

## As if Things Weren't Bad Enough, Russian Professor Predicts End of U.S.

In Moscow, Igor Panarin's Forecasts Are All the Rage; America 'Disintegrates' in 2010 By  
ANDREW OSBORN



MOSCOW -- For a decade, Russian academic Igor Panarin has been predicting the U.S. will fall apart in 2010. For most of that time, he admits, few took his argument -- that an economic and moral collapse will trigger a civil war and the eventual breakup of the U.S. -- very seriously. Now he's found an eager audience: Russian state media.

Igor Panarin

In recent weeks, he's been interviewed as much as twice a day about his predictions. "It's a record," says Prof. Panarin. "But I think the attention is going to grow even stronger."

Prof. Panarin, 50 years old, is not a fringe figure. A former KGB analyst, he is dean of the Russian Foreign Ministry's academy for future diplomats. He is invited to Kremlin receptions, lectures students, publishes books, and appears in the media as an expert on U.S.-Russia relations.

But it's his bleak forecast for the U.S. that is music to the ears of the Kremlin, which in recent years has blamed Washington for everything from instability in the Middle East to the global financial crisis. Mr. Panarin's views also fit neatly with the Kremlin's narrative that Russia is returning to its rightful place on the world stage after the weakness of the 1990s, when many feared that the country would go economically and politically bankrupt and break into separate territories.

A polite and cheerful man with a buzz cut, Mr. Panarin insists he does not dislike Americans. But he warns that the outlook for them is dire. "There's a 55-45% chance right now that disintegration will occur," he says. "One could rejoice in that process," he adds, poker-faced. "But if we're talking reasonably, it's not the best scenario -- for Russia." Though Russia would become more powerful on the global stage, he says, its economy would suffer because it currently depends heavily on the dollar and on trade with the U.S.

Mr. Panarin posits, in brief, that mass immigration, economic decline, and moral degradation will trigger a civil war next fall and the collapse of the dollar. Around the end of June 2010, or early July, he says, the U.S. will break into six pieces -- with Alaska reverting to Russian control.

In addition to increasing coverage in state media, which are tightly controlled by the Kremlin, Mr. Panarin's ideas are now being widely discussed among local experts. He presented his theory at a recent roundtable discussion at the Foreign Ministry. The country's top international relations school has hosted him as a keynote speaker. During an appearance on the state TV channel Rossiya, the station cut between his comments and TV footage of lines at soup kitchens and crowds of homeless people in the U.S. The professor has also been featured on the Kremlin's English-language propaganda channel, Russia Today.

Mr. Panarin's apocalyptic vision "reflects a very pronounced degree of anti-Americanism in Russia today," says Vladimir Pozner, a prominent TV journalist in Russia. "It's much stronger than it was in the Soviet Union."

Mr. Pozner and other Russian commentators and experts on the U.S. dismiss Mr. Panarin's predictions. "Crazy ideas are not usually discussed by serious people," says Sergei Rogov, director of the government-run Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies, who thinks Mr. Panarin's theories don't hold water.

Mr. Panarin's résumé includes many years in the Soviet KGB, an experience shared by other top Russian officials. His office, in downtown Moscow, shows his national pride, with pennants on the wall bearing the emblem of the FSB, the KGB's successor agency. It is also full of statuettes of eagles; a double-headed eagle was the symbol of czarist Russia.

The professor says he began his career in the KGB in 1976. In post-Soviet Russia, he got a doctorate in political science, studied U.S. economics, and worked for FAPSI, then the Russian equivalent of the U.S. National Security Agency. He says he did strategy forecasts for then-President Boris Yeltsin, adding that the details are "classified."

In September 1998, he attended a conference in Linz, Austria, devoted to information warfare, the use of data to get an edge over a rival. It was there, in front of 400 fellow delegates, that he first presented his theory about the collapse of the U.S. in 2010.

"When I pushed the button on my computer and the map of the United States disintegrated, hundreds of people cried out in surprise," he remembers. He says most in the audience were skeptical. "They didn't believe me." At the end of the presentation, he says many delegates asked him to autograph copies of the map showing a dismembered U.S.

He based the forecast on classified data supplied to him by FAPSI analysts, he says. He predicts that economic, financial and demographic trends will provoke a political and social crisis in the U.S. When the going gets tough, he says, wealthier states will withhold funds from the federal government and effectively secede from the union. Social unrest up to and including a civil war will follow. The U.S. will then split along ethnic lines, and foreign powers will move in.

California will form the nucleus of what he calls "The Californian Republic," and will be part of China or under Chinese influence. Texas will be the heart of "The Texas Republic," a cluster of states that will go to Mexico or fall under Mexican influence. Washington, D.C., and New York will be part of an "Atlantic America" that may join the European Union. Canada will grab a group of Northern states Prof. Panarin calls "The Central North American Republic." Hawaii, he suggests, will be a protectorate of Japan or China, and Alaska will be subsumed into Russia.

"It would be reasonable for Russia to lay claim to Alaska; it was part of the Russian Empire for a long time." A framed satellite image of the Bering Strait that separates Alaska from Russia like a thread hangs from his office wall. "It's not there for no reason," he says with a sly grin.

Interest in his forecast revived this fall when he published an article in Izvestia, one of Russia's biggest national dailies. In it, he reiterated his theory, called U.S. foreign debt "a pyramid scheme," and predicted China and Russia would usurp Washington's role as a global financial regulator.

Americans hope President-elect Barack Obama "can work miracles," he wrote. "But when spring comes, it will be clear that there are no miracles."

The article prompted a question about the White House's reaction to Prof. Panarin's forecast at a December news conference. "I'll have to decline to comment," spokeswoman Dana Perino said amid much laughter. *[It's no laughing matter, Ms. Perino – ed. Comment, JB.]*

For Prof. Panarin, Ms. Perino's response was significant. "The way the answer was phrased was an indication that my views are being listened to very carefully," he says.

The professor says he's convinced that people are taking his theory more seriously. People like him have forecast similar cataclysms before, he says, and been right. He cites French political scientist Emmanuel Todd. Mr. Todd is famous for having rightly forecast the demise of the Soviet Union -- 15 years beforehand. "When he forecast the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1976, people laughed at him," says Prof. Panarin.



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## Russian Scholar Says U.S. Will Collapse Next Year

Wednesday, March 04, 2009  
Associated Press

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**MOSCOW —** If you're inclined to believe Igor Panarin, and the Kremlin wouldn't mind if you did, then President Barack Obama will order martial law this year, the U.S. will split into six rump-states before 2011, and Russia and China will become the backbones of a new world order.

Panarin might be easy to ignore but for the fact that he is a dean at the Foreign Ministry's school for future diplomats and a regular on Russia's state-guided TV channels. And his predictions fit into the anti-American story line of the Kremlin leadership.

"There is a high probability that the collapse of the United States will occur by 2010," Panarin told dozens of students, professors and diplomats Tuesday at the Diplomatic Academy — a lecture the ministry pointedly invited The Associated Press and other foreign media to attend.

The prediction from Panarin, a former spokesman for Russia's Federal Space Agency and reportedly an ex-KGB analyst, meshes with the negative view of the U.S. that has been flowing from the Kremlin in recent years, in particular from Vladimir Putin.

Putin, the former president who is now prime minister, has likened the United States to Nazi Germany's Third Reich and blames Washington for the global financial crisis that has pounded the Russian economy.

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Panarin didn't give many specifics on what underlies his analysis, mostly citing newspapers, magazines and other open sources.

He also noted he had been predicting the demise of the world's wealthiest country for more than a decade now.

But he said the recent economic turmoil in the U.S. and other "social and cultural phenomena" led him to nail down a specific timeframe for "The End" — when the United States will break up into six autonomous regions and Alaska will revert to Russian control.

Panarin argued that Americans are in moral decline, saying their great psychological stress is evident from school shootings, the size of the prison population and the number of gay men.

Turning to economic woes, he cited the slide in major stock indexes, the decline in U.S. gross domestic product and Washington's bailout of banking giant Citigroup as evidence that American dominance of global markets has collapsed.

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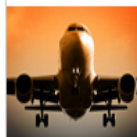
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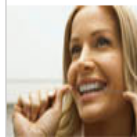
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