

**RUSSIAN-AMERICAN FRICTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR BUSINESS  
(BASED ON THE AMERICAN PRESS FROM 2002 TO 2012)**

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This article reports about the research conducted in 2014 on the consequences of various political conflicts between Russia and America for business. These conflicts were obviously supposed to have a serious impact on our economic relations; however, the reality differs from common expectations. Having analyzed the articles in the American mass media from 2002 to 2012, the author comes to the conclusion that different political frictions (like E. Snowden's case, for example), according to the journalists, were sure to affect the trade climate between the two countries. However, official statistics showing economic indices (export / import) that would be the evidence of "economic punishment" reveal that the American press is often mistaken in making assumptions. In fact, annual growth of export / import level means that political differences do not influence the business sphere a lot in the USA and in Russia. After comparing the data of economic indices and journalists' predictions, the paper concludes by proving that journalists were very often inclined to exaggerate the facts and raise a panic, while the economic benefits for both the countries seemed to be tangible, which prevented Russia and America from imposing any sanctions against each other.

*Ключевые слова:* Russian-American relations, Russian-American frictions, economic punishment.

**R**ussian-American relationships have always been hard. It's probably connected with the desire of each country to be the leading world power. The military sphere, economy, standard of living and other aspects of Russia and the USA are frequently compared. This situation causes a constant competition. Because of the competition, relationships between these giants have regularly changed in an unexpected manner; specifically, the relationships often took an unfavorable turn. When everything seemed to get better, there appeared different problems. This article reports about the effects of various political conflicts on business. These conflicts were obviously supposed to have a serious impact on our economic relations; however, the reality differs from common expectations.

The paper analyzes political articles from the American mass media which discuss effects of frictions caused by some recent events in Russian-American relations. Besides this, it considers official statistics concerning economic indices that would be the evidence of "economic punishment" (for instance, imposing a ban on import of some goods). Finally, the authors compare data from these two sources and make conclusions.

There were many events that could be good examples for the comparison of the journalists' opinion and the real situation. For example, Russo-Georgian War (also known as the 2008 South Ossetia War, Five-Day War or August War) or Syrian Civil War got an extensive coverage in mass media. They could have been used for the comparison because the journalists' projections about U.S.-Russian relationships were mostly negative. Nevertheless, this paper analyzes only one recent event.

It happened last summer when Edward Snowden arrived at Moscow airport and asked for a political asylum. Our government permitted him to stay in Russia; however, our decision did not please the U.S. government. There was an open conflict between Russia and the USA. The president of the USA Barak Obama even cancelled his visit to Moscow where he was going to meet with the Russian president Vladimir Putin. This conflict showed that relationships between the two countries are very unstable. This issue was actively discussed by all information sources, especially in the Internet; and there were many negative projections and prognostications.

Let us give an example. Steven P. Bucci, the director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at *The Heritage Foundation*, when speaking about Edward Snowden's stay, says that there must appear some problems in Russian-American business sphere because of these reasons: "The domestic crackdown, including anti-NGO legislation, the ban on orphan adoption to the US, prosecution of political opponents — all these complicate the ability of Russia and the US to do business together." [1]. But he does not describe specifically what problems will appear. He just guesses, making his judgment, without supporting his point of view. This instance is very similar to many other instances in different articles related to Russian-American business relationships [2, 3]. A lot of authors (Ian Bremmer, Sudeep Reddy, etc.) believe that differences between two countries over Syria, Iran, and democracy in Russia will inevitably lead to some deterioration in economic relations; however, this does not happen. After analyzing the American

printed press, we can assume that there are no well-reasoned negative projections; there are only guesses.

For more objectivity and balance, we decided to have a look at some statistics showing Russian-American economic activity to check the journalists' predictions about possible problems in the economic sphere. To illustrate, on the web-site of the Russian Federal Customs

Service [4] there is some official information of Export and Import level between the USA and the Russian Federation from 2002 to 2012. The data there suggest that the U.S.-Russian economic relations have greatly expanded over these years and have a great potential for growth, as shown in Table 1, which summarizes data on merchandise trade since 2002.

Table 1

U.S. TRADE WITH RUSSIA, 2001-2012 (BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Export</b>	2.4	2.4	3	3.9	4.7	7.4	9.3	5.4	6	8.3	10.7
<b>Import</b>	6.8	8.6	12.6	15.3	19.8	19.3	26.8	18.2	25.7	34.6	29.3

As we see, E. Snowden conflict did not affect the trade climate between two countries. We can see a considerable decline in 2008–2009, though. But this decline is connected with the financial crisis of those years. To understand the trends better, let us look at the chart based on these data (fig. 1).

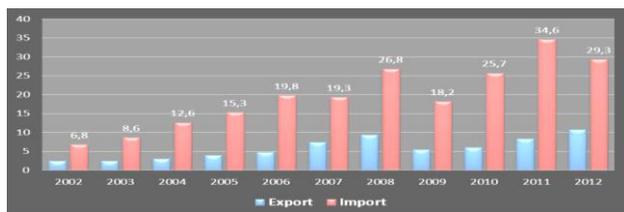


Fig. 1. U.S. Trade with Russia, 2001-2012 (billions of dollars)

This chart proves the idea that there are no serious consequences of Russian-American scandals for business. The main tendency is quite straightforward: the USA and Russia make some successful efforts to build good relationships in the economic sphere. It obviously means that political problems do not impact business much. From year to year the trade level increases, which means that, despite regular tensions between two countries, business interaction gets better.

As for the situation with Edward Snowden, there is no official statistic for 2013 year, only for half of the year. The import level in America of Russian goods has already been estimated about twenty billion dollars. It must be higher by the end of the year than in the previous one. It shows the annual growth. Thus, we can make a conclusion that recent tensions haven't not affected the U.S.-Russian business climate.

The Export / import statistic also shows that the international press is often mistaken in making assumptions. Annual growth of Export / Import level means that political differences do not influence the business sphere a lot in the USA and in Russia. Neither country ever used any punitive measures in terms of business.

To conclude, we would like to say that journalists are very often inclined to exaggerate the facts and raise a panic like in situations with Edward Snowden. Of course, the Russian Federation and the United States of America have always had some issues over which they disagree. However, the analysis of the materials on Edward Snowden, as well as on other stumbling blocks of US-Russia political relations, shows that the business

sphere was not affected by our political differences as the economic benefits seemed to be tangible, which prevented the two countries from imposing any sanctions against each other.

In view of the modern political crisis of 2014, the situation has changed dramatically, and serious political issues over Ukraine marred Russian-American trade relations, but this problem requires further research. ■

1. URL: <http://www.heritage.org/events/2013/09/us-russia-relations>.

2. URL: [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/06/wary\\_of\\_future\\_russia\\_confront.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/06/wary_of_future_russia_confront.html).

3. URL: [http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323316804578163353024324418?\\_nocache=1354861638854&user=welcome&mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424127887323316804578163353024324418.html%3F\\_nocache%3D1354861638854%26user%3Dwelcome](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323316804578163353024324418?_nocache=1354861638854&user=welcome&mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424127887323316804578163353024324418.html%3F_nocache%3D1354861638854%26user%3Dwelcome).

4. URL: <http://www.customs.ru>.

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URL: <http://www.customs.ru>.

## Русско-американские трения и их последствия для бизнеса (по данным американской прессы за 2002–2012)

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В статье приводится исследование (2014) о последствиях различных политических разногласий России и Америки в бизнесе. Ожидалось, что эти трения окажут серьезное влияние на торговые отношения. Однако в действительности эти ожидания не оправдались. Проанализи-

ровав статьи в американских СМИ с 2002 по 2012, автор пришел к выводу, что политические трения (как случай Э. Сноудена, например) должны были неизбежно затронуть торговый климат между этими двумя странами. В действительности же ежегодный рост уровня экспорта/импорта означает, что политические различия не оказывают существенное влияние на бизнес в США и в России. Сопоставляя данные экономических индексов и предсказания ре-

портеров, автор делает вывод о том, что журналисты очень часто были склонны преувеличить факты и распространить панику, в то время как экономическая выгода от сотрудничества обеих стран оказалась препятствием для того, чтобы Россия и Америка наложили санкции друг против друга.

Ключевые слова: русско-американские отношения, русско-американские трения, экономические санкции.

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