Russian relations in the 2000s, Putin felt more comfortable

talking to George W. Bush than to his successor, Obama. Of course, Trump did not fit into the traditional Republican mold, but the Kremlin apparently hoped that Trump's presidential and Republican congressional victories would make U.S. policy toward Russia more predictable and pragmatic.

Third, the new president's election campaign rhetoric—his numerous uncommon statements on topics including Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and NATO—provided some grounds for hope of substantial changes in overall American foreign policy. It seemed to some that Trump did not see Russia as the main security threat but as a potential ally in the inevitable standoff between the United States and China. At the very least, it looked as though Trump was hoping for Moscow's benevolent neutrality on this central U.S. foreign policy issue. Such strategic reorientation would bring significant tactical advantages for Moscow, which could essentially play the role of an intermediary between the two more influential global centers of power in the Washington-Moscow-Beijing geopolitical triangle.

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Yet it appears that neither tactical considerations nor a strong dislike of the post-Obama Democratic leadership were the main reason for the Russian leadership embracing Trump. What was more important was that they viewed Trump as being ideologically closer and thus more understandable to the Kremlin, in contrast with Obama or German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Trump has consistently expressed nationalistic, “America first” views, emphasizing the protection of his country’s immediate interests and U.S. sovereignty over the idea of retaining the theoretical global leadership of the United States. This nationalism struck a chord with the Russian political elite and the Russian president himself.² In addition, Trump expressed his distrust in international organizations, even those created and run by the United States. Putin has expressed very similar views on national sovereignty and international organizations.³

Trump is also a proponent of transactional politics, which means he treats U.S. relations with its partners and adversaries as a business transaction in which each party tries to obtain the most favorable conditions for itself. While he may occasionally use abstract concepts such as “common values,” “interests of humanity,” or “global public opinion,” they are not at the core of his foreign policy. This bears a striking resemblance to what Russia’s leaders have been saying in recent years, calling for the construction of relations upon the parties’ specific interests rather than abstractions such as “common values.”

Of course, some Russian analysts noted the bipartisan nature of U.S. foreign policy back in 2016. They pointed to the strong negative trend in bilateral relations that emerged during Obama’s second term, the U.S. system of checks and balances, and other issues.⁴ Nevertheless, the prevalent mood was generally optimistic, and the election of the new U.S. president generated great expectations.

Trump’s victory can also be viewed through the prism of the dramatic destabilization taking place in Europe. Many long-standing European problems actively manifested themselves in 2016. The UK’s unexpected decision to leave the EU, the rapid rise of right-wing populism and nationalism in leading European countries, the impending crisis of the European political party system, and the deep split in European societies on the issue of immigration all cast doubt on the viability of the European integration project and the stability of

the liberal world order as a whole.⁵ In this context, Trump’s victory was often seen as another manifestation of a general trend: the crisis of the ideological foundation of the international system that took shape after the end of the Cold War.⁶

Looking back and evaluating their attitudes in late 2016 and early 2017, most Russian political analysts and politicians now directly or indirectly acknowledge that their initial expectations were unjustified. Many believe that Trump, a political novice, suffered a defeat in his struggle against the deep state bureaucracy and Washington’s political establishment in general. Others maintain that Trump never seriously intended to expend effort to normalize U.S.-Russian relations, and that his ostentatiously “pro-Russian” rhetoric was nothing more than a ploy to set himself apart from Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and other political opponents. Some still hold that Trump’s strategic goal is to restore cooperation with Moscow, and that he’s merely waiting for the right time to move in that direction.

Every one of these theories puts all the responsibility for the failure to reverse the negative trends in bilateral relations squarely on the United States. Proponents point out that Moscow toned down its anti-American rhetoric in state-run media and refrained from a symmetrical response to unfriendly behavior on the part of the United States.⁷ Moreover, according to later leaks made public by the media, Russian officials sent the White House a comprehensive plan for restoring full-scale cooperation between both countries. The plan included proposals on cybersecurity cooperation, large-scale commercial and investment projects, conflict resolution in Ukraine and on the Korean Peninsula, and joint efforts to combat international terrorism. But the Americans reportedly saw the proposals as unrealistic, and they were not even seriously discussed.

All of these factors provoked feelings of desperation and hopelessness among Russian analysts and politicians regarding the future of U.S.-Russian relations, and by mid-2017, this sentiment had become fairly widespread. Diplomats and other government officials say in private that the Russian side “has done everything it could,” and that “our patience is running out.” They believe that President Trump may be unable to change the deeply irrational but quite rooted Russophobia that runs in the veins of the American foreign policy establishment. They think it’s better for Russia, therefore, to take a break, stop bombarding the United States with new proposals, and focus on other, more promising aspects of its foreign policy.

The last point is especially significant in the context of the events that took place in Europe last year. Having reached its peak, the year-old wave of right-wing populism and Euroskepticism gradually subsided. Pro-European political forces won elections in the Netherlands and France. Germany remained relatively politically stable, so Merkel had no serious challengers for her position as chancellor. Brexit did not trigger a chain reaction across the EU as some had predicted; on the contrary, it consolidated ties among the remaining members. As for the migration issue, although the EU did not completely resolve it in 2017, it is generating far less concern now than it did in 2016, let alone 2015. So fears—or eager anticipation in some quarters—that the EU might break up proved at the very least premature. The Russian leadership had to focus on the European element of its foreign policy once again.

Nevertheless, the jury is still out on the course of U.S.-Russian relations following the Trump administration coming to power. Of course, the negative momentum that had been building throughout Obama's second term is very much a part of U.S.-Russian relations now. Confronting Moscow has become one of the very few issues that Americans agree on, possibly even an aspect of national identity. Still, how inevitable was the escalation of the U.S.-Russian confrontation? Could relations between Moscow and Washington have developed differently if Russia had deployed alternative tactics in the first half of 2017?

Looking back, Russia made at least three tactical (not strategic) mistakes after the new Republican administration came to power. Perhaps a change in the trajectory of U.S.-Russian relations was still possible in January 2017, but the mistakes had a significant cumulative effect that obliterated the modest chance of such change.

First, Russia was incredibly insensitive to American accusations of interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. This meddling—regardless of whether or not it actually occurred—served as a powerful factor to mobilize all anti-Russian political forces in the United States. In fact, it did more to turn the Americans against Russia than Moscow's actions in eastern Ukraine and Syria. Russia chose to deny that the problem even existed, instead of demonstrating its understanding of American concerns and offering full cooperation in the investigation into the accusations of Russian hacking.⁸

Perhaps the Kremlin saw actions taken by hypothetical “patriotic hackers” as just retribution, a sort of delayed response to U.S. involvement in Russia's domestic political struggles in the early 1990s. Some even expressed the opinion that the Americans should be grateful to the hackers for exposing the dark side of the Democratic National Committee's workings. In any event, the accusations of Russian interference significantly impaired the new administration's ability to restore constructive dialogue with Moscow.

Second, the Kremlin chose to interact exclusively with the Trump administration, ignoring its political opponents, both inside and outside of U.S. Congress. Sending signals to American society at large, including its representatives on Capitol Hill, would have been a more reasonable tactic. For instance, Russia could have announced it was prepared to repeal or suspend the notorious Dima Yakovlev law,⁹ which harmed attitudes among the American public toward the Russian government.¹⁰ Restoring some of the Russian-American exchange programs terminated in the last few years of the Obama administration would have been a good idea, too.¹¹ Russia could also have sent a signal that it was willing to restore relations by removing some American NGOs from its list of “undesirable” entities.

We can only speculate now why none of these symbolic—and not very politically costly—gestures have been made. Moscow apparently underestimated once again the degree to which American public opinion and Congress can influence foreign policy decisions made by the executive branch. The Kremlin's projection of its foreign policy model onto other countries and societies evidently also played a role here: the Kremlin can always guarantee legislative and public support for its decisions, so it expects the same of Russia's international partners. Thus, Russia saw the White House's inability to promote its agenda in Congress as an impermissible show of weakness and executive inefficiency, rather than an effective demonstration of how the U.S. system of checks and balances works.

Third, the Russian proposals transmitted to the Trump administration in March called for the restoration of communication channels between the countries' political leaders, as well as military and intelligence agencies.¹² Leaked to the public in September 2017, these proposals contained no changes in Russian positions on questions of U.S. interest (Ukraine, Syria, Iran, “Russian interference” in the 2016 election, and

other issues). In other words, Russia simply wanted to turn the page in bilateral relations and start with a clean slate.

This approach promised no quick diplomatic victories for the Trump administration; they would have had nothing to present to their domestic political opponents. Moreover, restoring full-scale dialogue without any concessions from Moscow, however symbolic, would essentially have meant returning to business as usual. It would have effectively amounted to Washington's departure from the positions the West had consistently held from the start of the Ukrainian crisis. Accepting the Russian proposals, therefore, would not just bring Trump new problems at home, but would also generate additional issues for the already complicated relations that Washington has with its European partners.

Moscow first had concerns about the possible course the new American administration might pursue on issues of importance to Russia in the spring of 2017. The White House issued a graphic illustration of its new style by launching a missile strike against Syria's Shayrat airbase in Homs Province on the night of April 6. The strike was a response to the Syrian chemical attack in the city of Khan Sheikhun. Russia strongly condemned the U.S. operation and countered by suspending the memorandum of understanding between Russia and the United States on preventing incidents and ensuring flight safety in Syrian airspace, which had been in effect since October 2015.¹³

Russia was no less concerned by a tougher American stance on Iran, especially in light of U.S. threats to reevaluate the conditions for its participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program. The White House's belligerent statements on North Korea and the flexing of U.S. muscle in the North Pacific also disturbed the Russian leadership.

Moscow noted other alarming trends coming from the White House. Trump's team was gradually losing its Russian sympathizers, while conservatives—primarily former military officials—were gaining more ground. Trump's rhetoric on issues such as NATO, Ukraine, and Afghanistan also underwent some change. The U.S. administration was seeking to curtail its international obligations in general and was dragging its feet on organizing the first presidential summit between Putin and Trump.

Slim hopes that bilateral relations might improve or at least stabilize appeared after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

first visited Moscow on April 11–12,¹⁴ but hardly anyone expected a real breakthrough by that time. Most experts were inclined to believe that even if a window of opportunity for some far-reaching agreement between the Kremlin and the White House existed in the first one-hundred days of the new administration, that window then rapidly started to close after Tillerson's visit.

Back in April 2017, the parties still entertained the idea of a meeting between the two heads of state on neutral European territory. Finland and Iceland were named as possible venues for such a summit, which was tipped to take place after Trump's first official foreign visits to Saudi Arabia, Israel, Italy, the Vatican, and Belgium in late May. But it had become clear by late April that a U.S.-Russian presidential summit would not lead to substantial progress on any of the issues that the White House considered important and would only create additional problems at home for Trump, regardless of its outcome. As a result, a full-fledged Russian-U.S. summit never took place, and the two presidents only met on July 7 on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg.

Even though their meeting lasted for more than two hours and resulted in a host of practical agreements, from imposing a ceasefire in southeastern Syria to creating a diplomatic channel for consultations on Ukraine, the parties could not start the process of restoring U.S.-Russian relations, nor could they even prevent relations from deteriorating further. This past summer, Congress started active work on a new round of anti-Russian sanctions, which was almost unanimously passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate at the end of July. Trump signed the sanctions bill into law on August 2, although he did voice his displeasure with the document.

The adoption of the new sanctions is certainly the most significant event in U.S.-Russian relations in 2017. It capped a six-month period of hope and frustration, guesswork and speculation, waiting and diplomatic signals. The decision had a substantial economic impact on Russia and revealed the current balance of forces in Washington.

First, it demonstrated that the U.S. president has very limited independence from Congress. Essentially, Congress declared that it does not trust Trump's dealings with Russia, and it took upon itself some of the power traditionally held by the executive in this sphere.¹⁵

Second, since the law enumerated all of the Kremlin's real or purported transgressions, which were substantially outside the scope of bilateral relations, Moscow concluded that the United States had elected to follow a long-term strategy aimed at weakening Russia as much as possible, regardless of what the latter does in the international arena.¹⁶

Third, the law put Russia in the same category as Iran and North Korea. In doing so, the United States—directly or indirectly—pushed these countries toward closer cooperation with each other. On the whole, it would be fair to say that if the authors of this legislation were seeking to effect some positive change in Russian foreign policy rather than simply punish Putin, they have failed, and will not achieve their objectives in the future, either. On the contrary, just as was the case with U.S. and EU sanctions in 2014, they are likely to achieve the opposite result.

Moreover, the new round of sanctions has caused the Russian authorities to recalibrate their approach to dealing with the United States and Europe. At the start of 2017, the idea of bypassing crisis-ridden Europe and reaching a direct bilateral agreement with the Americans was very popular in Moscow. However, by late July, Russia started trying to secure European support in its struggle against U.S. sanctions. Answering a question about sanctions in Finland in late July, Putin emphasized their “extraterritoriality” and stated that the sanctions were an attempt by Washington to use its “geopolitical advantages in the competitive struggle with the goal of ensuring its economic interests at the expense of its allies.”¹⁷

In August and September, the two states exchanged new diplomatic sanctions, significantly lowering their mutual diplomatic representation, which in turn complicated the matter of processing U.S. visas for Russians. The United States extended a ban on financing cultural and educational programs involving Russia, and several Russian (and subsequently, American) media outlets were required to register as “foreign agents.” But the most vivid illustration of the deplorable state of U.S.-Russian relations was perhaps the cancelation of an extensive meeting that had been planned between the countries' top leaders at the APEC summit in Da Nang, Vietnam. Instead, the two presidents had a brief “standing summit” on November 10. The Russians subsequently blamed protocol officers for the failed meeting, but this explanation did not sit well with journalists or analysts from either country. In any case,

a full-fledged presidential summit has now been postponed indefinitely, although both parties express an interest in holding one.

The Trump administration's failure to improve relations between Moscow and Washington in its first year confirms some time-tested patterns. For instance, the most ostensibly anti-Russian U.S. presidents tend to achieve more in their dialogue with Moscow, a phenomenon clearly illustrated by the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Hillary Clinton could have become such a president too, but Donald Trump can not. During his tenure, cooperation with Moscow has stopped being purely a matter of foreign policy, and has moved firmly into the domestic political arena.

It is also evident that greater external and domestic problems do not necessarily force both countries onto the path of closer cooperation. On the contrary, Moscow and Washington remain convenient adversaries for one another, even thirty years after the end of the Cold War. Their confrontation is traditionally used as an instrument for political mobilization; it could even be called an element of national identity. Trump's attempts to single out China as the main geopolitical foe of the United States during his presidential campaign were doomed to fail. China remains an inconvenient adversary for the United States, and a serious confrontation with Beijing would bring Washington enormous economic losses, among others. International terrorism has also turned out to be an inconvenient adversary: it is an uncertain and blurry phenomenon, making the prospects of victory over it unclear.

For many in the Russian political class, confronting the United States is an even more significant part of foreign policy. It is the framework that sustains other aspects of foreign policy. Unfortunately, no other framework has been found in the years since the Cold War. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the new generation of Russian political experts, journalists, and diplomats who started their careers after the Soviet collapse have adopted the old Soviet logic of geopolitical confrontation with Washington.

The past year has also confirmed the old truth that pompous declarations about incompatible values and material differences on fundamental questions often conceal specific subjective errors related to a lack of understanding of the political culture and decisionmaking mechanisms of the other side.¹⁸

Both the way Russia treated the hacking scandal and the way the new U.S. sanctions law was framed illustrate the fatal mistakes made in 2017.

Nevertheless, there were also some positive outcomes in 2017, however small. The year showed that multilateral formats in which both sides participate play an especially important role when bilateral relations sharply deteriorate. Apart from phone conversations, the only personal contact between Putin and Trump took place within this format: at the G20 summit in Hamburg in July, and at the APEC summit in Da Nang in November. The multilateral format of the 2015 P5+1 agreement on Iran's nuclear program somewhat softened the substantial differences between Russia and the United States on this issue.¹⁹ This format is beneficial because it makes it possible to focus more on a problem itself than on its importance for U.S.-Russian relations.

In addition, certain aspects of U.S.-Russian cooperation proved their stability in 2017. Both sides successfully worked together in the Arctic. Even though the United States continued to chair the Arctic Council until mid-May, in the two years of American chairmanship, both countries managed to avoid the negativity that clouded other aspects of their relations. Another positive example is bilateral trade, which grew 17.5 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters of 2017, reaching \$16.6 billion.²⁰ On the whole, the most successful aspects of cooperation were those that received no attention from politicians: aspects that were not used as bargaining chips in the exchanging of sanctions and other negative interactions.

There was also a certain stability in some more politically sensitive spheres. The trilateral agreement among Russia, the United States, and Jordan on a ceasefire in southeastern Syria, which was signed in early July, was a good case in point. In November, it was also supplemented by a trilateral memorandum. There is far less talk of the Amman Syrian peace talks format than about what's been happening in Geneva and Astana. However, both Russian and American experts testify to its effectiveness in one of the most complex and explosive Syrian regions. Neither party has had cause to accuse the other of the conscious sabotage or a unilateral violation of the agreement. Both sides could therefore try to use the positive experience gained through the Amman format to stabilize the situation in other Syrian regions.

Finally, Donald Trump's first year in office confirms the traditional key importance of strategic arms control for bilateral relations. Some of Trump's pronouncements during his presidential campaign might have created the impression that he did not believe that strategic arms control should be a priority for U.S. foreign policy. Both Moscow and Washington had numerous questions and doubts about the future of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and New START. But if strategic arms control questions are removed from U.S.-Russian relations, they may simply fall apart. That's why the bilateral consultations on issues of strategic stability that got under way in August 2017 are so important. Of course, rapid progress should not be expected in this sphere, but the mere restart of a Russian-American dialogue is a definite, albeit modest, accomplishment of 2017.

NOTES

1. See article in Russian on RIA Novosti, November 9, 2016, <https://ria.ru/politics/20161109/1480965810.html>.
2. Interestingly enough, in November 2016 Putin spoke positively, albeit somewhat condescendingly, about the Kremlin's consistent critic, Senator John McCain. "Actually, I like him a bit for his patriotism and consistent defense of his country's interests," Putin said. See article in Russian on Lenta.ru, June 8, 2017, https://lenta.ru/news/2017/06/08/putin_mccain/.
3. In his much-cited speech at Russia's Security Council meeting on July 22, 2014, Putin said, "Russia is fortunately not a member of any alliance. This is also a guarantee of our sovereignty. Any nation that is part of an alliance gives up part of its sovereignty. This doesn't always meet the national interest of a given country." See "Security Council Meeting," President of Russia's official website, July 22, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46305>.
4. For instance, the opinions expressed in Igor Ivanov, "Russia-U.S. Relations: The Limits of Possible," Russian International Affairs Council, March 16, 2016, <http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/rossiysko-amerikanskije-otnosheniya-granitsy-vozmozhnogo/>.
5. See the Valdai Discussion Club Report published in 2017: Oleg Barabanov et al., "Global Revolt and Global Order: The Revolutionary Situation in Condition of the World and What to Do About It," Valdai Discussion Club, February 2017, <http://valdaiclub.com/files/13306/>.
6. Andrey Kortunov, "From Post-Modernism to Neo-Modernism: The World at the Crossroads of Two Eras," Russia in Global Affairs, February 13, 2017, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/From-Post-Modernism-to-Neo-Modernism-18578>.

7. Most notably, Moscow failed to symmetrically and immediately respond to the expulsion of thirty-five of its diplomats from the United States and the closing down of two diplomatic compounds in the suburbs of New York and Washington in late 2016.
8. Putin's interview with NBC anchor Megyn Kelly at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in early June 2017 illustrates this approach. See "Interview to NBC," President of Russia's official website, June 5, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54688>.
9. A law passed in 2012 that bans U.S. nationals from adopting Russian children. The law was passed in response to the U.S. Magnitsky Act, which created a blacklist of Russian officials involved in a legal case in which tax accountant Sergei Magnitsky died in prison.
10. Moscow indeed contemplated discussing the possible repeal of the law with the Americans, and the speaker of the upper house of the Russian parliament, Valentina Matviyenko, talked about this in early January 2017. See article in Russian on RIA Novosti, January 18, 2017, <https://ria.ru/politics/20170118/1485956505.html>. Unfortunately, no real dialogue on the issue got under way.
11. The most negative impact in the United States was, it seems, caused by Russia stopping its participation in the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program for high school students in 2014. The program had sent over 8,000 Russian children to the U.S. during a period of more than twenty years. See Neil MacFarquhar and Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Cancels Exchange Program After a Student Seeks U.S. Asylum," *New York Times*, October 4, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/world/europe/russia-cancels-exchange-program-after-a-student-seeks-us-asylum.html>.
12. See John Hudson, "How Putin Hoped to Make Up With the US," BuzzFeed News, September 12, 2017, https://www.buzzfeed.com/johnhudson/russia-sought-a-broad-reset-with-trump-secret-document-shows?utm_term=.vfw7L2mkLQ#.eyqKEoVzEp.
13. See article in Russian on NEWSru, April 7, 2017, <http://www.newsru.com/russia/07apr2017/attashe.html>. Many doubt that contacts between the Russian and American military forces were actually suspended, even for a short period.
14. The April 12 joint press conference held by Sergei Lavrov and Rex Tillerson in Moscow. See article in Russian on RIA Novosti, April 12, 2017, <https://ria.ru/politics/20170412/1492122689.html>.
15. Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. See article in Russian on TASS, July 26, 2017, <http://tass.ru/politika/4440127>.
16. See article in Russian by Sergey Sokolov at the Russian Council on International Affairs, July 31, 2017, <http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/novye-sanktsii-ssha-protiv-rossii-chem-otvetim/>.
17. See article in Russian on TASS, July 27, 2017, <http://tass.ru/politika/4444654>.
18. See Alexander Gabuev's article in Russian with *Vedomosti*, August 8, 2017, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/articles/2017/08/08/728392-sanktsii-karera>.
19. The five permanent UN Security Council members (Russia, the United States, China, France, and the UK) plus Germany.
20. See article in Russian on MFD-InfoCenter, November 13, 2017, <http://mfd.ru/news/view/?id=2211465>.

U.S.-RUSSIA POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE LONG HAUL

With the U.S.-Russian relationship badly frayed, what are the biggest risks for escalation, deterioration, and miscalculation? What, if any, opportunities exist for halting a continued downward slide?

With an eye toward informing the conversation about key issues in U.S.-Russian relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has commissioned a series of analytical papers by leading U.S., Russian, and European experts and practitioners to take a cold-eyed look at these challenges.

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perspectives beyond the relatively narrow confines of the current discussion in Washington and other capitals. The papers highlight the glaring differences between Russian and Western approaches to and perspectives on transatlantic, European, and Eurasian security.

The search for mutual understanding and dialogue is all the more challenging at a time when many of the long-established communication channels between Moscow and the West have been suspended as a result of what is increasingly described as a new cold war. Many of the perspectives in this collection differ, at times fundamentally, from the consensus view held by Western policymakers and analysts. Nevertheless, it is all the more vital for policymakers, analysts, and opinion-makers in the West to be informed about views held by their Russian counterparts, as these views oftentimes reflect and inform official Russian policy. This project is supported, in part, by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.



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