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Kudrin's Think Tank Chides Kremlin for Lack of Dialogue With Opponents

By The Moscow Times

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The Civic Initiatives Committee, a think tank headed by former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin, has published a report criticizing authorities for failing to establish substantive dialogue with civil society and engaging in "imitation politics."

The document, titled "2012: Authorities and Our Common Risks," stresses that only real dialogue between the country's political elite and civil society can stop Russia from descending into economic and political stagnation.

The report, released late Tuesday, was co-authored by Kudrin and a group of well-known politicians and economists, including Leonid Gozman, Boris Makarenko and Igor Yurgens.

It says the authorities reacted to the “failure” of the country's resource-driven model of economic development by rejecting real political competition, stifling the opposition and fomenting false threats.

The economic model that emerged during the financial crisis of 2008-09 has resulted in stagnation, increasing inefficiency in management at all levels, deterioration of social conditions; a loss of international prestige and a growing sense of social unfairness, the report says.

The report also says that attempts to manage Russia's "power elite" by relying on a carrot-and-stick approach contributed to political instability.

To reverse these tendencies, the document proposes a new political agenda. That agenda includes the establishment of meaningful dialogue with all political forces, an end to repression of political opponents, guarantees of media freedom and the adoption of meritocracy as the guiding principle in politics and business.

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