

The Sakharov-Reagan Model Outline

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During the period leading to the collapse of the Soviet communist government a new political model emerged that I call the Sakharov-Reagan Model, wherein three major forces secured the end of the communist regime: internal dissidents, Western democratic governments, and Western non-governmental organizations (NGO) and media and cultural and academic communities.

The model is based on my study of the crucial role of dissidents and the importance of supporting them in toppling dictatorships and establishing new democracies. Below is an outline of guiding principles for the three major forces in two stages: first, toppling the totalitarianism government and, second, building democracy.

Toppling Totalitarianism

Dissidents

- Non-violent resistance to a violent regime
- Open resistance in a closed and secretive society
- Human rights as primary concern and uniting principle
- Moral resistance, appeal to basic human values, high principles of ethics and honor
- High credibility, importance of precise and verified information
- Support for all victims of totalitarianism
- Appeal to domestic and international public opinion

Toppling Totalitarianism

Western governments

- Denying legitimacy to the totalitarian regime, considering its total replacement the only acceptable option
- Minimum interaction with the regime, no “constructive engagement”
- Resisting its expansion to other regions
- Peaceful offensive, public diplomacy, communication directly to people over the heads of their government
- Linkage between human rights and security, economic and cultural cooperation
- Political and moral, but not economic or organizational, support to dissidents
- Support to western NGOs helping dissidents
- Helping dissidents' voices been heard by their people through radio broadcasts and publications

Toppling Totalitarianism

NGOs

- Supporting dissidents as the main goal, subordinating partisan and ideological considerations to that goal
- Providing support to dissidents indiscriminately
- Following dissidents' requests, trying not to initiate any activities on their behalf
- Delivering dissident positions as is, without censoring or spinning
- Consistent effort in maintaining direct communications with dissidents
- Direct assistance
- Serious consideration and reliance on the dissident experience.
- No interaction with the regime or its pseudo-independent structures

Building a Democratic Society in the Post-Totalitarian Space

Dissidents

- Non-violent revolution
- Assuming power during the transitional period
- Moral underpinnings of new policy
- Maximum openness
- Unity during the first stage of democratization
- Uprooting communism: decommunization, trial over communist regime
- Building new relations with the West through forces that supported them during the communist regime

Building a Democratic Society in the Post-Totalitarian Space

Western governments

- Primary support to dissidents as new potential democratic leaders
- Conditional, limited support to “new democrats” and communist rebellions
- No support to communist reformers
- Mobilizing Western business and political resources for cooperating with dissident in developing a transitional political and economic models

Building a Democratic Society in the Post-Totalitarian Space

NGOs

- Continuing support for dissidents and their new activities
- Working with dissidents inside their country
- Abstaining from partisan politics in the post totalitarian country
- Conditional support to other democratic forces

Along with these guiding principles, it is important to establish the conditions for applicability of the model. Some of them include the declining, (yet possibly not always apparent), stage of the totalitarian regime; the existence of an internal dissident movement; the strong political,

economic and military position of the democratic world.