In a famous 1939 broadcast, Winston Churchill told his audience: “I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It’s a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Communism has long gone but is Russia becoming more transparent? In tackling this question my recent book How Russia Really Works presents a novel approach. Rather than looking at what does not work in Russia and why, I focus on what does work and how. By analyzing post-Soviet politics and business from the perspective of informal practices, I discover rarely visible forms of activity and dispel a number of commonly held stereotypes about corruption and illegality.


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