

## LET'S 'LEVEL OUT' RUSSIA



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There are two major methods for handling the task of modernization. The first method is to create a favorable climate for investors and then wait for things to develop by themselves. The second method is to generate various points of technological growth and provide them with individual support from the government.

Russia cannot wait for a modernization that exclusively follows the first of these two methods. However, to rely solely on the second method is not an adequate solution either; we saw this time and again in the Soviet era.

The only reasonable solution for Russia is to combine both methods. However, this cannot be accomplished without producing a certain number of focal modernization places, specific areas more developed than others. Such **'localities' can possess not only territorial but also industrial features.** For example, nuclear energy or the Global Navigation Satellite System are both crucial 'localities of modernization.'

For the past decade, several measures have been taken to reduce the number of 'backward' territories. **The greater the regional development, the greater the opportunity to pursue a policy based on stimulating growth.**

It is difficult to precisely define modernization in practical terms. But its central importance lies in offering new opportunities for individuals and enterprises, allowing them to work more effectively, with greater effi-

ciency, and above all, encouraging them to produce something new. In India, if a son of poor and ignorant peasants learns English and mathematics and goes to work in Bangalore as a programmer, then he has already become an element of modernization for his country. He and his children may one day be able to design a steering mechanism for fifth generation fighter aircrafts.

For the success of any modernization plan, it is important to continually motivate people to work and reside in our country, instead of leaving and going to work abroad. This point is crucial, and is something to be fought for – not through prohibition or legislation, but through positive encouragement and the creation of attractive and competitive conditions. This invariably includes the development of certain 'geographic localities of modernization.'

There is no doubt that Russia is capable of creating such focal modernization. Perhaps the best examples were the many Soviet era science-towns, where considerable scientific breakthroughs and technical projects were realized.

Ultimately, there remains the problem of providing an effective transition from focal modernization to real innovative development. Such a transition will no doubt require the help of broad elements in society and of the private sector as well. This is a real challenge, and at the moment we have yet to find an adequate solution. ■

## MODERNIZATION MUST BE FOCAL



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A strong state actor is a commonly understood as being capable of reflection and of initiating modernization. It's a strange thing that, **in Russia, the most active and informed part of society is focused within the federal government.**

Modernization has become the government and private sector's first non-commercial project, with the private sector relying on its reputation rather than capital.

When considering who will lose as a consequence of modernization, or whose position could grow worse, I am reminded that under any other possible scenario there would be a far greater number of losers. Deep reforms provide the opportunity for career development for those who were previously disadvantaged. However, due to weak institutions, nobody in our country can guarantee equality in the legal enforcement of this or that legislative rule.

Modernization is an essential form of development. At the moment, all theoretical and methodological notions of development are based on its 'locality,' growing specific points or areas of concentration and intensification. It would seem

that **non-focal modernization does not exist at all.** There cannot be an even distribution in territorial development.

Inequality between regions has always existed and will continue to exist forever. This is because it is not only a financial prerequisite, but also a climatic, geographic, and demographic one. **What we need is equal opportunities for citizens, not for regions.**

Mass media is responsible for polluting the Russian language with senseless terms, such as 'focal modernization.' Such words are not used in business precisely because they are senseless. If the private sector is offered dedicated, analytic people with certain philosophic or scientific backgrounds, then it will find a great deal of common ground with the government. Projects such as Skolkovo or Novosibirsk, although clearly defined, are difficult to realize; nevertheless, their difficulties form the core of modernization. Eventually, many jobs that require intellect and personal strengths will emerge in this country, and only then will we be able to return to our role as a producer of human and social capital. ■