The picture of an aggressive, expansionist Russia led by a scheming autocrat beholden to a coterie of corrupt, unprincipled and violent oligarchs actively threatening all of the small, peace loving, democratic states on its borders, while supporting terrorism elsewhere in the world, is one being painted and elaborated almost daily by a remarkably single-minded western media. But just how accurate is this picture? And what is the impact is this demonization having on Russia's internal politics - and policies? And what might an alternative - more moderate or reasonable - "western" approach to Russia look like and.or be able to achieve?

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