

CURRENT HISTORY

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This was supposed to be Russia's turnaround year. Instead it has been one of political paralysis and financial meltdown.

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Russia's financial crisis has shaken markets and grabbed headlines around the world. But another, longer-term development has largely escaped notice abroad: the emergence of barter as the modus operandi of the Russian economy.

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Russia's "budget crisis has had a cataclysmic impact on the entire military." And this is just where the problems begin.

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"There is now emerging in Russia a symbiotic relationship between organized criminal groups (the so-called Russian mafia) and corrupt political officials at all levels of government."

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