

# POTENTIAL PAYOFF IS WORTH CONTINUED EFFORT

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The U.S.–Russia relationship matters for two reasons. First, the United States can more successfully address many global challenges if it has Russia at its side. The potential payoff is worth the continued effort to bridge the differences between the two states. Second, Russia is undergoing considerable social change that has the potential to affect its role in the international system. The United States has an interest in being engaged with Russia at this time of change, to better understand its domestic dynamics and to capably respond to them in ways that increase the odds of deepening and sustaining the relationship.

The United States should engage with Russia in the same way it engages with other partners that do not fully share Americans' international outlook or domestic practices—no more, no less. The U.S. administration should keep expectations modest while continuing to demonstrate an interest in cooperation even on the most challenging of issues. We certainly should not treat every one of Moscow's disagreements with Washington as evidence of some kind of uniquely Russian opposition to the existing world order. But for the United States to continue extending a hand, the Russian government ought to dispense with its use of anti-Americanism (and anti-Westernism) for domestic purposes. It also should accept that what happens inside Russia unavoidably affects its standing internationally—the same way it does the United States or any other country.

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