



Former Russian Foreign Minister Looks Forward

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On June 13, the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC) was pleased to host an exclusive private dinner for former Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

The event, held at Washington's famous Hay Adams Hotel, brought together such political luminaries as former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and former Senator Bob Kasten for an extensive and thought-provoking discussion of the current state of U.S.-Russian relations.

Kozyrev, who served as Foreign Minister from 1999-1996, presided over a period of moderate politics in Moscow under the Administration of former President Boris Yeltsin. He shared his views on Russia's current, anti-Western trajectory under Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin. Putin's current level of popularity, Kozyrev suggested, is both inflated and misleading.

It is driven by hopelessness among the Russian public, and by a lack of viable political alternatives to the current Russian government, rather than real, deep support for Putin's authoritarianism and foreign adventurism. The United States and Europe, he noted, possess significant leverage – above and beyond the sanctions currently being levied on the Kremlin – to deter Putin, as well as to promote positive political change in Russia.