

COMMON INTERESTS, FUTURE BENEFITS

Dmitry Gorenburg, [Davis Ctr for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University](#)

Russia is one of the two most influential nondemocratic countries in the world. While chances for a successful transition to democracy in the near future are low, the benefits of such a future course would be high. The keys to promote democracy without the appearance of interference in Russia's internal affairs, since that would be counterproductive. Our common interests include:

- The two countries still have a common interest in cooperating against terrorism. The Boston Marathon bombings show that such cooperation is in the interest of the United States as much as it is in Russia's.
- Russia continues to play an important role in providing the U.S. military with access to Afghanistan. While this is a short-term common interest, after the NATO withdrawal is complete, Russia will become the most important player in ensuring that potential instability in Afghanistan does not spread north.
- Russia remains an important player in world energy markets.
- Russia remains the United States' only peer competitor in terms of nuclear weapons.

Dmitry Gorenburg is a Senior Analyst at [CNA Analysis and Solutions](#) and a Center Associate at the [Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University](#).

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