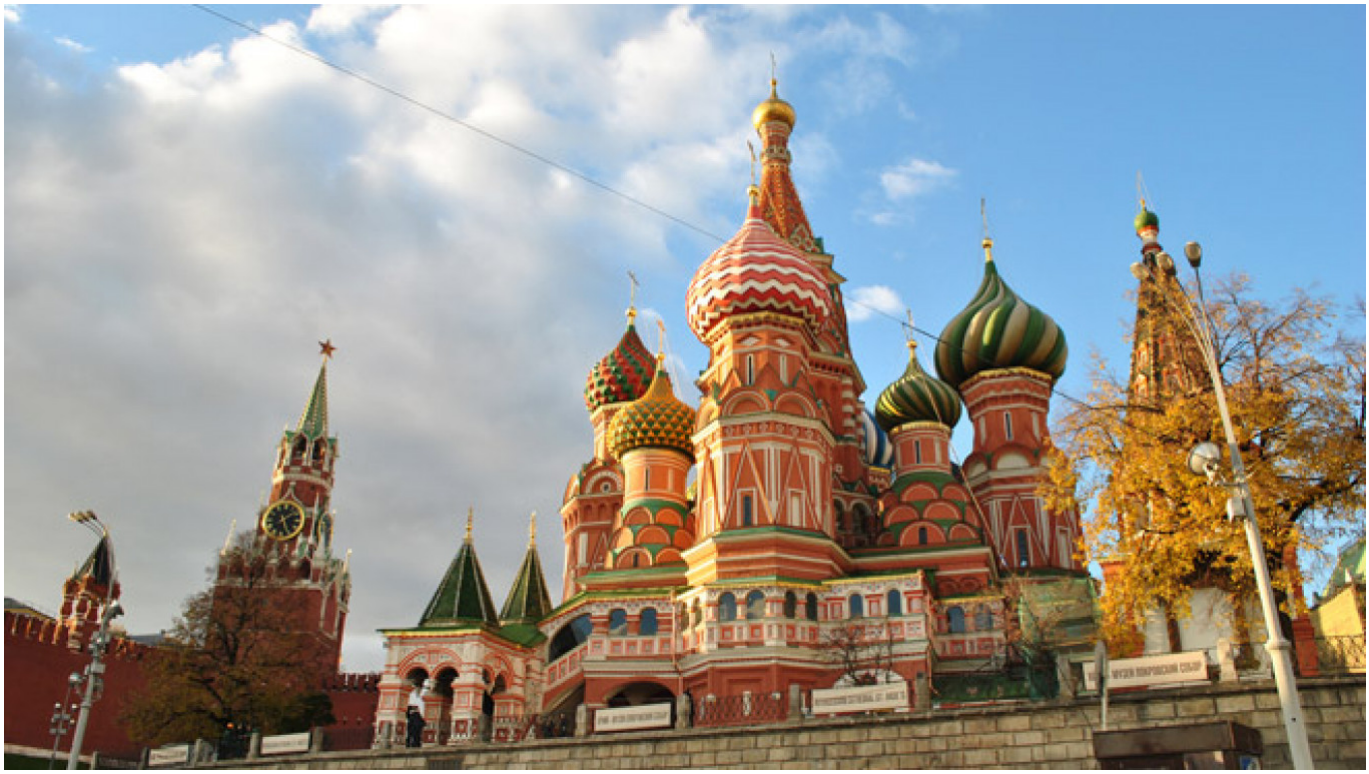
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# Most Russians Believe Foreigners View Country Favorably, Poll Shows

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Cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed on the Red Square

A poll published Wednesday revealed that a majority of Russians believe their country is perceived as "interesting" abroad, while few believe foreigners think Russia is "authoritarian."

The poll's results, which showed that most Russians believe the country is viewed favorably abroad, may be a surprise to some in light of the West's recent criticism of the country over ongoing events in Ukraine.

Conducted in May and June by the state-run Public Opinion Foundation on a representative sample of 1,600 adults, the poll found that more than two-thirds of Russians are convinced foreigners think Russia is an "interesting" country.

A similar — albeit smaller — proportion of the population believe the country is revered abroad because of its "strong power," "responsiveness" and "independence."

The survey also found that the population mostly agrees that foreigners do not perceive Russia as being "authoritarian," "stubborn" or "wasteful" — traits frequently voiced by Western leaders when criticizing Russia.

The results of the poll, which carries a margin of error that did not exceed 3.4 percent, clash with those of surveys conducted by Western pollsters and research organizations, signaling a distortion between what Russians believe the world's views to be and what they actually are.

A survey conducted by American pollster Gallup in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March revealed that 68 percent of Americans consider Russia an "enemy" or an "unfriendly" country, which represents a record high since 1999.

A study commissioned by the BBC World Service from GlobeScan and the Program on International Policy Attitudes published in June showed that attitudes toward Russia had soured in 13 out of 24 countries surveyed since the poll began in 2005. The study found a sharp increase in negative views of Russia in many Western countries, including the U.S., Spain and Germany.

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