

# RUSSIA'S FUTURE:

## A CHALLENGE FOR U.S. POLICY

The Jamestown  
Foundation &  
Delphi Global  
Research Center  
Washington D.C.,  
USA

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FREE NATIONS  
OF POSTRUSSIA  
FORUM



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# WASHINGTON DECLARATION

June 16, 2025

The Forum of Free Nations of Post-Russia, together with the Jamestown Foundation and Delphi Global held an international conference at the Bush School of Governance and Public Service in Washington D.C. on June 12, 2025. The event focused on the future of Russia and the challenges to U.S. policy and was attended by over 110 people in person and 170 online. The conference produced several key observations and policy recommendations:

**1. Russia's war against Ukraine is a global war. It pitches the Western democracies and their allies against the autocratic axis of Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.** This axis can be defeated by dissolving its weakest links. In this context, Russia remains a brittle colonial empire which can neither be transformed nor reformed. The only long-term solution is systemic decolonization, in which the captive nations and captive regions, as well as the Russian majority itself, will benefit from the freedom to establish new states. Such geostrategic progress will help propel the West toward victory in this global war and help undermine the offensive potential of the PRC (Peoples Republic of China).

**2. No durable reset or rebuilding of the relationship with Russia is currently possible, as the problems revolve around the structure of the state rather than the current regime in the Kremlin.** However, Russia today is more fragile than the Soviet Union in 1991 before its disintegration. The war against Ukraine and international economic sanctions have undermined its main source of income – energy exports. With a full push of tougher sanctions and their stricter enforcement Russia can be rapidly defeated in Ukraine, as its war machine and repressive apparatus will be starved of resources. Russia's military defeat in Ukraine is an imperative for the dissolution of the imperial state.

**3. Many Western leaders are fearful of Russia's breakdown and decolonialization, believing that this will result in a bloody Yugoslav scenario with nuclear weapons.** To better advise governments and public about the scenarios of Russia's systemic dissolution, as well as the aspirations and prospects for its citizens, much more information is needed about the captive nations. Russia is not a monolith, but consists of diverse nations and regional identities even among the Russian ethnicity in widely separated territories such as St. Petersburg, the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East. Without Moscow's imperial control, many of Russia's republics and regions will seek to establish cooperative and productive relations with their neighbors – from Finland, Poland, the Baltic states, and Ukraine in the west, to Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Japan in the east.

**4. The dismantling of the Russian empire will constitute a major victory for the United States. It will enhance security in Europe, the Arctic, and Asia by eliminating the military threat from Moscow to its numerous neighbors.** It will enable the emergence of new states that will seek de-nuclearization in order to gain international recognition. It will generate economic cooperation through investment and trade with the new states possessing abundant natural resources and seeking international partners. And it will allow America to establish ties with new potential allies in Eurasia, including Buryatia, Siberia, Sakha, and a Pacific Federation, that will curtail the colonial ambitions of Beijing and develop links with other regional allies such as Japan and South Korea.

**5. Washington must prepare for a scenario where the repressive glue holding the Russian Federation together comes unstuck amidst economic decline, political power struggles, and calls for the separation of several republics and regions.** The formation of new states is a process visible throughout history when loyalty to the existing state dissipates and new forms of sovereignty are widely supported. U.S. policies in the 1980s and early 1990s hastened the collapse of the Soviet empire, and many of these can be emulated, including support for political pluralism, minority rights, administrative decentralization, ethno-national autonomy, and self-determination among Russia's disparate regions. Assistance can be provided to Russia's civic and ethno-regional activists online and in exile. Western capitals can host members of the political opposition and independent media outlets, provide financial aid, and protect them from Moscow's security services. This would help undermine the isolation of Russian society fostered by the Putin regime and challenge the anti-Western narrative in the official media.

**6. By managing the process of dissolution, Western governments lessen the likelihood of conflict that spills over state borders.** By establishing direct political and diplomatic links with Russia's republics and regions the U.S. and Europe can promote the peaceful transition toward statehood. Washington must also engage directly with the post-Putin government in Moscow and stand firm that shedding Russia's remaining imperial possessions will prove beneficial for security, economic development, and international cooperation.

*The full conference can be viewed on [www.youtube.com/live/YX24goQ\\_aAo](https://www.youtube.com/live/YX24goQ_aAo)*

*Washington DC, June 16, 2025*