RING-FENCE AREAS WHERE THINGS ARE WORKING

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Politicians on both sides have convinced themselves the relationship doesn’t matter all that much. For years, the expert community has been drawing up lists of reasons why a productive and cooperative U.S.-Russia relationship matters to both countries’ security and prosperity—but these arguments don’t seem to have fallen on fertile ground.

Politicians should stop trying to “fix” the U.S.-Russia relationship. The current climate, plus the personalities of the two presidents, do not bode well for pursuing new “resets.” What’s more important right now is to ring-fence those areas where things are working to create habits of cooperation or to build a foundation for a better relationship at a future date. We don’t need U.S. congressmen or Russian bureaucrats throwing monkey wrenches that mess up productive technical cooperation or promising economic relationships.

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