



## ***FIFTEENTH SEMI-ANNUAL MUNK DEBATE ANNOUNCED***

### ***SHOULD THE WEST ENGAGE, OR ISOLATE, RUSSIA?***

***Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Pozner, Anne Applebaum, and Stephen F. Cohen convene in Toronto, Canada, to debate the West's relationship with Russia***

**March 3, 2015** – Toronto, Canada

The Munk Debates announced today the resolution and debaters for the fifteenth semi-annual event, to be held in Toronto on Friday, April 10, 2015. To encourage public discussion of the geopolitical issue of the moment, the spring 2015 Munk Debate will move the motion: ***Be it resolved the West should engage not isolate Russia.***

How should the West deal with Putin's Russia? For the U.S. and some European powers the answer is obvious: isolate Russia with punishing economic sanctions, remove it from global institutions such as the G8, and arm the nations directly threatened by Putin. In short, return to the Cold War doctrine that froze Soviet aggression in Europe and helped bring about the collapse of communist Russia. Others argue that such a policy is a dead-end. Putin's Russia has legitimate grievances against Western and NATO powers meddling in its sphere of influence. Instead of further antagonizing Putin and risking a dangerous escalation of the current conflict, the U.S. and Europe should seek common cause with Russia to address shared threats, from the Middle East to Asia to combatting terrorism.

Arguing **for the resolution** will be **Vladimir Pozner**, veteran journalist and bestselling author named the "Voice of Moscow" by CNN, and the host of the top-rated weekly current affairs program on Russia's largest television network. He will be joined by one of America's most vocal proponents of a collaborative relationship with Russia, **Stephen F. Cohen**, a Professor of Russian Studies and History at New York University who has acted as an advisor to both Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. president George H.W. Bush on Russia.

Speaking **against the resolution** will be **Garry Kasparov**, Russian-born political dissident and outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin, and the world's greatest living chess player. Kasparov will be joined by **Anne Applebaum**, an internationally renowned expert on Russian history, Pulitzer Prize winning author for *Gulag: A History*, and a director at the prestigious Legatum Institute on global affairs in London.

**Rudyard Griffiths**, director and moderator of the Munk Debates, comments: “This is the geopolitical debate of the moment. Is taking a hard line towards Putin’s destabilizing foreign policy not only the right approach, but the one that upholding international norms demands? Or, is a de-escalation in tensions with Russia possible; one that leads to genuine compromise on both sides and peace and stability in Europe?”

The Munk Debates offer a lively and substantive forum for leading thinkers to discuss the pressing issues of our time. Two debates are held each year in Toronto, one in the spring and one in the fall. Previous Munk Debate participants include former British prime minister Tony Blair, Henry Kissinger, Christopher Hitchens, Paul Krugman, Fareed Zakaria, Dambisa Moyo, Mia Farrow, and Glenn Greenwald.

**The Munk Debates is a signature initiative of the Aurea Foundation, founded in 2006 by Peter and Melanie Munk to support Canadian institutions involved in the study and development of public policy.**

“Our philanthropy is aimed primarily at improving the quality and vitality of public debate in Canada,” said **Peter Munk**, speaking about the rationale for the Munk Debates. “Whether it is the support we provide to the Munk School at the University of Toronto or the creation of the Munk Debates through our Aurea Foundation, Melanie and I are committed to broadening public knowledge, education, and informed discourse.”

The Munk Debates are open to the public. The Debate on Russia will take place in Toronto at Roy Thomson Hall on **Friday, April 10, 2015** at 7:00 pm EDT. **Tickets go on sale to Munk Debate Premium Members at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, March 10. Any remaining tickets will go on sale to the public at 12:00 NOON on Thursday, March 12.** For information on purchasing tickets, or premium membership, please visit [www.munkdebates.com](http://www.munkdebates.com). Seating is limited.

The debate will also be broadcast live over the Internet for global viewing audiences. For more information on the livestream of the Munk Debate on Russia visit [www.munkdebates.com](http://www.munkdebates.com)

Our archive of commercial-free, HD videos of past Munk Debates is now free for unlimited viewing to all Munk Debate members. For a free membership, and to view past debates, visit [www.munkdebates.com](http://www.munkdebates.com).

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