

SMART RUSSIA

Medvedev's vision of Russia's future is about brains, not the power of oil, bombs, or the Kremlin.

BY OWEN MATTHEW AND ANNA HEMPTON
PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURE NORTON/AGE

WHEN VLADIMIR PUTIN SPOKE ABOUT achieving Russia's greatness, he evoked a deeply anti-western vision of using state muscle, military might, and oil wealth to command respect. When his government, Dmitry Medvedev, opened for the same job, he talked about building a "knowledge city" in the Moscow suburb of Skolkovo, where the state will leave the nation's best minds free to pursue the scientific and technological breakthroughs that are the bedrock of a 21st-century "knowledge economy." Medvedev's vision is designed to break Russia free from what he calls a "stagnating" reliance on natural gas exports, and to revive the greatness of a nation once known for scientific and technological achievement. "The mission of the Smart Russia movement is a question of life and death for Russia," says Dmitry Alishin, the only elected vice minister of Skolkovo. Russia, who

was chosen by Medvedev last month as overall head of the Skolkovo project, "the idea of Skolkovo is like 'think, act, win'—the idea of huge and eventual success." "Whether Putin is messenger or a great power may well be determined by Medvedev's campaign to revive its smart side. For all its inefficiency, the Soviet state was a generous supporter of science and technology, building the world's first artificial satellite and the capsule that put the first man in space. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, state support for the sciences collapsed, scientists fled for jobs overseas, and the state itself evolved into a producer-consumer theory to the free market, but too often in practice to producing private enterprises for profit. In the generation that supported Post-Capital's spotlight from public education to access, Russia's GDP and industrial production



