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Public Opinion in Perspective: Russia

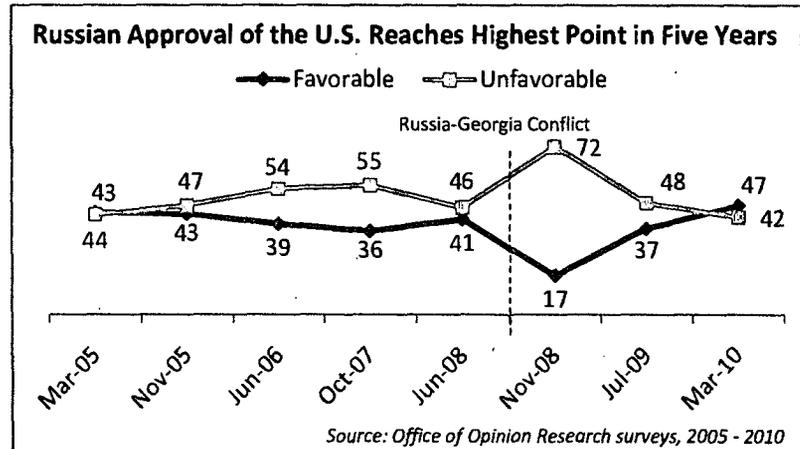
FAVORABLE VIEWS OF U.S. ON THE RISE

Public views of the United States have risen steadily since their low point just after the 2008 Georgia war:

- 47% have a favorable opinion of the United States, up from 17% in November 2008.
- 71% describe the relationship between Russia and the United States as "friendly" and 79% say it is important for Russia to maintain good relations with the United States.

These views are bolstered by favorable views of the new **START agreement** and the desire for greater cooperation between Russia and the United States:

- 66% say it is in Russia's interest to work closely with the United States and Western powers.
- 60% think the previous START agreement benefitted both the United States and Russia equally, and 72% feel that the new START agreement is important.
- A majority would welcome U.S.-Russian cooperation on combating terrorism (87%), stopping the spread of WMDs (86%), stopping climate change (81%), and halting the flow of drugs through Central Asia (76%).



But Russians are wary of the international mission in **Afghanistan** and sanctions against **Iran**:

- 78% oppose their country providing troops to military operations in Afghanistan, and 63% oppose the transit of international troops through Russian territory or air space. However, pluralities would support taking a larger role in development assistance (43%) and the transit of aid (45%) to Afghanistan.
- 48% are unaware of Iran's nuclear program. Among those who have heard of the program, 42% see it as a minor threat to global stability, while 21% see it as no threat at all.
- 45% of those who have heard of the program would support economic sanctions to discourage Iran from continuing its nuclear program. Only 8% would support military action.

RUSSIANS SEE COMPETITION FOR WORLD LEADERSHIP

Russians feel their country should be a leader on the world stage and appear open to greater integration with the world economy:

- 87% say it is desirable for Russia to exert leadership in global affairs.
- 63% favor closer economic ties with other countries.

This global outlook is coupled with wariness about the intentions of other countries, and suggests that improved bilateral cooperation has not erased skepticism about the United States:

- 52% say that the West is trying to impoverish Russia.
- Though increasingly "friendly" toward the United States, 58% still see the U.S. more as a competitor than a partner, and 79% say it is not in Russia's interest for the United States to play a leadership role in global affairs.

RUSSIANS DON'T WANT COOPERATION IN THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

In one arena of international affairs Russian views are especially clear:

- 81% feel that Russia will always have a privileged interest in the CIS countries.
- A majority oppose U.S.-Russian cooperation on resolving the conflicts in South Ossetia (67%), Transnistria (63%), or Nagorno-Karabakh (60%).