



RUSSIA REFORM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of  
Russian Government Actions and U.S. Policy

# Russia Reform Monitor No. 2316

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**Related Categories:** Democracy and Governance; Europe Military; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Russia; Ukraine

## WHAT SHAPE WILL RUSSIA TAKE IN TEN YEARS?

The Free Russia Foundation has published "Russia Scenarios 2030," an examination of the key factors most likely to affect Russia's future decisionmaking and development over the coming decade. The twelve scenarios envision predominantly negative outcomes for Russia as a result of either continuing trends or abrupt reversals, including debilitating energy dependence, a sudden military confrontation, or Moscow's gradual devolution into a proxy superpower controlled by China.

Three major factors appear consistently throughout all scenarios: Putin's persona, global energy prices, and the current lack of "quick and easy" ways to improve the U.S.-Russian relationship. Beyond these three similarities, the forecasts diverge on the basis of each author's calculation regarding the likelihood of social strife or uprisings should internal and external pressures intensify. The role of China and the forcing effect of international sanctions also rank among the most important factors shaping the scenarios. According to Natalia Arno, the Foundation's president, the analysis is intended to ensure that the international policy and activist communities are prepared for any kind of dramatic shift in the country's trajectory and can support Russia's "transition to a more positive future." (Free Russia Foundation, May 2019)

## RUSSIA'S MILITARY-RELIGIOUS COMPLEX

In contrast to other countries of predominantly Christian faith, where signs of excessive religious influence over the professional military provokes controversy, Russia is fully embracing the growing bond between its Orthodox Church and its armed forces. In recent years, religious traditions and acknowledgements have begun appearing with ever-greater frequency among Russia's military, including the blessing of missile silos, "pep talks" that idolize religious-military links from the country's medieval past, and the Kremlin's recent plans to construct a Church of the Armed Forces in Moscow's Patriot Park. Last August, the Ministry of Defense created a new body, called the Main Political Directorate of the General Staff, that has been charged with "developing structures at all levels for the armed forces" for religious education and integration.

Perhaps the most intriguing manifestation of this trend is the Church's relationship to Russia's nuclear forces. Patriarch Kirill, the Church's leader, has stated in the past that the Church deserves credit for "maintaining the country's nuclear capacity in an era when finances and confidence was rock-bottom." Indeed, *Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy*, a new book by IDC Herziya University professor Dima Adamsky, tracks this relationship from the early 1990s, when the enforced atheism of the Soviet Union was discarded, and both the Orthodox Church and the country's nuclear stewards and scientists found themselves adrift. Adamsky compares today's Orthodox priests to the "zampoliti" officers of the Soviet military who were tasked with disseminating Marxist ideology, rallying morale, and remaining vigilant for potential dissidents. (*The Economist*, May 29, 2019)

## CAPITOL HILL WEIGHS INCREASED SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel and Ranking Member Michael McCaul have proposed legislation that would promote new measures to assist Ukraine, noting that "as the world's lead defender of freedom, the United States must employ all tools necessary to protect our shared values." If passed, the bill would allow for the provision of anti-ship and anti-aircraft weapons to Kyiv (two new categories of lethal security assistance) while also condemning Moscow's continued detention of 24 Ukrainian sailors, calling for full implementation of the Minsk II peace agreement, and asking President Trump to consider determining Ukraine as a major non-NATO ally. Meanwhile, the Senate is currently debating this year's defense authorization act, which contains a provision authorizing up to \$300 million for security assistance to Ukraine (\$100 million of which can be used for lethal aid). In total, the United States has already provided more than \$3 billion cumulatively in assistance and \$3 billion in sovereign loan guarantees to Ukraine since Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. (*Defense News*, May 31, 2019)

## NO LENIENCY FOR ELECTION ACTIVIST

A Moscow court has upheld strict pre-trial detention restrictions for Golos official Roman Udot. Udot, a board member of the independent election monitoring organization, was arrested last month on trumped-up charges that he had threatened to kill two reporters from the state-owned NTV news organization. Both Memorial and Human Rights Watch have condemned the case as politically motivated and criticized the Russian government for failing to curb NTV's aggressive tactics. Memorial officials have warned that Udot's arrest is likely an attempt to intimidate Golos and interfere with its activities prior to the regional and local elections that will take place this September. (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 4, 2019)

