

THINK ABOUT HOW THE WORLD LOOKS THROUGH THE OTHER'S EYES

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Any realistic hope of managing a negotiated peaceful end to the Syrian civil war, or preventing Iran getting a nuclear bomb, or maximizing the chance for relative stability in Afghanistan, or keeping global energy markets stable, will require successful cooperation with Putin's Russia. Beyond those issues, there are in addition counterterrorism and moving toward a more stable global nuclear order. In sum, Russia matters only if one is seriously concerned about protecting and advancing America's national interests.

The easiest course for leaders of both countries is to blame the other; certainly that sells best in the domestic politics of each. And about Putin's Russia, there is certainly lots not to like.

But if American and Russian leaders will focus first on their own national interests, they will conclude that poking each other in the eye or insisting on unrealistic demands are unhelpful. Finding a path to the limited cooperation essential for dealing with the challenges that matter most will require both to think more clearly about how the world looks through the other's eyes, and to compromise in ways that will be uncomfortable, especially in the domestic politics in each country.

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