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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

| Updated July 12, 2013, 6:56 p.m. ET

A Whistleblower in Moscow

And we don't mean Edward Snowden.

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"Russia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Ecuador," [Edward Snowden](#) said on Friday, "have my gratitude and respect for being the first to stand against human rights violations carried out by the powerful rather than the powerless." The self-admitted leaker of America's national security secrets thanked those anti-American regimes for offering him exile, but then announced plans to seek asylum for himself and his tin ear in Moscow.

A day before, Mr. Snowden's protectors offered a lesson in modern Russia's respect for human rights. A court in Moscow convicted Sergei Magnitsky, who had exposed a \$230 million embezzlement scheme run by Russian officials, on tax fraud charges. He received no prison term, but not because the Moscow judge had gone soft. Beaten and suffering from pancreatitis, Magnitsky died in agony four years ago while in pre-trial police custody. He was a brave whistleblower who exposed abuses and sought no glory for himself.

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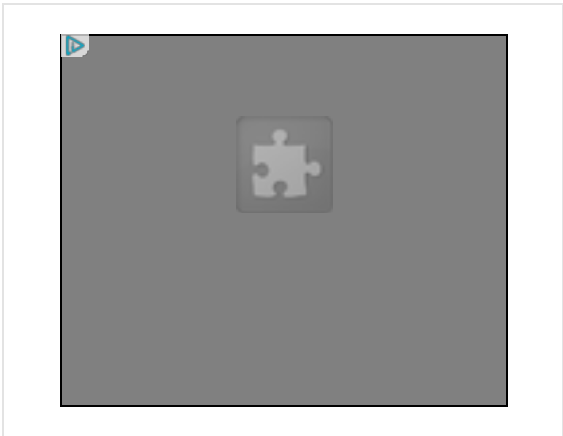
WSJ editorial board member Matt Kaminski on NSA turncoat Edward Snowden's latest asylum request. Photo: Associated Press

Congress to adopt a law that bars Russian rights violators, starting with Magnitsky's killers, from banking and travelling in the U.S.

The Magnitsky Act passed in December, but Mr. Browder wants other democracies to follow. That's proved harder. The EU, which this week called the Magnitsky conviction "disturbing," has resisted sanctions. Ditto the U.K. Parliament. A Canadian version of the Magnitsky bill, introduced in 2011, hasn't moved. The Irish legislature took up a

This was the first posthumous prosecution in modern Russian history, complete with an empty steel cell in the courtroom for Magnitsky. Stalin killed his victims after a show trial, but Magnitsky in his afterlife has brought a lot of grief to Vladimir Putin, and the Russian leader doesn't forgive or forget.

Magnitsky was a lawyer for William Browder, a hedge fund manager in Moscow. For years, Mr. Browder lobbied



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draft measure this year but dropped it in May after Moscow threatened to retaliate. The Kremlin banned the adoption of Russian orphans by Americans in response to the Magnitsky Act and proposed to add Irish parents to this blacklist.

Meanwhile back in Moscow, as self-proclaimed rights defenders swirl around Mr. Snowden, another prominent, genuine and this time living Russian corruption whistleblower next week learns his fate. A court in the city of Kirov on Thursday is scheduled to rule in the case against Alexei Navalny. The activist and opposition leader faces six years in jail on trumped-up corruption charges. In Putin's Russia, the outcome isn't expected to favor the powerless.

Misgivings Over Coup in Egypt



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