Experts illuminate Putin’s role in Europe

The Jackson Foundation has continued to have deep concerns about the worsening situation for Russian civil society and how it has impacted those working for a democratic future there. In addition to monitoring what’s happening in Putin’s Russia today, we have been following with some alarm the efforts made by the Russian State to influence and exploit vulnerabilities in Europe. Russia is doing what it used to do in the days of the Cold War—seeking to divide European countries from each other and from the United States to deepen faultlines among allies and gain influence. How does it do this? The Kremlin has been directly engaging and supporting far-right groups and even those on the far-left in Europe, using propaganda, the funding of civil society groups, and funneling money to political parties. It also tries to sway corporations to promote its values.

How has this had an impact? Each country has been affected in different ways, of course, and each has its own dynamics. But Russia’s political might and rubles have started to make themselves felt in European capitals. The main goal would seem to be to reinforce the perception that Russia is a force to be reckoned with on the world stage. It is also a very anti-Western effort.

Working with the American NGO Human Rights First, the Jackson Foundation recently convened a high-level expert discussion by scholars, journalists, and policy makers from the U.S., Russia, and Europe to delve into these concerns more deeply. The aim of the roundtable was to gain an understanding of Russia’s motives in Europe, the impact of its strategies on Europe as a whole and on individual countries, and to think about what remedies and tactics to recommend to U.S. and European policy makers and thought leaders that can counteract the Russian propaganda machine.

Human Rights First and the Jackson Foundation intend to follow up this initial roundtable with a second one engaging more U.S. participants in order to sharpen and publish recommendations that will be made public. Initial draft recommendations include (1) aligning and coordinating U.S. and European funding to address the challenges posed by Russian influence; (2) relying on multilateral institutions with regional legal and judicial tools; (3) counteracting Russia propaganda with support for independent media and investigative journalism; and (4) ensuring that U.S. and European governments share a common approach and message in order to combat Russia’s anti-liberal values.

The Jackson Foundation hopes that highlighting Russia’s negative influence on European political and social affairs will bring attention to this little-understood aspect of Putin’s Russia. Lawmakers in the West who care about the future of a democratic and open society in Europe must understand the trends in Europe today and the behind-the-scenes role that Russia has been playing to gain political advantage.
Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter. We will reach out to you a bit more often now with up-to-the-minute reports about the many Foundation programs that we are doing throughout the year. As you see, we continue to work across the spectrum of issues—delving into Middle East politics, shedding light on Russian President Putin’s propaganda machine in Europe, and, closer to home, highlighting the new Jackson Professor of Law at the University of Washington Law School. We’ve also showcased the inspiring work of the Jackson Leadership Fellows as their projects have taken shape.

We launched a YouTube Channel—just Google Henry M. Jackson Foundation to find us—where we put up dozens of videos with former staffers who worked closely with Senator Jackson.

We are busy with programs this spring, using the talents of our dedicated, volunteer Board of Governors and our staff to extend our work in the community and in Washington, DC. We hope you like our new format and find that it feels fresh and timely.

Lara Iglitzin  
Executive Director

Jackson Professor named at UW Law School

The Jackson Foundation joined the University of Washington School of Law at a February event to install Mary Fan as the new Henry M. Jackson Professor of Law. Mary Fan served as a federal prosecutor in the Southern District of California and an associate legal officer at a United Nations criminal tribunal before joining the Law School faculty in 2010. She has twice received the Dean’s Medal for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.

UW Law School Dean Kellye Testy and Jackson Foundation Board President John Hempelmann offered welcoming remarks at the installation, and Washington State Supreme Court Justice Steven González introduced Mary Fan. Professor Fan delivered a dynamic and engaging lecture on the body camera revolution in policing. According to Professor Fan, “The police body camera revolution implicates some of the greatest dilemmas of modern organized society, including how much discretion to accord the police and the right balance between surveillance and privacy.” Her talk addressed some of the main questions confronting communities as they begin to deploy body cameras and the varying policies being developed around their use.

John Hempelmann remarked, “There is a long-standing and deep connection between the Jackson Foundation and the UW Law School. The Jackson Foundation is pleased to have had a role in the creation of this professorship and honored to have such an accomplished leader in this position. We know Professor Fan to be an extraordinary individual, a leader in her field, and one who will bear the Jackson Professor mantle with distinction.”

The Henry M. Jackson Endowed Professorship in Law originated as a gift from the law school class of 1935 at their 50th class reunion to honor their classmate, Senator Jackson. The Jackson Foundation was delighted to have provided the final gift towards the professorship to make it a reality.

It was an honor and pleasure to see the Senator’s beloved children, grandchild, and dear friends gathered to celebrate his great legacy. I am deeply moved and inspired by this stellar community and the great work that continues.  
— Professor Mary Fan
The Jackson Leadership Fellows Program has exceeded our expectations in this inaugural year. The Program, intended to foster leadership skills in young professionals with the aim of bringing them closer to the Jackson Foundation and to the Jackson way of looking at the world, has been enriching for both Fellows and Board members to date. As a small team, the Fellows are being exposed to leadership training and skill-building that they are using to solve real-world problems in their own organizations. They are also working on individual projects that help them to use the skills they are learning to engage the broader community.

Quite of few of the Fellows are working on environmental issues, an area close to the heart of Jackson's legislative legacy. For example, one of our Fellows, Laura Stewart, has interviewed community leaders—particularly in communities of color—about environmental and climate injustice in our region. She has developed a video with their voices to raise awareness of views not often heard to help shape our priorities for climate change. Matthew Combe of Seattle’s 2030 District is developing a report on how property owners and managers can utilize the Clean Power Plan and Clean Air Rule to improve building efficiency and reduce carbon emissions from commuters. Tom Bugert is working through his organization, The Nature Conservancy, to help ensure broad representation in conversations about how our state should act on climate.

All of the Fellows are engaged in challenging projects—and challenging our ways of thinking as well. Tamara Power-Drutis, of Crosscut Public Media, is hosting a Global Citizen Journalism conference in May. It will provide one-day training for refugees, immigrants and ethnic community leaders in how to reach traditional media outlets. Tamara’s view on the value of the Fellowship is striking: “The program has surrounded me with the tools and resources I need to become the most effective servant leader I desire to be: training and workshops to explore my leadership and team strengths; input and problem solving with a team of close experts (the other fellows) as we apply the principles we learn back into our professional worlds; and regular mentorship to work through the questions and opportunities as I experience them.”

All the Fellows are being mentored by Board members or community members so that they can get high-level guidance, networking help, and an entry point into the extended Jackson Foundation family.

In early June we will bring the Jackson Fellows to Washington, D.C. for a site visit so that we can showcase this talented group of Jackson ambassadors to Board members, the Washington State delegation, and NGOs. We will also tailor a training in Washington for the Fellows so that they can have exposure to how policy is really made.

John Hempelmann, Foundation president, commented on the importance of the program: “The Jackson Leadership Fellows Program is intended to infuse the spirit of Senator Jackson’s leadership qualities into a new generation. This first year of the Fellows Program has shown us that young people are easily relating to the leadership values that Scoop embodied. We are committed to continuing this exciting program.”
Noted journalist tackles Middle East politics at Jackson School

Together with the Foundation, the Jackson School hosted acclaimed international journalist, Robin Wright, at a special public lecture at the University of Washington in February on, “Rock the Casbah: Thundering Change Across the Middle East.” Robin Wright contributes to The New Yorker and serves as a joint fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson Center. Formerly a correspondent for The Washington Post, she has reported from 145 countries. Her numerous awards include the U.N. Correspondents Gold Medal.

Ms. Wright briefed the packed audience on Islamic radicalism and the rapidly changing situation in the Middle East. She believes that the depth of sectarian differences is greater than at any time since the founding of the faith many centuries ago, due to the extremism of current political leaders. Wright offered predictions and explanations about a number of specific countries and also discouraged the further use of U.S. military force in the area as a potential solution to the current conflicts.

Watch Senator Jackson’s colleagues speak about his leadership

Go to youtube.com and search for Henry M. Jackson Foundation

The Jackson Legacy in Action, a publication of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, is distributed quarterly.

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