

NOT A ZERO-SUM GAME: US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD



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It is a common stereotype to describe relations between the US and Russia as a zero-sum game between erstwhile rivals, in which one side's gain is inevitably the other side's loss, and vice versa. Indeed, on a growing number of international issues, from Syria to gay rights to Ukraine, the two countries now find themselves at odds, which remind us that tensions and conflicts have been a regular feature of the US-Russian relationship for over a century. But the really important part of the record of the history of their relations – including the period of the Cold War - is their demonstrated ability to work together, in spite of their differences, in the face of major threats and challenges to world peace and security. In the 21st century, deeper and more productive US-Russian cooperation is in the best interests of both nations and of the world as a whole – a world which has gone far beyond the bipolar model of the Cold War. Developing such cooperation is a realistic goal which should be steadfastly pursued by both sides.

In his native Russia, Dr. Sergei Plekhanov's job was to explain America to Russians. As a Moscow academic expert on US-Russian relations, he took part in the development of ideas for the historic reforms undertaken by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, which helped bring the Cold War to an end. Today, as a scholar, consultant, lecturer, media commentator and peace advocate, he is known for his unique ability to explain Russia to Americans. Professor Plekhanov teaches international and comparative politics at York University in Toronto, Canada. He has also taught at UC Irvine and Occidental College in Los Angeles.



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