

Part 1.

**THE POLITICAL SYSTEM
– CHANGES DURING THE ELECTION
CAMPAIGNS**

The search for a new political model. Putin as the national leader – a change in status and a possible change in the configuration of the political system. A change in the weight of different political institutions

All of 2007 was characterized by the competition between two projects that can conditionally be called “successor” and “third term”. At that, supporters and opponents of the latter scheme belonged to different groups among the elites, which added a distinctive sharpness to the situation and this manifested itself not only in an ideological but also an administrative confrontation.

The search for a place for Vladimir Putin in the “post-Putin” system of checks and balances started after the 1st of October when he agreed to head the United Russia party list. Before this, in spite of many statements by the head of state himself about his unwillingness to go against the Constitution and run for president for a third term, projects that entailed changing the Constitution predominated. The main lobbyists for the “third term” project were the so called “*siloviki*” or the security wing of the presidential administration that were headed by deputy head of the presidential administration, Igor Sechin. In the media, the main voice on this topic was the head of the Federation Council and leader of the party Fair Russia Sergey Mironov. This politician is considered to be in the orbit of this group of elites. Nevertheless, his wavering to meet the “party line” was evident.

In particular, at the end of March in 2007, he increased his activity in this direction¹. Sergey Mironov, who was reelected to his post as head of the Federation council, in his “inaugural” address, refreshed the problem of the third presidential term, which provoked new lines of discussion on what was considered an already solved problem. According to the head of Fair Russia, who had just been reelected to the post of speaker for the third time, it was necessary to take up the possibility of increasing the president’s term to 5 or even 7 years, and also discuss the possibility of changing the Constitution of the Russian Federation to cancel the article about the inability of occupying the presidential post more than two times in a row.

¹ See., for example., Nikonov I. Sergey Mironov is insisting on a third term// <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2007/03/30/637160.shtml> (03.30. 2007).

The initiative of the head of the Federation Council evoked an immediate reaction. The press-service of the president of the Russian Federation released an official statement saying that the position of the president on this issue had not changed. In fact he had spoken negatively about this idea several times. The position of United Russia members was pretty much the same – the difference was just in the emotionality of the response (the sharpest statement came from the deputy speaker of parliament, Vladimir Katrenko, who called Mironov's initiative "useless and meaningless").

After waiting about a week for reactions, including from Vladimir Putin, Sergey Mironov did a little "back-peddling", though it did not seem that he directly renounced his earlier intentions. At a press-conference he stated that the party that he was the head of, Fair Russia, would not initiate legislation that would change the Russian Constitution in relation to the number of back-to-back presidential terms allowed. According to Mironov, he just wanted to propose the discussion of this topic and to "hear the opinions of the parliamentarians and other citizens".

Originally, the only politician who supported the idea of the head of the Federation Council was the LDPR leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who said: "what Mironov said, that is what is going to happen". A little bit later, the parliament of the Stavropol territory, which was under the control of Just Russia, joined the initiative of the "SRs" (an abbreviation for Just Russia). Then the deputy speaker of the Federation Council, Svetlana Orlova, who represented the parliament of the Kuzbass, said that the Kemerovo parliamentarians also supported the initiative.

More intriguing was the reaction of a number of politicians from United Russia. A number of speakers from regional parliaments who were under the control of United Russia, in particular the Legislative council of St. Petersburg and the Government council of Tatarstan, came out sharply against the initiative of the head of the Federation Council. However, there were some exceptions. The head of the Irkutsk parliament, a member of the regional political branch of United Russia, Victor Kruglov, said Mironov's initiative was "worth looking at"². The cochairman of the high council of United Russia, Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, also came out in favor of the idea of a third term, stating that it was undesirable to replace someone who showed himself to be quite capable in the presidency. At the same time, the Moscow mayor decided to insure himself – "to achieve a balance", the speaker of the capital city parliament, Vladimir Platonov, stated that the

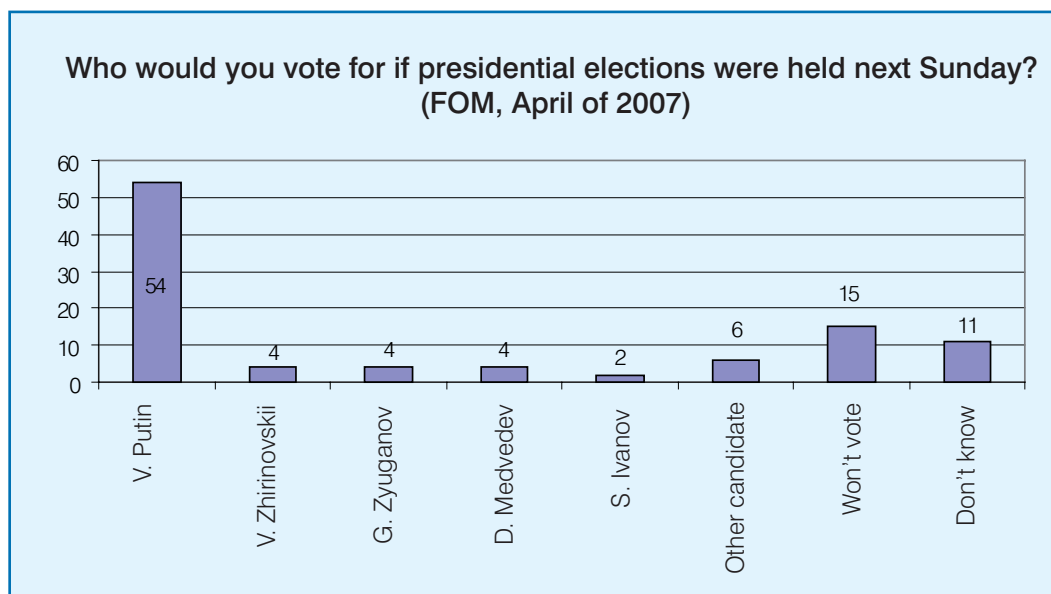
² Stanovaya T. The ruling party and the problem of the "third term"
//<http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=4404> (04.10. 2007)

parliament that of which he is the head of, supports observing the constitution. Taking into account the executive chain of command, it is doubtful that such a statement could have been made without Luzhkov's sanction.

Sergey Mironov's initiative (possibly, not worked out in detail) was a complexly structured political maneuver, every vector of which was beneficial to one or a number of pressure groups. First of all, one winner was Mironov himself. He was able to accomplish several goals relating to his image in one stroke. First of all, in the next round in the information battle with United Russia, he was able to come forward as the initiator of the discussion while United Russia became the side that had to respond. This allowed him to receive reputational dividends. Secondly, Mironov's unexpected demarche uncovered the ambiguity of United Russian's position on the federal and the regional level as well, on of the main political questions of the day. Finally Sergey Mironov came forward as a supporter of preserving "Putin's stability", taking into account that this idea is supported by a substantial portion of the electorate, while United Russia was forced to position itself as a supporter of "destroying" it.

Also there is reason to believe that this initiative received the blessing (maybe an unspoken one) from the "*siloviki*" of Igor Sechin, who stand to lose the most if Putin leaves the presidency. Sergey Mironov is considered their indirect ally. From the same category is Yuri Luzhkov, who also came out in support of the idea of a third presidential term.

In principle, from a legal standpoint, changing article 81 of the constitution, which limits the authority of the president to two consecutive terms, looks like merely a more complicated procedure of passing a federal constitutional law. Passing he changes requires the support of two-thirds of parliament and three-fourths of the Federation Council, after which the passed law must be upheld by two-thirds of the regional parliaments. In the present atmosphere where the president enjoys a high degree of popularity, support for these changes on the federal level looks certain.



The reaction of the regional parliaments at first looked predictable. According to the statement made by the head of the executive committee of the “Concord and stability” movement, Valerii Gisoiev in the summer of 2007, 56 regional parliaments were ready to support the initiative to extend the president’s term limit. Mironov’s initiative, which was sent out to regional legislatures, could be looked at as a kind of original “survey”, which was intended to set out feelers for possible future official action. However, the results of this survey turned out to be a disappointment. Only a few parliaments voiced their unequivocal support, while many more were against it. The vast majority of parliaments chose to ignore the initiative of the speaker of the Federation Council. It is not unlikely that he had a hard talk in the Kremlin, because at the end of May he came out with a statement saying that his initiative was “misunderstood” and that raising the term limit, if it should happen at all, would come no sooner than in 2012³.

In the fall, even skeptics came to believe that the president of the Russian Federation didn’t intend to change the Constitution and that he planned to transfer power to a “successor”. However, since Vladimir Putin was the guarantor of keeping the “balance of power” among the ruling class, many schemes of keeping him in power after he left the presidency were concocted.

³ See., for example., Latukhina K. Glikin M. Third term put off // *Vedomosti*. 05.29. 2007. № 96 (1870).

On November 6, the coordinator of the policy on ethnicity and the cooperation with religious associations for United Russia, Abdul-Hakim Sultigov, published an article on the party website called “About the Russian national leader phenomenon”. On the next day, the leadership of the party distanced itself from Sultigov’s proposals, saying that, that was his personal initiative. It was noteworthy that the article was removed from the site almost immediately, but the text of the article was available on a number of political-community websites⁴.

The author of the article proposed to “create the institution of national leader “as a basic element of the “new configuration of power, and as a principle condition of realizing Putin’s plan”. This initiative, on the author’s suggestion, should be formalized and drawn up by a “pact of civic unity”. The document could be ratified by a “Civic council of the Russian nation”, that would come together after the presidential elections. According to Sultigov, this pact would, at the same time, become a civil oath “on the loyalty to the will of the people by the representatives of the government on all levels, local government bodies, political parties and other institutions of civil society” and their loyalty to Vladimir Putin.

If one were to follow the surface logic of the information process, then the publication of this article truly does look like the personal initiative of the author. The secretary of the presidium of the general council of United Russia, Vycheslav Volodin, and the head of the Central Executive Committee of United Russia, Andrei Vorobey, declined to comment on the article, stressing the fact that this was “the personal opinion of the author”. However, circumstantial evidence allows one to surmise that even if Sultigov was not directly ordered to come up with the initiative, then, at least, he received a “hint” about the desirability of such material appearing. It ought to be noted that such grand initiatives under the highly disciplined executive structure of United Russia and its smooth decision making system is just impossible. It is also interesting that this article appeared at the same time that the movie “1612” hit theaters. It was about the Time of Troubles and the method used to get out of the crises that Russia found itself in, in the beginning of the XVII century – then, a very similar institution to Sultigov’s Civic council – the Assembly of the Land – picked Mikhail Federovich to be tsar, which began the Romanov dynasty. Most likely, the fact that these two events happened at the same time isn’t a coincidence – the release of the movie and its viewing by a wide audience was supposed to refresh an interest to the problem and on a specific

⁴See., for example., Sultigov A.-X. About the Russian national leader phenomenon // <http://www.kreml.org/opinions/164932766>

historical example lead the electorate to the notion that a monarchial (or something close to it) regime is a solution to the crises of the continuity of authority.

All in all, despite the fact that the leadership of United Russia publicly distanced itself from the initiative of its fellow party member, it partially accomplished the task at hand. During the fall, there was a sharp increase in the number of journalistic and scientific material dedicated to the analysis of the perspectives of the monarchial (in essence, but not always in form) model for Russia. This created a favorable informational background to start a wider public discussion about this problem.

Regardless of which “job placement” scenario plays out, Vladimir Putin will retain various levers of influence on the political situation. One of these might be the creation of the “for Putin” movement, which was started in the fall of 2007.

On November 15, in the city of Tver, the All Russian council of initiative groups for the support of Vladimir Putin was founded. 700 delegates from 80 (84 according to other accounts) regions in Russia, representing different segments of the population, took part in the meeting. At that, most of the delegates weren't in any way officially connected with any government institutions. The forum was held in Tver for a number of reasons. First of all, one of the first mass rallies of support for Vladimir Putin was held in this region in the fall; so it made sense to finish preparing the project in support of the president here. Secondly, the parents of the head of state have roots in the Tver province. This fact lessened the chances of any other region holding the meeting.

The coordinator of the new social movement was the lawyer Pavel Astakhov, who was also chosen to be the co-leader of the movement. Of an equal status with him were the cardio surgeon Renat Akchurin, the head of the agricultural workers union Natalia Agapova, and also 7 regional representatives. At that, there is almost no doubt that the deciding voice among the leaders of the organization will be with Astakhov, while the two co-chairs will function as social representatives, while the 7 regional representatives will be responsible for establishing the infrastructure of the new movement in the federal regions.

The question of who organized this mass movement is still open. In order to hold mass rallies in the majority of the territorial subjects of the Russian Federation within such a narrow time frame (within 3 weeks), and in some, more than once, and to organize an all Russian movement, the maximum mobilization of the administrative resource is required. The smooth work of the regional authorities points to coordination from the Center. At that, the notion that the new movement is a project of United Russia doesn't look feasible. In support of this

presumption is the fact that the ruling party at first did not know what to do when the meetings started, and then only after a couple of days had passed, recommended party members on the local level to join in the rallies. The fact that there practically wasn't any follow through on this recommendation (the role of United Russia in organizing the meetings did not increase), and taking into account the executive discipline of the party, this could point to the lack of consolidation among the leadership of the party in their position on the new movement.

The above stated facts allow one to presume that not United Russia but the “political” wing of the presidential administration is behind the new movement. This wing favors the principle of the diversification and the organization of different pro-presidential forces in Russia. In particular, besides the ruling party and the all Russian council in support of Vladimir Putin, these other forces include the pro-Kremlin youth movements, of which only the “Young guard” is directly affiliated with United Russia.

If United Russia can claim the status of being the only pro-presidential force in parliament, then the new movement will facilitate the mobilization around Vladimir Putin of that part of society that doesn't sympathize with the ruling party but instead is oriented directly towards the head of state. Moreover, the “for Putin” movement will allow the current president of the Russian Federation to appeal directly to civil society and to go around the parliamentary institutions of representative democracy, which increase his ability of political maneuver and brings him more in line with the status of not just the formal head of state but “leader of the nation”.

The question of the different available variants of the “transitional” job placement for the current president has recently become more urgent. The assumption that he will become the prime minister is still on the level of discussion. According to the Russian constitution and the established legal practice, notwithstanding the fact of its formal independence, the institution of the executive branch still remains under the firm control of the president. The fact that security block is no longer under his authority (the subordination of these ministers according to the Federal Constitutional Law “About the government” is directly to the head of the government so in this case the Constitution will not have to be changed), will only partially weaken this institution. First of all, the Constitution says that the head of state is the Commander-in-chief and that he determines the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, and even after the changes to the law “About the government”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the defense ministry will still be under him. Secondly, the president has the right to dismiss the

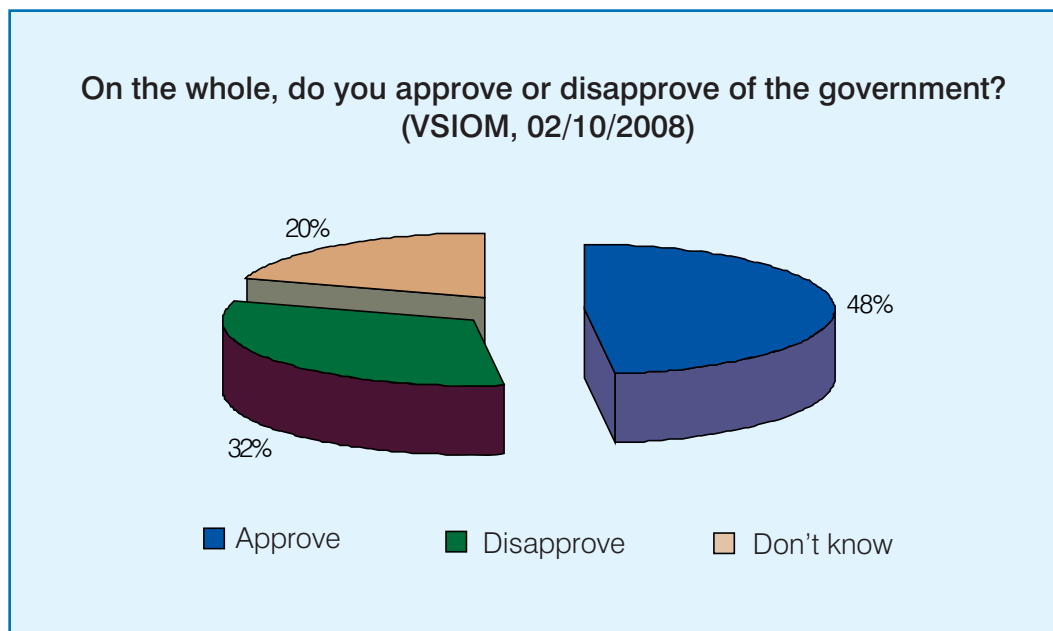
government which further weakens the position of the prime minister. Also, the president in October and December of 2007 indirectly stated that such a scenario was impossible, saying that the redistribution of powers between the president and prime minister is not being planned.

The second part of the United Russia convention, which was held after the parliamentary elections, notwithstanding its predictability, brought about a mini-sensation. In addition to coming forward in support of Dmitri Medvedev as his “successor”, president Vladimir Putin publicly accepted his offer to become prime minister after he leaves office in March of 2008. At the same time, the current head of state confirmed his earlier statements about the undesirability of the redistribution of powers between the two institutions of government. His answer was unambiguous: “... if... the citizens of Russia, put their trust in Dmitri Anatolyovich Medvedev and elect him as the new president of Russia, then I will be ready to continue our common work, in this case, as the head of the government of the Russian Federation, without redistributing the powers between the institutions of the presidency and the government”⁵.

Notwithstanding the confident tone of Vladimir Putin’s statement about his premiership and the work being done to prepare for it, there remain serious doubts about whether this scenario is realistic. First of all, the head of state himself has allowed himself to not be straight about his career prospects. In particular, in an interview with Time magazine published on December 19, he stated that he hasn’t “yet made the decision on whether to seek the premiership or not”⁶. On the one hand, the interview was given one December 12 – 5 days prior to his announcement about his agreement to accept the Dmitri Medvedev’s offer. On the other hand, unlike choosing a “successor”, the final decision of which was taken in the final week before its announcement, Putin has probably been thinking about his perspectives as prime minister for some time. That is why it would be appropriate to assume, that in this case, the final decision will not be made until after the presidential campaign in April / May of 2008.

⁵ http://president.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/12/17/2041_type63374type63376type82634_154550.shtml

⁶ http://president.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/12/19/1607_type63379_154772.shtml



With that, indirect facts, mainly on the administrative level, point to the gradual increase in the weight of the executive branch to the detriment of the presidency. In particular, the transfer of the functions of the management of government property which is located on foreign land from the Administration of the president to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade can allow one to come to such a conclusion. The image of Elvira Nabyullina as a weak administrative player lets one assume that it is unlikely that such a capital-intensive decision was the result of her lobbying.

Another variant was also looked into – the election of Vladimir Putin to the post of speaker of the parliament. This post, as well as the legislative branch as whole, is less dependent on the president. The formed opinion that the parliament is just a “limb of the president’s administration” is based merely on the high level of support among the population for Vladimir Putin personally, which is confirmed by surveys. The parliament as a representative institution cannot ignore this. The president can dismiss the parliament for only a limited number of reasons, the appearance of which, in today’s internal political environment, is highly unlikely. Admittedly, for this scenario to play out, according to current law, it was necessary for Putin to take a seat in parliament immediately after the victory of United Russia, which did not happen. But since this question is regulated not by the

Constitution but by federal laws, the norms can be changed without detriment to the Constitution.

Another post that Vladimir Putin can take is the secretary of the Security council, which has already been vacant for 6 months. Originally, ***the Security council was supposed to be the key structure for administrating the specialized organs of the Russian Federation along with being the “nerve center” and the center for making strategic decisions.*** The status of the Security council (SC) and the way in which it was created was established by the Law of the Russian Federation “About security” in 1992. The SC as a constitutional organ which prepared the decisions of the president in this field, answered for strategic problems relating to governmental, economic, social, defense, media, ecological and other security related fields, as well as safeguarding the health of the population, prognosis, the prevention of extreme situations and the overcoming of their after-effects, and the ensuring of stability and law and order. Taking into account the fact that the system of government security in the Russian Federation did not function during the course of a year (from September, 1991 till fall of 1992), this structure from the beginning took up an exclusive role in the system of government.

In the spring of 1992, Yuri Skokov became the first secretary of the Security council and became an influential and independent figure who could lobby the adoption of strategic decisions, including decisions regarding personnel (for example, the first head of the Krasnodar region was said to be Skokov’s man). Afterwards, events lowered the status of this organ. First of all, Yuri Skokov aroused discontent by publicly criticizing Boris Yeltsin and was dismissed by the president. Secondly, the key sections of the law were overturned by a presidential decree in December of 1993 in connection with the passage of the new Constitution of the Russian Federation. The legal vacuum that was created was supposed to be filled by the law “About national security” which was being considered by the parliament of the first convocation. In 1995, this document, which was presented by the parliamentarian Vladimir Semago, was rejected by the parliament and is still in a state of revision. Until the legislative settling of the questions about the status of the SC, all these questions are settled by presidential orders.

The uncertainty of the legal status of the SC makes its place in the hierarchy of the organs of government extremely dependent on two factors – the political and administrative skills of its secretary and the intentions of the president. In the second half of the 1990s this organ, despite being dependent on the will of he

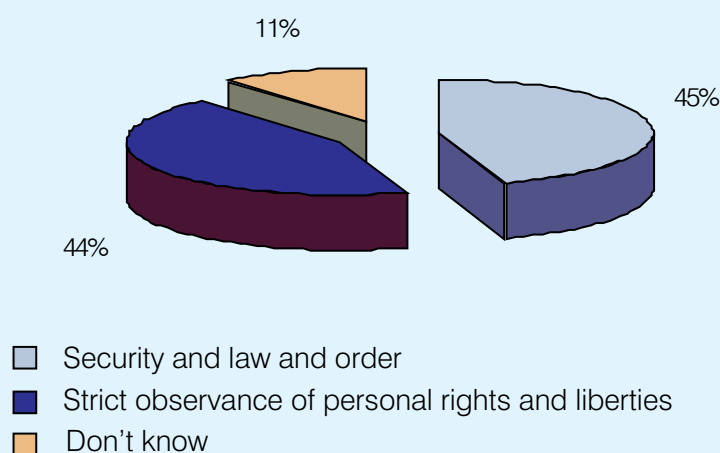
president, was able to return to the ranks of a strategic security organ. This process was started by Alexander Lebed (1996) and later, after an interruption, by the current first deputy premier Sergey Ivanov (1999-2001).

However *with the coming of Vladimir Putin to power, the situation had somewhat changed*. On the one hand, the new head of state started to gradually place people from his “team” into the highest governmental posts, gradually taking over the running of the country from the “oldmuscovites”. On the other – the sharp need arose to find job placements for the “the family” resignees. The scenario of kicking all of them out of the elite circles at once was unacceptable. This could lead to the formation of an influential Fronde, and secondly this didn’t mesh with Putin’s personnel policy style. In this situation, the Security council became an ideal “elevator” for the decline in social rank for one of the most powerful figures in the late Yeltsin period – the former head of the MVD Vladimir Ryshailo. The appointment to the post of head of the Security council after Sergey Ivanov looked honorable and even promising, however this organ gradually attained the reputation of “personnel cesspool”.

After the departure of Ryshailo to an even less influential and noticeable post, the executive secretary of the CIS, Igor Ivanov, who lost his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs due to administrative reform, became head of the Security council. Although he also was considered a member of the outer circle of “the family”, for Putin’s “team”, taking into account its tightening grip on power, the former diplomat didn’t present any danger. With this leader, the Security council could well have regained some of its lost influence, but this did not happen. This was partly due to the fact that by the beginning of his second term, the president began to make decisions by himself without the support of a team of advisors, and also to the low administrative maneuvering talents of Ivanov himself.

According to unofficial accounts, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs recognized the impossibility of reestablishing the status of the structure that he was heading and this in turn led to his resignation. The lack of prospects in staying in this post was due to the fact that the presidential elections were around the corner – one can assume with an almost 100% certainty that the new president, even if he does the maximum in pleasing all the different groups of elites, will do at least a limited “purge” of personnel, the result of which will be finding job placements for the dismissed. Thus, an element of “preemption” was present in Ivanov’s decision.

What is more important for modern Russia maintaining security and law and order or strict observance of personal rights and liberties? (VSIOM, fall of 2006)



Other scenarios of a “transitional job placement” for Vladimir Putin (for both a few months and a few years) such as the head of The Public Chamber, or head of Gazprom and others look less and less realistic as they are all “not independent” in relation to the institution of the presidency.

Be that as it may, to all appearances Putin will retain influence after May of 2008, when the new Russian president is inaugurated. ***In the past year and a half a distinct trend can be noticed in the policies of Vladimir Putin. This is the diversification of the instruments of influence on the political situation.*** This is expressed in the following forms: the appointment of people from his personal “personnel pool” who are not in any way connected to the leading groups of elites, to key positions, the weakening of the “superdepartments” by dividing up and taking away their functions, and the formation of new channels of influence on the internal political situation.

An illustration of the first thesis is the appointment to the post of head of “Transneft” a former colleague from the time when he was working in Dresden, Nikolai Tokarev. It is worth noting that this tactic doesn’t always work. For example, the head of the Investigative committee, Alexander Bastrikin, who has a reputation of being the president’s man, in the end leaned more and more towards

cooperating with the “*siloviki*” wing of the presidential administration – which evidently didn’t correspond with Putin’s calculations.

Another instrument of retaining Vladimir Putin’s influence on the internal political situation will be the “second generation” personnel reserve. The promotion of members from this group to key positions has been a priority for the head of state. ***For the past year and a half, a new rule for personnel rotation has gradually taken shape. It follows that new government appointments to important posts, especially executive ones, come from the personal “personnel team” of the president of the Russian Federation.*** Among the requirements of fitting into this category are, first of all, not having any patron-client relationships with any of the influential groups of elites from the “first Putin call-up”, who have long-since taken up lobbying their personal interests.

The first such appointment can be considered Andrei Belyaninov, who became head of the Federal customs service in May of last year. He became a bullet in Vladimir Putin’s “clip” almost immediately after the promotion of the latter – in the course of his first term he headed Rosoboronexport and in 2004-2006 Rosoboronzakaz. However, back then it was perceived in the context of an administrative confrontation between the “*siloviki*” and the “liberals” with the victory going to the latter against the “liberal” German Gref. A month before this, another appointment with much less resonance took place. This was another “man of the president”, Aleksey Anichin. He became head of the investigative committee of the MVD.

This course of promoting people personally loyal to the head of state into the ranks of the official elite became more apparent in the fall of 2006. A former member of the KGB and the main specialist in the committee for foreign dealings of the St. Petersburg city hall, Oleg Safonov was appointed deputy minister of the MVD (at the end of February 2007, rumors began to circle that he would replace Rashid Nurgaliyev in march), and another protégé of the president Valerii Golyubev took up the post of deputy general director of Gazprom. Later Safonov was appointed presidential envoy plenipotentiary to the Far-east region.

This tendency came into place once and for all in 2007. In the spring, Alexander Vishnikov, the head of the Central Election Committee, someone completely loyal to the government, but not in Putin’s team, was dismissed in favor of Vladimir Churov, a man who is personally acquainted with Putin and who was a “Petersburg” parliamentarian from LDPR. A couple of months later, the long talked about division of the General Prosecutors office into an Investigative committee and a department who’s duties would include only

surveillance, finally happened and quicker than originally planned. The head of the Investigative committee became another Putin promotee, the former deputy general prosecutor Alexander Bastrikin. Finally, after the promotion of the ex-head of Rosfinmonitoring Victor Zubkov, his post was taken up by Oleg Markov, who six months before that became the deputy head of the department in an analogous post in the protocol system of the president of the Russian Federation (in St. Petersburg he was the deputy head of the committee for foreign dealings), and Rosfinmonitoring itself was removed from under the subordination of the Ministry of Finance.

In October, the members of the president's "personnel pool" underwent their first test to determine whether they met their requirements. The catalyst for this became another turn in the battle among the "siloviki", which has been going on in a latent or active form for the past four years. This was the confrontation between the head of the FSB, Nikolai Patrushev and the head of Gosnarkokontrol, Victor Cherkosov. At that, there were signs of an alliance between the head of the Investigative committee, Alexander Bastrikin and Nikolai Patrushev. In particular, staff from the Investigative committee with operational support from the FSB, began doing the job of the employees from Gosnarkokontrol, and also the job of the arrested staff members of the Audit Chamber, the head of which, Sergey Stepashin, can be considered a situational ally of Cherkosov.

Thus, one can ascertain the presence of the first signs in the appearance of administrative alliances between the key representatives of the first and second "wave" of the "Putin call-up". For now the question remains open about the long-term nature and durability of these alliances. However, Alexander Bastrikin, is not only defending the positions of his own department but is also acting in the interests of the "siloviki" wing of the presidential administration. It is worth noting that the Prosecutor General, Yuri Chaika, who up until recently held a neutral position, came out on the side of Gosnarkokontrol (FSKN) by disputing the arrest of the head of the department for operational security of the FSKN, lieutenant-general Alexander Bulboy, who was one of the closest figures to Cherkosov.

For now it is hard to forecast whether or not the above mentioned tendency will continue, and if it does, what the reaction of the president will be. Judging by the first signs, it can come forward in the leveling of the playing field between the "old" groups of elites. For example, the order "About extra measures in the battle against drug trafficking" was signed, which gives Gosnarkokontrol extra administrative levers.

However it is most likely that the process of promoting “the president’s men of the second generation” to the top government posts will continue. For now, the “not yet revealed” personnel reserve of the head of state includes the head of Rosreserve, Alexander Grigoriev, the former judo trainers of the president, Arkadi Rotenberg and Vasili Shestakov, Putin’s former classmate Nikolai Egorov, and also the former rector of the St. Petersburg conservatory Sergey Roldugin, the businessman, Valerii Polomarchuk, and the head of the organizational-protocol department of the presidential administration Marina Entaltsiva.

In the cohort of “the president’s men of the second generation”, a special place is occupied by people who hail from the Foreign intelligence service. Former or current members of the PGU and SVR make up a very influential group of elites that is separate even among former government security (intelligence) servicemen. What sets them apart is their much reduced publicity even in comparison with former members of the counterintelligence organs – unlike their colleagues, they don’t make a show of their past. Much of this is based on the statutes of the law. In particular, in accordance with the law “On foreign intelligence”, information about formerly belonging to the CBP can only be revealed with the sanction of the leadership of the service. Moreover, agents of the foreign intelligence service can, without revealing their status, hold posts in government and business structures.

Another point that sets people who hail from the SVR apart is their tendency to keep conflicts completely private. This advantageously sets them apart from their colleagues in the counter-intelligence services (the example of the public conflict between Nikolai Patrushev and Victor Cherkessov). In particular, the conflict between the head of Rosoboronexport, Sergey Chemezov and the former prime minister Mikhail Fradkov (judging by indirect evidence both hail from department “T”) hit the media airwaves only after the dismissal of the latter, and the whole incident didn’t really get that much coverage in the media.

Among those who hail from the SVR and occupy high-level posts are Sergey Chemezov, the first deputy premier, Sergey Ivanov, and the newly appointed envoy plenipotentiary to the southern federal district Grigorii Rapota. It is quite possible that the new head of the Central energy customs-house, Vladimir Vsevolozhskii, who worked as the deputy to Tokarev at Zarubezhneft and curated the security there, also hails from the same organ. Those spies that after leaving the service went into business, are now usually co-owners of international companies that are registered in the location of their previous service.

The new role of political parties. The course of the parliamentary elections and their results

2007 was the year that the party system in Russia received its final contour – the formation of a few-party system reached its concluding phase. On July 16, 2007, the Constitutional court (KC) confirmed the compliance with the Constitution of a law which stipulated that a party must have at least 50 thousand members and that its branches must be open in more than half of the regions of the country⁷. These articles of the law “About political parties” were contested by the Russian communist workers party – Russian party of communists (RKRP – RPK). A court of general jurisprudence had already reached a decision to liquidate them. This situation is a model, and the decision of the KC once and for all endorsed the intention of the current authorities to put their stake on a few-party system, which should guarantee its additional stability.

The beginning of the “purge” of the party system from the “dwarfs” began with the insertion into the law, the above mentioned changes in December of 2004 with a two year transition period. According to the legal regulations that came into effect, any party that did not meet these regulations had to transform into a civil association (which makes it impossible to participate in elections) or self-liquidate. The RKRP did not do either of these things, and its activities were brought to an end by a suit by the Federal registration service. This case isn’t unique and moreover it is a precedent, as are the attempts to contest the articles in the law “About political parties” – an analogous complaint was filed with the KC by the Republican party of Vladimir Ryzhkov.

The decision of the constitutional court of the Russian Federation was far from the first and more likely the last signal that Russia will have a few-party future – the verdict cannot be appealed. All in all, this scenario has a number of positive aspects. First of all, is the already mentioned stability, which is already in existence due to the relatively calm socio-economic situation in the country, but which could be shaken if there was to be a fall in energy prices. In this case the “established” parties, who are the support beams of the public political system, will play the role of a “buffer”. Secondly, the presence of large parties will allow not only to institutionalize the political playing field, but also to create vertical

⁷ Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation from July 16 2007 № 11-P “About the case checking the constitutionality of separate regulations of articles 3, 18 и 41 of the Federal law “About political parties” in connection with the complaint of the “Russian communist workers party – Russian party of communists” political party // Russian newspaper. 2007. №4420

channels of social mobility, not unlike those that existed in the soviet times, which would guarantee added security to the whole power structure, since the most socially active members of society will be incorporated in it.

Admittedly, there are a few potential risks. The most significant of which is the bureaucratization of the decision-making process, which, in ones turn will slow down the response to important social needs. However, an insurance policy against the realization of such a scenario is the working-out of an algorithm of personnel rotation and intra-party competition, and also the presence of institutions of party control from the executive branch and the head of state.

Incidentally, the government began trying to effectively use “regulatory resources” during the parliamentary election campaign. The main trend in preparing the “legal part” was the serious toughening-up of the election laws, and also the laws concerning parties and social-political activity. Paradoxically this was done through the formal liberalization of these laws. However, the decision of Vladimir Putin to head the United Russia party-list made these innovations rather accessory. Nevertheless, the regulatory resource of the government was very important in making the flow of the parliamentary elections more “formatted” and in legitimizing their results.

The most important legal “innovation” was the transition from a proportional-majority system (50% – by party-lists, 50% – by single-member districts) to a completely proportional system of elections. This allowed the parties to enlarge and also substantially lowered their number, which overall, positively affected (and in the future this effect will remain) the manageability of the election. Also, this measure, along with the increase in the minimum required percentage of votes for a party to get into parliament (“the cut-off threshold”) from 5 to 7 percent, was advantageous to the large parties, to whom went the mandates of the outsiders who didn’t make it into the parliament.

Another route in toughening up the election law was the anti-extremist trend. In 2007, among other things, a number of large legislative initiatives were passed, among which were the ban on “groundless” and “radical” criticism of opponents during election campaigns. The law passed in the fall of 2006, differed in the sense of its anti-extremist orientation, which was a reaction against the increase in the inter-ethnic tension in society, which many politicians, because they did not have any other resources, tried to exploit during the elections. People who had outstanding or current convictions for extremism lost the ability to take part in the elections. Also, a new ground for the refusal of registration was put into effect: a party could be forbidden to participate in the elections if in the period before the

election campaign, any one of its representatives, who was on the party-list, in their public speeches or statements made “calls, or statements that provoke social, racial, national, or religious discord”, or if they publicly displayed or propagandized Nazi symbols.

Not only was the anti-extremist trend continued in the summer of 2007, it became more large-scale than at any time during the final stage of the election law reforms. In particular, not only was a conviction for a serious or very serious crime and also the commission of a crime of an extremist nature grounds for losing the right to run for office, but now also any administrative penalty (stipulated in article 20.3 in the KoAP – Codex of administrative offences of the Russian Federation) that one received for an offence of an extremist nature fit into that category to. One is guilty under this article if they prepare, distribute, receive with the intent to distribute, and also propagandize or display publicly Nazi symbols, or symbols that are “similar to the point of intermixture”. Since cases can be examined much quicker in the administrative format, this administrative lever can be used more operatively in the course of the election campaign.

It is also worth noting the reform of the anti-extremist legislation itself, in particular the passing of the law “About combating extremist activity”. Its new wording significantly widens the concept of extremism, and those activities that fall under it. According to the previous wording of the law, the following fell under extremist activity:

1) the activity of social, religious or other associations, or media, or individuals, involved in planning, organizing, preparing, or doing actions which are directed towards:

- the violent alteration of the basis of the constitutional order, and the violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation;
- undermining the security of the Russian Federation;
- the seizure or appropriation of authority;
- the creation of illegal armed groups;
- the carrying-out of terrorist activity or the public justification of terrorism;
- the incitement of racial, national, or religious discord and also social discord concerned with violence and calls for violence.
- the abasement of national dignity;
- the carrying-out of mass disturbances, hooliganism, and acts of vandalism that are motivated by ideology, politics, race, religious hatred or animosity, and also hatred or animosity of any social group;

- the propaganda of the uniqueness, superiority, or inferiority of citizens based on their belonging to any religious, social, racial, national, or lingual group;
- 2) the propaganda or public display of Nazi symbols or symbols that are similar to Nazi symbols to the point of intermixture;
- 3) public calls for the carrying-out of the mentioned activities or the carrying-out of the mentioned activities;
- 4) the financing of the mentioned activities or any other assistance in carrying-out the mentioned activities, including through according financial aid, real estate, educational polygraphic and the material and technical foundations, telephone, fax or other means of communication, informational services, or other material or technical means for the carrying-out of the mentioned activities.

The new wording “textually” left the same volume of the legal qualifications of this concept, but at the same time significantly widened it. Currently the following falls under extremist activity:

- 1) extremist activity (extremism):
 - the violent alteration of the basis of the constitutional order, and the violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation;
 - the public justification of terrorism and other terrorist activity;
 - the incitement of social, racial, national, or religious discord;
 - the propaganda of uniqueness, superiority, or inferiority of a person on the basis of his social, racial, national, religious, or lingual status, or religious affiliation;
 - the violation of the rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of a person and citizen on the basis of his social, racial, national, religious, or lingual status, or religious affiliation;
 - the hindrance of citizens in exercising their electoral rights and their rights to participate in a referendum or the violation of secret balloting, in connection with violence or the threat of violence;
 - the hindrance of the lawful activity of government organs, or local administrative organs, election commissions, in connection with violence or the threat of violence;
 - committing a crime with the motivation that is mentioned in point “e” of the first part of article 63 of the Criminal code of the Russian Federation (;
 - the propaganda or public display of Nazi symbols or symbols that are similar to Nazi symbols to the point of intermixture;

- the public call for carrying-out the mentioned activities or the mass distribution of material which is knowingly extremist, and also its creation or storage with the intent of its distribution;
- knowingly, falsely accusing a person that is holding a government post of the Russian Federation or the government post of a territory of the Russian Federation, while he is fulfilling the duties of his post, of the activities mentioned in this article that are criminal;
- the organization and the preparation of the mentioned activities, and also the incitement of their execution;
- financing the mentioned activities or the assistance in their organization, preparation and execution, including through giving educational, polygraphic and providing a material and technical base, telephone or other forms of communication or the giving of informational services.

As was said above, the criticism of opponents during an election campaign was banned in the spring of 2007. In particular, parties who bring forth a list of federal candidates do not have the right to use the air time on broadcast channels granted to them, for the following aims:

- 1) calling to vote against a list of federal candidates (federal lists of candidates);
- 2) the description of the possible negative consequences if that or any other list of federal candidates will receive parliamentary mandates, that or any other candidate (candidates), that is included (are included) in the list of federal candidates, will be elected (are elected);
- 3) the dissemination of information, in which there is evident information about any political party that has brought forward a federal list of candidates, any candidate (candidates) that is (are) included in a list of federal candidates, in conjunction with negative commentary;
- 4) the dissemination of information, that helps create a negative attitude in the voter about a political party that has brought forward a federal list of candidates, any candidate (candidates) that is (are) included in a list of federal candidates.

To be fair, it should be noted that along with toughening the “rules of the game”, there did occur a certain liberalization of the election laws. In particular, the previous wording of the law “About the parliamentary elections“, grounds for refusing the release of a certified copy of a list of federal candidates were the absence of, or not having all the necessary documents, and also the violation of the

procedures of putting forward a list of federal candidates (point 8, article 38). After passing the amendments, the grounds for refusing to certify a list of federal candidates included only the absence of the documents and the violation of the procedures of putting forward a list of federal candidates. In practice this means that in case only some of the necessary documents are presented (this was the most commonly used form of the using the administrative resource), the list won't be refused registration, but will just have to supply the missing documents.

Besides the purely legal framework for the parliamentary campaign, there are unwritten rules of political behavior, the violation of which, would, without delay, bring about legal sanctions.

First of all, it is absolutely forbidden to use slogans of a nationalist or national-patriotic character. However, this principle isn't absolute. At the end of September in 2007, Vladimir Putin met with the leader of the "great-power patriot" party "The people's union" Sergey Baburin, who later took part in the "Russian march – 2008". Naturally, only the establishment parties may use nationalist rhetoric, though very carefully and in a very small amount.

Another silent rule is the absence from the lists of politicians that are outside the system and also outstanding personas that could give United Russia some competition (at least the parties followed this principle until Putin headed the party-list of the "ruling party"). In particular, the leader of the KPRF, Gennady Zuzanov, was able to make Ivan Melnikov, who is known for his critical outlook on the current course of the country overall, "remove himself" from the party-list. There was an analogous situation in Fair Russia. According to unofficial accounts, the Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov gave an ultimatum, according to which he would leave the United Russia list if the banker Alexander Lebedev joined the SR Moscow list and especially if he headed it. The maximum amount of resources were directed in ousting Lebedev from the Moscow list, and it worked. The "Russian Patriots" also followed this silent rule. Gennady Semigen's party convention did not confirm the rumors that were previously circulating about Dmitri Rogozin, the famous politician, entering the party troika. The first two spots, as was expected, were taken by Semigin himself, and the leader of the "Party of Russia's revival", the former speaker of parliament Gennady Seleznyov. The third spot went to the actor Sergey Makhovick. Wanting to keep the look of being an opposition party, the "Patriots" made Andrei Savelev, the formal leader of the unregistered party "Great Russia", the head of their Moscow list. However, this politician isn't as famous as Rogozin – neither on the regional, nor the federal level.

Another silent rule of the parliamentary elections of 2007 was the minimization of the usage of leftist slogans and social rhetoric – something Vladimir Putin openly indicated immediately after the spring regional elections. An exception to this rule was made for the “old left” – KPRF, and of course United Russia.

The parliamentary campaign in Russia could be divided up chronologically into two periods: before and after October 1, 2007, when president Vladimir Putin agreed to head United Russia’s party-list in the elections. Before October 1st the main intrigue was the battle between United Russia and Fair Russia for the right to call itself Vladimir Putin’s party. From time to time, SR (most likely after “receiving instructions” from the Kremlin) tried to reorient itself to battle for the top spot on the left flank with KPRF, though not very successfully.

Vladimir Putin’s decision to head United Russia’s party-list fundamentally changed the configuration of the parliamentary campaign. According to WCIOM, his decision to be №1 on the party list of United Russia added, after only one week, 6 % to their rating⁸. If during a survey on the 29-30 of September 48% of those surveyed were ready to vote for this party, then on the 5-6 of October 54% were ready to vote for them. This was the historic maximum recorded for United Russia since 2002. Thus, even when taking into account the possibility of a statistical error of 3.4%, there was a rise in United Russia’s rating, something that the experts at CCPR forecasted. At the same time, the second part of the forecast turned out to be correct too – the rise in the rating wasn’t that sharp. At the same time the ratings of KPRF and SR fell by a percentage point each to 6 and 3 percent correspondingly.

The percentage of people in a survey who would vote for Putin if the election were held next Sunday rose by 6 percent (from 60% to 66%) in the first week of October. The other potential candidates for the highest post in the government lagged significantly behind: 4% for Dmitri Medvedev, 3% for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and not more than 2% for other politicians. This result contradicted the forecasts of most analysts, who soundly thought that the rating of the president and of United Russia would start to converge: United Russia’s rating would rise, while the presidents would fall, which would be quite natural since one could criticize United Russia for a lot more than one could criticize Vladimir Putin.

One can suggest a couple of explanations that supplement each other to explain this phenomenon in the social consciousness. First of all, the citizens

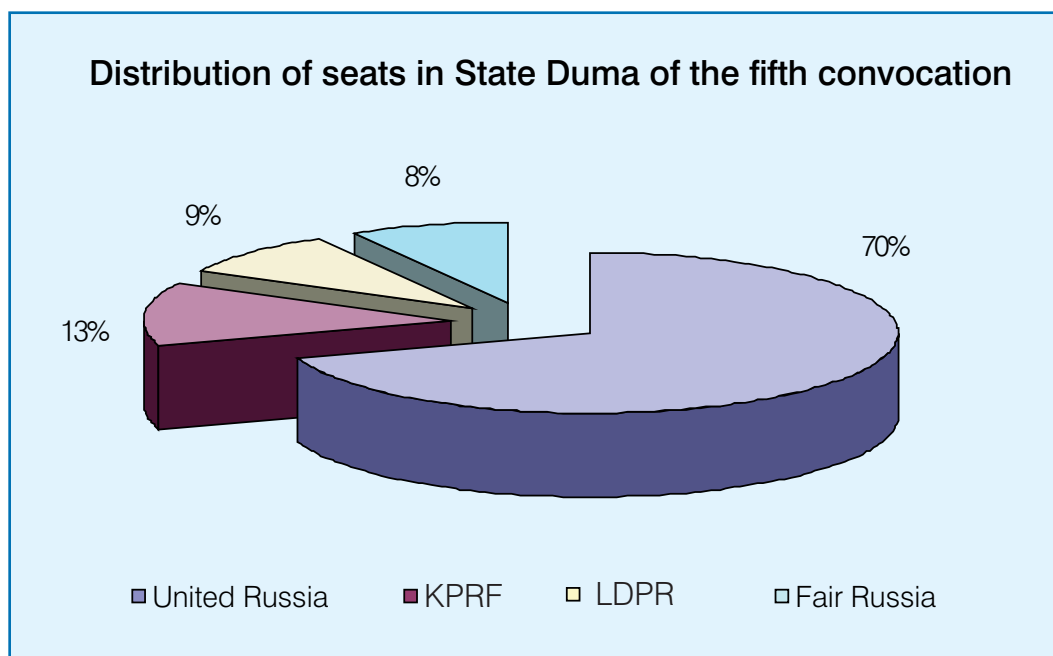
⁸ <http://wciom.ru/novosti/reitingi/ehlektoralnyi-reiting-politicheskikh-partii.html>

approved of the president's move as an act of "civil courage". This thesis is supported by the surveys of WCIOM – for the first week of October (when the rating of the president increased) Putin's job approval rating practically remained the same: the vast majority, 83% rated it as positive while 10% – negative. In this way, the rise in the rating of the head of state isn't connected with a rise in his job approval rating. Another explanation is that the electorate became tired of the uncertainty connected with a post-Putin Russia. One of the key accomplishments of the president that the masses attribute to him is the so called "Putin stability", the demand for which not only did not fall, but actually rose, especially under the conditions of an uncertain socio-economic situation (the rise in food prices, etc.). The decision of the president to head the United Russia list convinced part of the electorate that he would play the role of the guarantor of the socioeconomic stability of the majority of the population after May 2008 as well, which brought an increase in his rating.

By the results of the elections on December 2, only four parties, who were all in the previous parliament (Fair Russia was built on the base of the Rodina block), were able to break the 7% barrier. Thus, the apprehension of observers that a repetition of a modified "Kazakhstan scenario", a two-party parliament, (a one party parliament is not allowed under Russian law) would repeat in the Russian Federation were not confirmed.

At that, United Russia was able to increase the number of seats it held from about 300 (during the fall session, this number fell due to the appointment of a number of parliamentarians to important positions in other institutions and organs of government) to 315. This 2/3 majority allows the passage of federal constitutional laws (these are passed on Constitutional matters), the changing of individual regulations in the Constitution, and also the initiation of impeachment proceedings. In other words, United Russia does not have any need to form any coalitions with any of the parties that made it into parliament.

The remaining three parties received only a few dozen mandates each – KPRF – 57, LDPR – 40, and Fair Russia – 38. The personal make-up of these parties, notwithstanding their total lack of influence in the parliament, is more important, since the direction and intensity of the imitation of oppositional activity will depend on their "mastery".



The main objective that stood before the authorities was not so much as helping United Russia as insuring a higher turnout of the electorate. The first objective didn't seem that imperative after Vladimir Putin directly appealed to vote for the "ruling party". The main effort was in mobilizing the population with the goal of producing a significant turnout at the polls. A large part of the passive or apolitical voters should, according to the intentions of the curators of United Russia's campaign, vote for the "ruling power" if they saw the name of the Russian president on the list.

It is worth noting that United Russia wasn't the only beneficiary of the high turnout. Apart from this, the rating of LDPR noticeably increased in comparison with the pre-election polls, especially considering that their pre-election rating didn't leave them much hope in making it into parliament. An especially significant "contribution" to "Zhirinovsky's party" came from the voters of the Fareast region, where this political party has traditionally strong positions. It is worth noting that the campaign to raise the voter turnout gave spotty results. In particular, across the Urals, where support for the "ruling party" is pretty high, the level of voter turnout surpassed that of 2003. At the same time, in the regions where oppositional parties are stronger (for example in Moscow), the turnout by mid-day wasn't that different from that of four years ago.

The Presidential elections – who can take Putin's Place?

The disclosure of the “successor” became the crucial event of not only 2007, but of the two previous years. According to Russian political tradition, the question of continuity of power is key, and the political course and the lay of the land are just a derivative of its answer. Lately, there has been a lot of analytical material about the biography of the “successor” – from apocryphal books to blunt compromising material⁹. An analysis of the preconditions of the rise and the entourage of the president was published by the author in the journal “Political class” in January 2008¹⁰. At that, the accent wasn't so much on the statistics – staff composition – as on the dynamic factor – the system of alliances and contradictions, and inter-elite conflict, all of which while solidifying the positions of the “successor” will also have a larger influence on the political reality. This chapter focuses on the statistical elements concerning the “successor” and the possible members of his future team.

Dmitri Medvedev became a full-fledged public politician in November 2005 after being appointed to be the only (at that time) first deputy premier. In many respects, this was pushed along by the idea, which was new at the time, of the national projects, the curator of which became Medvedev. Subsequently, over the course of a year and a half, there was a competition between him and the “regular” (until February of 2007) deputy premier Sergey Ivanov for the right to be considered the lone “successor” of the current president.

From the beginning, the silent competition was being won by Dmitri Medvedev. This was facilitated by the heightened attention of the media to the national projects, and to a competent media counter-intrigue against Ivanov. In particular, in the first half of the year, the “Sichev case”, which was about hazing in the military, was widely promoted and had a negative impact on the image of Sergey Ivanov as he was the Defense Minister at the time. It should be noted that, in many respects, the “promotion” of this scandal was facilitated by media under the control of “Gazprom-media”, and in particular, the radio station “Ekho Moskvi”.

By the end of 2006, the majority of the elites saw Medvedev as the more probable “successor”, which was expressed by the gradual consolidation of

⁹ See., for example., Zhigulev I. The President's course // Smart Money. 2008. №3 (93).

¹⁰ Salin P. The successor and his team: Dmitri Medvedev has a large clientele // Political class. 2008. №1 (37).

pressure groups around the first deputy premier. Most likely, Putin wasn't satisfied with this tendency, so he fundamentally altered the positions of the "successor" contest by making changes in the government. This drastically undermined the inner-elite positions of the previous favorite, who gradually came to be viewed as an outsider against the background of the rising chances of his vis-à-vis Sergey Ivanov. In particular, according to unconfirmed reports, the unofficial headquarters for nominating Medvedev for president dissolved itself at the end of April.

Notwithstanding the failure of Sergey Ivanov to become prime minister in September of 2007, because of which he lost his "favorite" status in the "successor" race, Dmitri Medvedev preferred to maintain his tactic of "active waiting". On the one hand, he continued to be present in the media as the curator of the national projects, but on the other, he didn't show the confidence or ambition of the "successor". In particular, in contrast to Sergey Ivanov, he didn't make presidential statements.

Judging by circumstantial evidence, Vladimir Putin made his final decision to support Dmitri Medvedev's candidacy in the week prior to it being revealed and the informal agreement process lasted until the weekend of the 8-9 of December. The sharp increase in the conflict within the elites in the time leading up to the decision by the president threatened the stability of the system as a whole and demanded of the president the revelation of the "successor". However, Medvedev wasn't the only one on the list. Mostly likely, there were three deciding factors: the lack of support for Medvedev from the "*siloviki*" wing of the presidential administration, his "correct" behavior in the last two years, and his personal qualities.

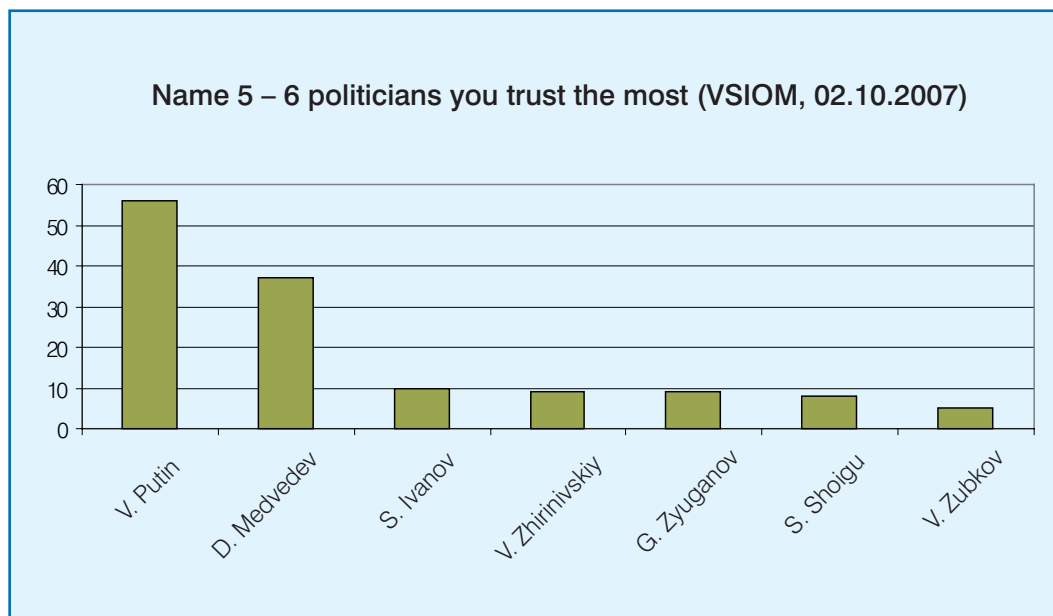
From the point of view of the inner-elite positions of the three "official" candidate "successors" (besides Dmitri Medvedev, Sergey Ivanov and Victor Zubkov were also considered potential candidates), the "social" first-deputy premier was the farthest from the majority of the leading groups of elites. In particular, Zubkov was considered the promotee of the "*siloviki*" wing of the presidential administration, and Sergey Ivanov after his promotion in February of 2007, came to be considered the future president by the majority of the elite.

At the same time, it would be wrong to say that Medvedev is a completely autonomous figure. First of all, from the beginning the so called "family" group, in which at the present, Anatoly Chubais, Alexander Voloshin (both in RAO EES), and Roman Abramovich hold the strongest positions, lobbied for him. In particular, in the beginning of November 2006, the chairman of the board of directors of the energy monopoly Voloshin made a visit to Washington, where,

according to unofficial accounts, he “floated” Medvedev’s candidacy as a “successor”. However, by April 2007 this group changed its tactic from an active one to a wait-and-see one, “freezing” the activity of the unofficial headquarters for nominating Medvedev. Nevertheless, in support of the notion that its activity wasn’t completely stopped was the visit Roman Abramovich made to Vladimir Putin not long before the president made his choice.

Apart from that, Medvedev is the chairman of the board of directors of Gazprom. And though the “Gazprom” group is a rather loose structure which unites a number of subgroups with competing interests, one shouldn’t completely discount the fact of its support for Medvedev. In particular, Gazpromneft, which is under the formal control of Gazprom, is in the sphere of influence of one of the closest people to the president – his former colleague, the oil-raider Gennady Timchenko, who is also the leader of one of the two subgroups of the “Russia” bank group. Besides that, the son of the leader of the second subgroup which is headed by Yuri Kovalchuk, Boris, heads the department for the realization of the national projects in the government, which makes him practically the trusted man of Medvedev. Finally, the large-scale expansion of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration, which in the last few months took a very expressive form (the arrest of highly placed officials), threatened the status of Vladimir Putin as the highest arbitrator, which determined the necessity of picking the “successor” from the opposite camp.

The “elite” factor wasn’t the sole motive behind Vladimir Putin’s decision. Besides that, the fact that Dmitri Medvedev passed the premier test played its role too. In particular, when his positions were strong at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007, he didn’t allow himself to sound presidential, and when he was no longer the favorite in the winter and fall of 2007, he took that as something that was supposed to happen and didn’t start demonstrating his own ambitions. In many respects, this was the corollary of the third factor – the personal qualities of Dmitri Medvedev, which gives the current president a guarantee that his “successor” won’t, with time, reconsider the role of Vladimir Putin as the “highest authority”.



The coalition which formed around Medvedev after it was revealed that he was the “successor” was a rather diverse one. Right now, its main connecting link is its ambition to weaken the “*siloviki*” wing of the presidential administration. However, as the image of the “common enemy” disappears, its unity could be put under question.

One of the “pillars” of Dmitri Medvedev’s team are the representatives of the so called “oldmuscovite” group, who, most experts in the latter half of 2007, completely discounted. Its interests are represented by the former head of the presidential administration Alexander Voloshin and the head of RAO EES Russia, Anatoly Chubais. Moreover, the businessman Oleg Deripaska, who unlike the other two figures, during the years of Putin’s rule didn’t go into the shadows, is also a part of this group. It should be noted that lately Alexander Voloshin has become more active. According to unofficial accounts, he was the one who headed Dmitri Medvedev’s informal nomination headquarters. It is interesting that after the name of the “heir” was revealed, an interview with the former head of the presidential administration (which was supposedly given a couple of years ago) was published, in which his views about the current political situation in the country were set forth. And in the beginning of this past week, Voloshin made a speech at the French institute of international relations where he repeated a few of Medvedev’s theses that he had made earlier (for example about the

inexpediency of having government officials present on the board of directors of government companies), and also stated that there won't be any usurpation of the president's powers.

Another center of influence in Dmitri Medvedev's entourage is represented by people who previously didn't play leading roles in Russian politics and who are now planning to "improve their situation". These men include, the head of the presidential administration, Sergey Sobyenin (headed the election headquarters of the "successor's" campaign) and the businessman, Alisher Usmanov. At that, the co-owner of Gazmettal has a lot of influence and even has pretensions on the status of being Medvedev's main "personnel officer". It should be noted that there has been rising tension between this center of influence and the "oldmuscovite" one. In particular, Usmanov is trying to take part in the division of the assets of Interros, where one of the players is Deripaska.

The third significant center of influence in the entourage of the "successor" is the so called "liberal siloviki" who are headed by the head of Gosnarkontrol, Victor Cherkesov and the head of the Presidential security service, Victor Zolotov. This group has the goal of gaining control over all of the security organs of the country. This group is considered the most "moderate" among the "Petersburg chekists" and is oriented towards the modernization of the security organs, changing-over their activity towards the creation of a modern society that is based on an open free market economy and a pluralistic democracy (of course within certain "limits"). It should be noted that it is the most autonomous of the three centers of influence in the entourage of the "successor" and that they view him not so much as a patron but rather as a situational ally.

Besides allies and partners, Dmitri Medvedev has been able to, through years of being a federal official, incorporate in the higher echelons of power, people that are aligned with him personally. The most active expansion of Dmitri Medvedev's associates has been seen in the judicial branch of power. In particular, the head of the Arbitration court, Anton Ivanov and a significant portion of his entourage, and also the Constitutional court judges Sergey Kazantsev, and Sergey Mavrin are all considered his promotees. Moreover, the representative of the president to the Constitutional court, Mikhail Krotov is also considered to be with the "Petersburg lawyers".

Another "personnel base" that Dmitri Medvedev has is located in Gazprom. Although the interests of different groups of elites intersect in this company, and to say that it is controlled by Medvedev is an overstatement, his protégées occupy important posts there. In particular, a member of the executive committee,

Konstantin Chuyko (curator for the Russian side of the dealings of Rusykrenergo) and the deputy head of Gazprombank, Ilya Eliseev.

The “successor’s” personnel reserve is dispersed in other branches and in other levels of government. In particular, the parliamentarian Pavel Krashenninnikov, who, thanks to having the reputation of being “Medvedev’s man”, was able to regain the post of head of the legislative committee, Nikolai Vinnichenko, who is the head of the Federal service for court enforcement officers, Alexander Gutsan, who is deputy general prosecutor, and Alexander Konovalov who is the envoy plenipotentiary of the president in the Volga federal region, are all considered bullets in Medvedev’s “clip”. The head of the RFFI, Yuri Petrov, can conditionally be counted as belonging to the “successor’s” team.

It should be noted that even among the “successor’s” associates there are lines of conflict, which are caused by a battle for resources. In particular, Nikolai Vinnichenko has been recently trying to remove the realization of confiscated materials from the jurisdiction of RFFI.

Vladimir Putin’s support for Dmitri Medvedev has severely weakened the positions of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration. From the beginning, this group of elites played against the “liberal successor” and did so even at the end of 2006, when his private inner-elite rating was “at its peak” and the *nomenclatura* groups were oriented towards him as the future head of state. At the same time, the “siloviki” did some things to try to discredit Medvedev in spite of the strengthening positions of his vis-à-vis – Sergey Ivanov – a figure that also didn’t satisfy this group of elites.

In addition, in the fall of 2007, the “siloviki” found themselves divided and drawn into an internal fight. In the beginning of October, the head of the department of operations of the Federal narcotics service (FSKN), lieutenant general Alexander Bulbov was arrested in Domodedovo airport. And in November, the deputy Finance Minister Sergey Storchak was arrested. An interview with the head of FPG Financegroup Oleg Schwartzman in the newspaper Kommersant had a particular resonance. The interview basically laid out the ideological framework for a “velvet reprivitization”, which was immediately interpreted by commentators as the possible uncontrollable redistribution of assets in favor of people close to the head of state. At that, Schwartzman directly named the leader of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration, Igor Sechin and the head of Rostechology Sergey Chemezov as his sponsors and backers.

The interview resonated deeply in the business world and with some of the high-ranking officials and managers of government companies. In particular, the

head of PAO EES, Anatoly Chubais called the phenomena that Schwartzman talked about “systemic” and as “having deep roots on the federal and local levels”. And the first deputy head of the board of directors of Alpha-bank Oleg Sisoiev called the contents of the interview “very serious, resembling the truth, and scary”.

Schwartzman later practically disavowed his earlier statements in an interview on Ekho Moskvi. This was most likely the result of “prophylactic measures” conducted with Schwartzman by the representatives of those who incurred losses due to the publication of the interview. With that, the destructive potential for the current power structure from this scandal is far from exhausted, because in any case the informational resonance from it will be felt for a long time to come.

A couple of versions can be put forth as to the identity of the person who initiated the release of the scandalous materials. According to the first version, the reason for the release of the materials wasn’t political. It can’t be ruled out that Schwartzman, because of his work started to “know too much”, so he quickly “released” the information in order to save himself from physical “neutralization”. Furthermore, it is quite possible, that the publication of the interview was aimed at eliminating Schwartzman’s Financegroup from taking part in the battle for the financial flows of the Russian venture company (RVK). In particular, during his appearance on Ekho Moskvi, the businessman said that according to the results of the RVK concourse, his company was recognized as the best, overtaking Vneshtorgbank and the management company Leader. The latter, in spite of having a reputation as a “Gazprom company” (it manages the assets of NPF Gazfund) is de-facto controlled by Russia bank.

However it is doubtful that the scandal with the interview was only about the battle for the flow of finances, because the people who initiated and benefited from the interview definitely knew that the measures taken in response by the people who incurred losses from it were going to be exceptionally harsh. It is most likely that political motives dominated this story and that the intended targets (to tarnish their image) were the mentioned leaders of the groups of elites.

Among the most influential people who were named in the text were the leader of the “*siloviki*” wing of the president’s administration and the head of Rostechology Sergey Chemezov. The latter during the course of 2006-2007, significantly widened his sphere of influence, notably on the administrative-political level. At the same time, the main role in the dismissal of the government of Mikhail Fradkov, or at least the speeding up of its dismissal is ascribed to him.

However *the main target of the information attack was, most likely, the leader of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration, its deputy head, Igor Sechin.*

Rumors about the fact that the leader of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration, Igor Sechin might leave his post started circulating in the middle of November in 2007. In confirmation of this, information was spread that said that Sechin was on a special vacation from which he wouldn’t return. It became clear in the beginning of December that if this information did have anything behind it, that it was drastically exaggerated. At that, the deputy head of the presidential administration sped up the preparation of a safety net. In particular, several vice-presidents from Rosneft, a company which was in the sphere of influence of the “siloviki”, were dismissed, including Alexander Saprionov, the curator of a key department – refining and sales. The point was to perform a “purge” of people from the government company who were close to its president – Sergey Bogdanchikov, who recently more often couldn’t come to an understanding with its chairman of the board of directors Igor Sechin.

Signs that certain groups of elites that were in conflict with the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration gained from Medvedev becoming the “successor” became apparent almost immediately. First of all, the head of the Ministry of Finance, Aleksey Kudrin, could finally meet with his deputy, Sergey Storchak, who was under arrest. Earlier, the minister wasn’t only denied the release of his deputy even under personal guarantee, but he couldn’t even visit him, which according to unconfirmed reports, was taken as a vote of no confidence in Kudrin by the president and forced the Minister of Finance to think about resigning.

Secondly, information came out that the general prosecutors’ office was going to initiate an audit of the activities of the Investigative committee. This department is headed by Alexander Bastrikin, who in the past few months was actively cooperating with one of the main members of the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration Nikolai Patrushev. Besides joint actions in connection with the arrest of high-ranking officials (the audit chamber, Gosnarkokontrol, the Ministry of Finance), this alliance consolidated its personnel positions. A minimum of three FSB officers are now working in the Investigative committee. According to unofficial accounts, around 50 employees of “Lubyanka” are attached to the Investigative committee further down the chain.

It is interesting that besides auditing the legality of indictments, and the expediency of pre-trial detentions, the auditors are also going to establish the expediency of using FSB agents for Investigative committee investigations. It is

also worth noting that it was the deputy general prosecutor Victor Green who signed the order for the audit. It was Green who was in conflict with Bastrikin regarding the division of spheres of influence in the “old” General prosecutors’ office, before the Investigative committee became its own department. Finally, the deputy general prosecutor is making his subordinates send progress reports to the supervising prosecutor Victor Nasedkin, who before September was working a case about corruption in the FSB, in particular about the contraband of Chinese goods and later lost his position as an investigator in the Investigative Committee (according to unofficial accounts, because of pressure from the secret services).

Three high-profile events happened in December of 2007 that can be viewed as attempts at counter-intrigue from the “*siloviki*”. First of all, together with the head of the FSB, Nikolai Patrushev, the deputy head of the presidential administration Igor Sechin met with the widows of deceased FSB agents. During the course of his short speech, he stated that the family members of the deceased could rely on him for any help needed. Thus, this measure could be viewed as an attempt to mobilize the “*chekist* community” around the deputy head of the presidential administration.

The second episode happened in the government. Its head, Victor Zubkov – a protégé of the “*Kremlin siloviki*” – demanded that the head of the Ministry of Finance find the billion rubles that “got lost” on their way to the Far East. This remark can be viewed as a direct hint by the premier if not about the direct involvement of the minister in a scheme to steal money, then at least about his incompetence. It is interesting that this incident happened on the eve of the meeting between Kudrin and Storchak. It is quite possible that it was “timed” like this on purpose.

Finally, not long before the New Year, the elites received a clear signal that the “*Kremlin siloviki*” don’t intend to yield on their positions, at least not until Vladimir Putin leaves his presidential post. According to unofficial accounts, the delay of the Investigative committee audit till the spring means a de-facto “freezing” of the operation for an indefinite amount of time, that is until the positions of the “*siloviki*” wing of the presidential administration are subject to real noticeable erosion. Information also appeared that as another retaliatory move by the “*Kremlin siloviki*”, Victor Green, who formally launched the investigation, will be “exiled” to the post of deputy prosecutor of one of the federal regions. It is also interesting that the Storchak case move forward – Igor Kruglyakov, a member of the board of directors of the Inter-regional investment bank (MrIB) was indicted. MrIB, for its part, is closely connected with business structures that are under the control of Sergey Chemezov.

The positions of the other groups of elites will overall remain unchanged for a certain amount of time after the possible arrival of Dmitri Medvedev. The Russia bank group can be considered any ally (albeit a “tactical” one) of the deputy premier. The same can be said of the “Petersburg liberals”, who after the departure of German Gref from the government, de facto and de jure consolidated around Aleksey Kudrin. According to unofficial accounts, the Cherkesov-Zolotov-Murov group also supported the candidacy of Medvedev as a counter-weight to the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration, with whom they had pretty strained relations.

It is noteworthy that overall, the Medvedev candidacy and his proposed policies are supported by the Russian population.

The first part was revealed at the All-Russian civic forum at the end of January in 2008. This isn’t a regular or yearly event – the first one took place at the dawn of the “Putin era” in the fall of 2001. By ***picking the civic forum as the starting point for the presentation of his program, the “successor” indirectly confirmed his reputation as a liberally orientated politician who takes into account the opinions of nongovernmental institutions.***

Hence, ***the difference between the positioning of Dmitri Medvedev and the Vladimir Putin of 1999 – beginning of 2000 is evident.*** If Putin personified the figure of a tough and decisive ruler, who was ready to take the steps necessary, even if the legality of them wasn’t that clear (“rub them out in the outhouse”) for the preservation and strengthening of the institutions of government, then Dmitri Medvedev appeared in the form of a leader who, first of all, in his actions is ready to take into account the opinions of society and secondly isn’t the advocate of tough and decisive action. This difference in positioning overall is overall in line with the mood in society: if eight years ago the country was under the threat of territorial and infrastructural collapse and the implementation of immediate anti-crisis measures were needed, then today society feels the need for modernization with the obligatory preservation of all the socioeconomic achievements of the “Putin era”.

The confirmation that the positioning of Medvedev was “right on” is his constantly rising rating. In the first few weeks this sharp jump could be explained by the fact that the population was gradually learning of Vladimir Putin’s choice. But by the beginning of January almost 100% of the population was in the know about Putin’s choice.

Dmitri Medvedev’s speech was addressed to different parts of the electorate. In particular, he indicated the necessity of “decades of calmness and stability”,

which is in-line with the expectations of the vast majority of electoral groups. At that, that part of his speech which dealt with the assessment of the 1990s was rather revealing. In contrast to Vladimir Putin's speech in November of last year, his overall assessment of the first decade of existence of the Russian Federation was more positive, though his opinion wasn't radically opposed to Putin's.

In particular, according to the first deputy premier, Russia in the 1990's "walked, what is called, on the edge... We went through serious ordeals, made a lot of mistakes, but didn't destroy the country, and this is a real accomplishment of the authorities and civil society of that period". Noting the accomplishments of the "authorities of that period", Medvedev showed that he is not only positioning himself as Vladimir Putin's "successor", but that he is going to take into account the positive accomplishments of that earlier period. With that, the 1990s didn't come off as a period of victory in the candidate's speech – he mentioned the massive impoverization of the population, the fall in the birth rate, and the increase in mortality.

There was also a landmark message to the pensioners (the most disciplined electoral group) in his speech. In particular, after Medvedev's statement about the need to reform the pension system, his opponents (in the presidential race and in the Fronde) could have used this to portray the "successor" as an advocate of the "cannibalistic reforms" of the beginning of the 1990s, who is ready to realize the plans of Mikhail Zurabov. But his statement about the necessity of "competently building an effective pension system that would provide for a dignified retirement" could narrow the field for the negative portrayal of his earlier statement.

Another key block of the "successor's" theses was devoted to the problem of developing a dialogue with civil society and of building democracy generally. With that, ***Medvedev didn't start speaking in the style of the liberals from the 1990s who completely disavowed specific national characteristics and called for the building of a system of "government – society" from scratch.*** In particular, his indication that a key question is the question of combining "our national traditions with a functional assortment of democratic values" shows that he is ready to take into account the national traits. With that, it is doubtful that this is simply pre-election rhetoric – he made similar statements before it was announced that he was the "successor" in the fall of last year when his chances of becoming him were pretty questionable.

In his address, "candidate №1" talked about another systemic problem that wasn't previously brought up – the high level of corruption in Russia. The proposal to turn the fight with corruption into another national project is pretty

revolutionary and it changes the fundamental essence of the national projects. Previously, the national projects had the status of forcing through the development of breakthroughs in specific fields. But in the fight against corruption, simply throwing money at the problem will just exacerbate it. A new systemic approach will be needed.

It is quite possible that the fight with corruption will become a long-term theme in the rhetoric of the “successor” and not just a pre-election sound-bite. In this case, the reanimation of anti-corruption initiatives should be expected from the government. They practically stopped after the beginning of the work of the specialized committee under the management of the assistant to the president for personnel, Victor Ivanov, about a year ago.

Moreover, *the fight against corruption can become a convenient lever in doing a gradual rotation of the elites*, which will inevitably start after the inauguration of Dmitri Medvedev. Since many of the influential elites are involved in corruption (not only government officials) it will be convenient to use this excuse when dismissing them.

A little bit later, at the economic forum in Krasnoyarsk, Dmitri Medvedev unfurled the second part of his program. *On the one hand it met the expectations of observers* since it spoke to all electoral groups – from businessmen to the socially disadvantaged layers of society – and it gave them reason to hope. In particular, the calls for developing regional infrastructure and increasing the mobility of labor resources were perceived very positively.

On the other – notwithstanding earlier assumptions, the program didn’t contain any indications of the specific means of achieving the stated goals. By the gauge of generalization this document is about equal to Dmitri Medvedev’s earlier speech at the All-Russia civil forum on January 22. The “successor” purposefully in the very beginning of his speech said that he wouldn’t get off the main course set by Vladimir Putin.

At the same time, even though the economic program had a “strategic” character, concrete numbers weren’t given. For example it was indicated that the NDC tax should be lowered or even replaced with a sales tax, but even a ballpark figure for a new tax rate wasn’t given. The rate and the way in which the tax (on profit) is collected, according to the “successor”, should stimulate businesses to invest in NIOKR, however no concrete or even model scheme of switching over to the new rate was given. Very effective but again without any concrete details were his other tax initiatives: the simplification of accounting for small businesses, the setting of taxes and export tariffs in such a way as to stimulate the building of

new production that contains a high degree of processing of natural resources and so on.

The same can be said of the other macroeconomic initiatives of the “successor”. In particular, one of the key points of his program was the transformation of the ruble into one of the regional reserve currencies. At that, the methods in doing so – the launching of a project of long-term refinancing, the creation of comfortable regulatory rules for the market and the support of the financial system – are all of a general character.

In this way, *the effect produced from Dmitri Medvedev’s speech was in some ways positive and in some ways negative*. Since the audience to whom the speech was directed was so wide, at a minimum, the current level of popularity of the “successor” among the population will be maintained. However the lack of specificity in the form of concrete dates and target values (the program is formulated for the next four years and doesn’t have any detailed time frame) will allow the Russian bureaucracy to sabotage the realization of its initiatives, in the same way it was done time and again with individual theses of Vladimir Putin’s addresses.

It should be noted that *the successor’s speech wasn’t only economic in nature as reported by most of the media*. All the measures in increasing the effectiveness of the economy and the financial system, according to the logic of the speech, are just a means in achieving “the most important tasks” – the supremacy of the law and the realization of the principle “freedom is better than no freedom”. Moreover, Dmitri Medvedev stated in his speech that there will not be a new redistribution of assets as is sometimes the case when new figures come to power in Russia. Accordingly, another priority of his rule will be *the supremacy of property rights*.

Another direction of reform is insuring the independence of the judicial system. Dmitri Medvedev paid a lot of attention to this question in his speech, which can be explained by at least two factors: ideological and administrative-tactical. In the first sense, the increased attention of the “successor” to this topic can be explained by his professional career, since after graduating college in the 1980s and up until he became a federal official in the beginning of the 2000s his fate was closely intertwined with jurisprudence. This was on the theoretical level (he taught at St. Petersburg University, and participated in the creation of textbook on civil law), as well as on the practical (providing services to various clients).

The second reason could have a more “practical” nature. Out of all the branches of government, the representatives of Dmitri Medvedev’s “personnel pool” have consolidated themselves in the judicial organs. Some of the main members of his team are the head of the Highest arbitration court Anton Ivanov

together with part of the management of this structure along with some judges on the Constitutional court. Because the “successor’s” freedom of maneuver in the personnel department will be severely limited, at least in the beginning, he can try to do an expansion not by personnel means but institutionally – by redistributing the informal *nomenclatura* influence to the advantage of the judicial branch of government.

An analysis of Dmitri Medvedev’s speech shows a significant similarity between some of his theses and the initiatives of Vladimir Putin’s first term. In particular, this is the maximum elimination of administrative barriers and an increase in the role of society in evaluating legislation. In 2000-2003 there was intent to realize this idea. Apart from that, the intention to vest administrative procedures in work regulations for government organs is an exact copy of one of the main points in Vladimir Putin’s administrative reform, which was developed in the second half of his first term. The intent to replace the administrative procedures which required to get permission with ones where you simply had to declare your intentions.

At the same time, the “successor” practically confirmed the rumors that were going around about the “dying-off” of the national projects, at least in the form in which they existed for in the past two years. According to him “the main object of the policy of social development shouldn’t be a specific field (we already did that), but rather every citizen, every individual family”. In this way, although indirectly, this statement admits the partial ineffectiveness of approaching social development on an industry by industry basis, and the intention to switch to a recipient-oriented approach to giving social services. This idea was popular in the first half of the 2000s and even went into the idea of the monetization of benefits.

Finally, Medvedev’s offer to create a special joint-stock company which would be responsible for developing infrastructure by passing a law, reminds one of a call to create another government company (albeit one with a different legal-organizational structure), which goes against his previous statements and the statements of Vladimir Putin himself about the undesirability of the formation of new structures of this type.

Judging from Dmitri Medvedev’s speech, one can assume that he intends to continue Vladimir Putin’s course, however the accent will be on the rehabilitation of a few initiatives that were developed in 2000-2003 and practically forgotten in 2006-2007. However, since the indication of the mechanism that will be used in achieving the goals he set out in his speech are absent, they may repeat the fate of German Gref’s programs, which were developed by TsCR in 2000.

The reorganization of the government of the Russian Federation – September of 2007.

Notwithstanding the fact that during all of 2007, there were “pin-point” dismissals and appointments, the main events in the reorganization of the Russian government happened in the fall.

The government of Mikhail Fradkov was dismissed in September and the post of prime minister was given to Victor Zubkov. From the point of view of “Transition-2008” the personnel moves of Vladimir Putin were very significant. At that, it was important to note not just the new appointments but also the informational background under which they came in. The first and most important consequence of the president’s decision was the increase in the number of potential successors. By August the analytical context allowed one to surmise that the number of potential successors narrowed to only two “official” ones – Dmitri Medvedev and Sergey Ivanov. In the first part of September, there was a feeling that the president had already stopped on Ivanov – joint “presentational” trips of the head of state and the first deputy premier became a regular occurrence.

The appointment of Zubkov and the statements that followed from the new prime minister and the president considerably altered the alignment of forces on the “successor” playing field. The prime minister’s statement that “if I get something done while prime minister then I can’t rule out something like that (being a candidate for president)” immediately added his name to the short-list of likely candidates. Finally, Putin’s statement that there are “not less than five people” who could be president, completely reshuffled the deck and disoriented the elites (after Zubkov’s hint about the possibility that he could run for president, they could have started to consolidate around him), and also significantly increased the list of potential candidates. Besides Victor Zubkov, Sergey Ivanov, and Dmitri Medvedev, people again started talking about Anatoly Serdyukov, Vladimir Yakunin and a number of other possible candidates. Although Sergey Ivanov was no longer the absolute leader, he was still seen as one of the most likely, though now not the only candidate for the highest post.



One of the president's aims in reshuffling the cabinet was his desire to inject some intrigue and a sense of uncertainty into the pre-election atmosphere. The unexpected personnel move facilitated this. The dismissal of the cabinet of ministers by itself couldn't be seen as a "huge" event, because unlike in 2004, it was completely anticipated – if not in September, then definitely before the end of October. In this situation, the candidacy of Victor Zubkov, who a year ago turned 65 and lost the right to be in the government civil service (previously it was forecast that he would receive an honorable appointment to the Federation Council), was completely unexpected.

Victor Alekseyevich Zubkov – Was born on September 15 1941 Arbat, Kushvinskoy district Sverdlovsk region; graduated with an economics degree from the Leningrad agricultural institute in 1965, candidate of economic sciences; began working in 1958 as a metalworker in the Monchegorsk mechanical-repair factory of the Severonikel industrial complex (in the city of Monchegorsk in the Murmansk region); 1960-1965 – a student at the Leningrad agricultural institute; 1965-1967 – service in the Soviet Army; 1967-1970 – branch manager, deputy director of the Krasnaya Slavyanka state farm of the Gatchina district of the Leningrad region; 1970-1981 – director of the Razdolye state farm; 1981-1985 – general director of the Pervomaiskaya agricultural production complex in the Priozersk district of the Leningrad region; 1985-1986 – head of the

executive committee of the Priozersk city soviet of people's deputies; 1986-1987 – first secretary of the Priozersk city committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); 1987-1989 – head of the department for agriculture and food industry, head of the agrarian department of the Leningrad regional committee of the CPSU; 1989-1991 – first deputy head of the executive committee of the Leningrad regional Soviet of the people's deputies; 1992-1993 – first deputy head of the committee on foreign dealings in the city hall of St. Petersburg; 1993-1998 – deputy head of the State tax service of the Russian Federation – head of the State tax inspectorate for the city of St. Petersburg; 1998-1999 – head of the Office in the Ministry of the Russian Federation for tax collection in the city of St. Petersburg; July 1999 – October 2001 – deputy to the Minister of the Russian Federation for tax collection; November 2001 – March 2004 – head of the committee for finance monitoring in the rank of first deputy of the Finance Minister of the Russian Federation (during the course of the administrative reform of the structure of the executive federal organs, the committee was transformed into a federal office); March 17 2004 – appointed head of the Federal office for finance monitoring; Honored economist of the Russian Federation (2001); awarded the order of “the Badge of Honor” (1975), Workman's Red Banner (1981), “For service to the Fatherland» IV degree (2000) и III degree (2006), the medal “Veteran of labor” (1986); married, has a daughter.

By nominating the new prime minister, Vladimir Putin was able to solve two problems at once. First of all, the tendency to appoint people to key posts from the president's “personnel bench” continued. Victor Zubkov was Putin's deputy for two years in the St. Petersburg city hall. According to unofficial accounts, he received an invitation to come to Moscow personally from the president, though formally the invitation came from the current assistant to the president for personnel, Victor Ivanov, and the deputy head of the presidential administration Igor Sechin.

Secondly, ***the candidacy of Zubkov for prime minister was acceptable to the majority of the influential groups of elites.*** The new head of government had good relations with the head of parliament, Boris Grislov – one of the key “clients” of the “*siloviki*” wing of the presidential administration, and also with its most informal

leader, Igor Sechin. Moreover, since the time of the “Ozero” cooperative (Zubkov is considered the author and administrator of this idea) he has established contacts with the head of Russian Railroads (RZhD), Vladimir Yakunin and also the Kovalchuk brothers (especially Yuri). Zubkov can also be considered close to the “personnel” wing of the presidential administration, which is headed by Victor Ivanov. Besides that, he has steady relations with the majority of the “Petersburg” elite.

The Appointment of Victor Zubkov also set the main ideological trend for the parliamentary and presidential elections. In the beginning, two methods were considered for the mobilization of the electorate through “super ideas”. The first was the “creative rethinking” of the victorious Chechen war per sample 1999. However, the persistent activity of the militants in the Northern Caucasus region and the inability of the security organs to stop the wave of terror attacks made this project unfeasible and forced the selection of the second option – the battle against corruption. Rosfinmonitoring, which before his new appointment was headed by Victor Zubkov, collects different information, including that about “shady” financial flows.

With the appointment of the new prime minister, the basic configuration of the system of checks and balances that will be in place after the departure of Vladimir Putin became clearer. The figure of the “successor” of the current president, notwithstanding the heightened attention it is currently receiving, will not be key in the future power balance. Irrespective of whether the new head of state will be a weak or strong administrative player, whether he is charismatic or not, he won’t have those instruments of power that Vladimir Putin has today. First of all, he will be severely constrained in the financial sphere, above all, because of the three-year budget. Secondly, even if he wanted to make changes to the law he most likely won’t be able to because the parliament, which is under the control of United Russia, will be an alternative center of power (though not comparable in status and authority to the president). Another constraint will be the government, which, most likely will be headed by Vladimir Putin.

In spite of the fact that the main reason for dismissing the government was Vladimir Putin’s desire to demonstrate some political initiative and once again reformat the seemingly stable and predictable “successor” race, there were also other motives behind the actions of the head of state. One of those was the extremely tangled hierarchy inside the executive branch, which generated many conflicts.

The old government didn’t have a single decision-making center. Moreover, there were parallel management structures whose decisions often contradicted each other. This included the prime minister, the first deputy premiers (though they

didn't noticeably interfere with the work of the government administration, they did pursue their own interests) and the ministers, who all had a direct outlet to the president. Aleksey Kudrin, and to a lesser extent German Gref can be considered among the latter.

Moreover, the state corporations, who weren't directly accountable to the government made a serious attempt to conduct their own economic policy, which provoked the resistance of the former prime minister Mikhail Fradkov. In particular, he impeded the putting-together of the legislation required for the state corporation Rostech, which was being lobbied for since 2005 by the head of Rosoboronexport, Sergey Chemezov.

According to unofficial accounts, Fradkov received help from the assistant to the president for personnel, Victor Ivanov, who was unhappy with the expansion of the arms industry structures that were controlled by Sergey Chemezov and their possible expansion into OAO Kontsern PVO Almaz-Aitai, where Ivanov is the chairman of the board. The fact that the conflict reached the media irritated the president and possibly hastened his decision to dismiss the government.

At the same time, ***more and more lines of conflict sprouted up around prime minister Mikhail Fradkov.*** When he became head of the government in 2004 as a "technocrat", he wasn't part of the clientele of any of the influential groups of elites and he didn't have his own serious "personnel pool". However, after three and a half years of being prime minister, Fradkov significantly strengthened his own positions. First of all, he cemented an administrative alliance with the so called "*siloviki*" wing of the presidential administration which gave him room to maneuver. Secondly, through "small moves" he was able to achieve an administrative expansion that included the subordination of several departments under his direct control (for example the Federal customs service) and also the placement of his protégés or allies into the top posts of a number of departments (for example, head of the FSFR Vladimir Milovidov and the head of Rosriblofstva, Andrei Kraynev).

All of the mentioned factors significantly lowered the effectiveness of the government which aroused the dissatisfaction of the president and the incomprehension of the public as to what was going on in the executive branch of government. In particular, according to surveys, a large part of the respondents either couldn't rate the effectiveness of the Fradkov government, or gave it a "C".

The new composition and organizational structure of the government demonstrated that the president hadn't yet made his final decision as to the subsequent development of the economic policy of the country. During different historical time periods in Russia (including in the Empire and in the USSR) there

were three main lines of development: liberal (beginning of the 1990s), regional (Khrushchev's councils of national economy) and sectoral (the ministries – the giants of the soviet times). All three scenarios had an equal chance in September of 2007.

The main lobbyist for the liberal course became Aleksey Kudrin, who not only was promoted to first deputy premier but also started curating the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade (MEDT). The “successor” to German Gref, the new head of MEDT, Elvira Nabyullina is known to be a classic liberal. For example, she previously sharply protested against “slowing down the pace of reform”. It should be noted that her administrative status is much lower than her predecessor's. First of all, after the redistribution of authority, MEDT practically became a “Center for strategic planning” with the rank of a ministry. Secondly, the new minister is more of a scholar-economist than an official, which a priori testifies to her weak lobbying opportunities.

The “regional” line of development was put under the control of Dmitri Kozak. First of all, he is known for his uncompromising style. Since he has a direct line to the president, this most likely, is an administrative advantage. Secondly, his Ministry of Regional Development received significant authority to distribute money, which automatically increases his “administrative weight”.

Finally, evidence that the president supports the “sectoral” line of development is that he presented legislation to the parliament (under his own name) that would create the state corporation Rostechnology. It is possible that in the near future the process of creating these new sectoral companies will continue. There is already an idea of creating Rosavtodora, which would be responsible for building and operating private roads.

In spite of the fact that the composition of the cabinet didn't change that much, its reshuffling provoked the stirring up of old two-way conflicts, and the rise of new ones. There don't seem to be any particular lines of conflict in the Ministry for Health and Social Development – Tatyana Golikova is known to be a financial expert. That is why she either liquidated the lines of corruption in her ministry, or at least brought them under control. At the same time, she put a couple of sectors (for example the market for DLOs) that were of interest to a number of groups of elites, under their control.

The appointment of Dmitri Kozak has a high conflict potential for a whole host of reasons. First of all, he is famous for being someone who isn't prone to compromise or “come to agreement”. Moreover, the authority for operating the regional programs of the Investfund, have been transferred to his Ministry (the

Ministry for Regional Development). This is reason for tension between him and the first deputy premier, Aleksey Kudrin, who is the curator of the whole economic block. Kudrin is famous for being an experienced administrative player who is always looking to expand his administrative base. In fact, his first “target” after the redistribution of authority could be the Investfund, which isn’t currently under his control.

Another redistribution of authority within the economic block has contributed to the possible confrontation between the deputy premier, Zhukov and his colleague Kudrin, who is now the curator of the whole macroeconomic block, and also between the Finance Ministry and MEDT. At the same time, it can be forecast that Kudrin will but-heads directly with Zhukov, who is responsible for the preparation for the Olympics in Sochi. However, when taking into account both of their administrative infighting abilities and Zhukov’s “peace-loving” nature, it is doubtful that it will become public.

More significant, though still latent, is the rivalry between Zhukov and Kozak. The latter has at last two reasons to try to participate in the preparation for the Olympics. First of all, there is a direct connection between the Olympics and regional development, and secondly – by force of habit. Zhukov was the former envoy plenipotentiary of the president to the southern federal district.

Besides the new lines of conflict, the structural reforms have exacerbated old antagonisms. First of all, this concerns the head of the Ministry of Agriculture Aleksey Gordeyev (who’s dismissal is till being forecast) trying to get control of the fishing industry. In particular, the Ministry of Agriculture has prepared changes to the law “About fishing and the preservation of bio-marine resources” that are aimed at stimulating fish processing on Russian territory by giving tax preferences and eliminating catch-quotas. Most likely, the head of the Ministry of Agriculture tried to accomplish two things at once: snatch the initiative in reforming the industry and in this way make an account to the president for fulfilling orders, and also to receive the support of the “fishing lobby”. The next step is supposed to be the liquidation of Rosriblovstva and the transfer of its authority to the Ministry of Agriculture – a specialized department has already started being set up in the second half of May 2007.

Finally, a fierce struggle has unfolded over the once again established committee on youth. In contrast to the 1990s, highschoolers and students in general have become a pretty serious resource for carrying out “orange” revolutions and also for resisting them. This is all the more important in the run-up to “Transition-2008”. Notwithstanding the resistance of a number of groups of

elites, in the upshot, the former head of the “pro-Kremlin” youth group “Nashi”, Vasili Yakemenko became the head of this government committee.

Immediately after the composition of the new government became known, all of the attention of the media and the political analysts was on the personnel, while the organizational questions remained on the periphery. However, the detailed analysis of the presidential order of September 25, 2007, “The structure of the federal organs of the executive branch” indicates that the changes in the government weren’t as “pin-point” as it is widely believed. It is also possible that this is the beginning of the reformation of the whole structure of the executive branch – one that will have little in common with the principles of the previous administrative reform.

First of all, we have already seen the significant strengthening of the Ministry of Regional Development at the expense of MEDT. In particular, Dmitri Kozak’s ministry is in charge of allocating the resources of the Investfund, the coordination all the federal target-oriented programs dealing with integrated regional development, and also the functions of the government-purchaser FTsP, which are connected with the economic development of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and municipalities. Moreover, according to the new rules, the ministry works out the method in which government support funds are allocated to the regions and municipalities.

In this case, the authority of the Ministry of Regional Development is limited. First of all, it must coordinate the methods it worked out with the Ministry of Finance and “other interested federal organs of the executive branch”. Secondly, the finished document must be approved by the whole government of the Russian Federation.

Another acquisition which transforms the previously minor department into a “super-ministry” is the control of the state corporation “The fund for the assistance in the reformation of housing and public utilities (HPU)” with an overall budget of 250 billion rubles over 5 years. It is important to note here, that in this case the president backtracked from the fundamental rule regarding the activity of state corporations – the principle of being free from government control.

Another beneficiary of the changes was the “siloviki” wing of the presidential administration whose sphere of influence now extends over the Ministry of Justice. The functions of the federal real-estate agency (Rosnedvizhemost) were transferred from MEDT to the Ministry of Justice. This ministry received the function of working out the regulations for running the government real-estate cadastre. Notwithstanding its ‘technical’ status, this department has significant

authority, and hence this move seriously lowers the “administrative weight” of the MEDT.

At first glance, the positions of the “liberal” wing of government were strengthened. First of all, one of its leaders, the Minister of Finance, Aleksey Kudrin received the rank of deputy premier, which is a definite promotion. Secondly, Elvira Nabyullina, who because of her views received the nickname “our Margaret Thatcher” among the liberal milieu, received the post of head of MEDT. She resigned from the post of first deputy minister in 2003 as a protest against the “freezing of reforms” and in the 1990s worked in the “ultra-liberal” Ministry of economics eventually reaching the post of deputy minister.

However, an analysis of the organizational transformations shows that both of these changes were more about status than about administration or personnel. Aleksey Kudrin’s status as deputy premier received a boost, and all in all he was able to get control over MEDT. As far as MEDT is concerned, a significant part of its functions were transferred to other departments – the only things that are left are Rosreserve, the Federal agency for the management of federal real-estate (FAMFR), and the agency for the management of the special economic zones (RosSEZ). At that, Rosreserve is headed by a member of the president’s “personnel pool” – Alexander Grigoriev – so one can basically say that it is not really accountable to MEDT. Most likely, MEDT has been assigned the role of “collective advisor” and the decisions on whether or not to bring their recommendations to life will be taken somewhere else in the hierarchy.

In this situation of uncertainty and “suspension” of the two above named representatives of the liberal wing, much will be determined by their personal initiative – and they know this.

Finally, another consequence of the organizational change of the structure of government was the subordination of Rosfinmonitoring (RFM) directly to the head of government, which has weakened the legal positions of Aleksey Kudrin (Rosfinmonitoring, with Victor Zubkov at its head, practically wasn’t even under his control before). Moreover, in this case, the trend of appointing people to important positions from members of Vladimir Putin’s “team” continued. Oleg Markov, who prior to being the deputy head of RFM in the spring of 2007 was the first deputy administrator for protocol of the Russian president, became the head of this department.

The change in the “administrative weight” of the ministries (*an analysis of the presidential order from 09.24. 2007 “The structure of the federal organs of the executive branch”*)

| Ministry/department | Acquisitions | Losses | “Administrative weight” (1 = the status of the ministry as of 09.12. 2007) |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| The Ministry of Regional Development | Investfund; FTsP of regional development; State corporation of HPU | | 3 |
| The Ministry of Justice | The federal real-estate cadastre agency | | 1.2 |
| The ministry of finance | The promotion of Aleksey Kudrin to deputy premier | Rosfinmonitoring | 1 |
| MEDT | | Investfund; FTsP of regional development; The federal real-estate cadastre agency | 0.5 |
| Rosribovstva | Became a government committee | | 2 |

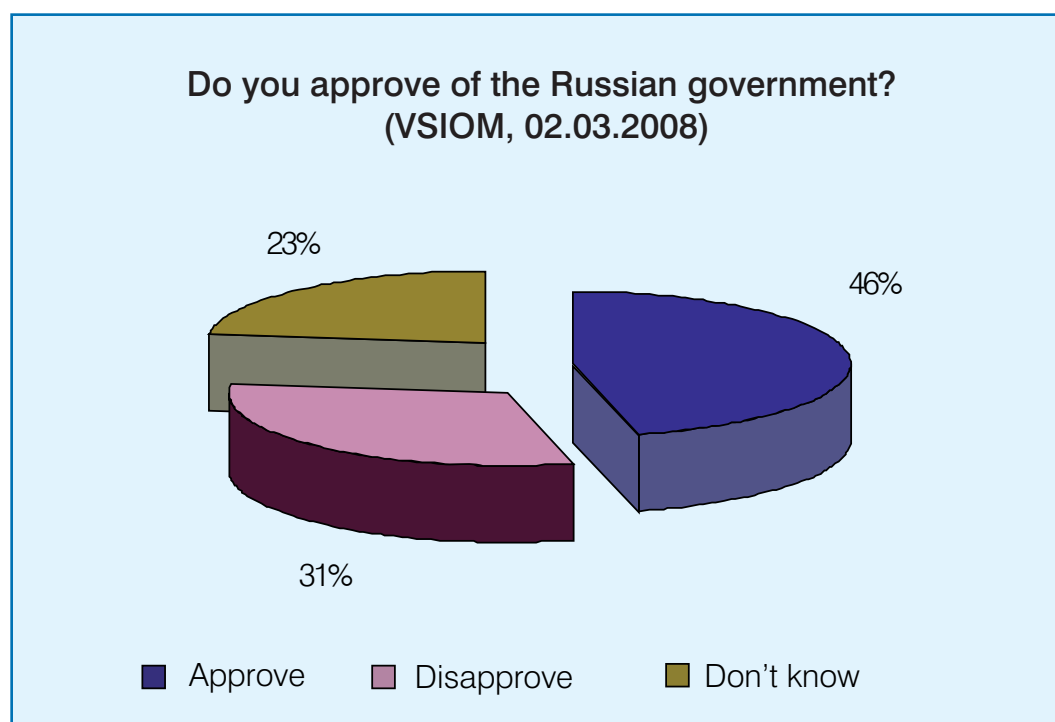
Another significant innovation in the president’s order was the creation of government committees. Their status and authority directly contradicts the main idea of the administrative reform – the division of government departments into the creators of sectoral government policy (ministries), government controlling agents (services), and departments that provide services (agencies). A government committee (GC) is a federal organ of the executive branch that that at the same

time carries out the functions of creating government policy and regulations, control and supervision, and also providing government services and the management of government property, “if it is so stipulated in a statute about the federal organ of the executive branch”.

Besides this, the government committees have other ministerial powers – they have the right to submit regulatory acts to the government and make propositions to the federal budget (to those parts that deal with the activity of the government committees). It is especially noted that the head of the GC “has other rights of a federal minister”.

Some serious changes are in the offing for the balance of power in the government after the presidential elections.

According to the majority of unofficial sources, the radical structural reform and personnel reshuffling in the government could have happened immediately after the appointment of Victor Zubkov in September of 2007. In particular, it was then that he brought the president’s project, but Vladimir Putin decided that it was too early for the radical changes, after which it was decided just to get rid of the more odious figures such as Mikhail Zurabov. The long interval between the appointment of the prime minister and the published order on the structure of the



government (2 weeks) can be explained by the preparation of the reforms and also the lobbying groups that surrounded the head of government. At the same time, the personnel and structure of the government remained virtually unchanged, whereas the more significant “shakeup” of 2004 took less time, since the distribution of powers inside the cabinet of ministers was already worked out within the framework of the administrative reform and the personnel changes were decided upon beforehand.

Changes are most likely to occur in three key blocks of the government: social, financial-economic, and security. The first block is represented by the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the structures under its control. Lately, from the administrative point of view, the role of these structures wasn’t that important, which was compensated by their importance in public politics as a “lighting rod”. However, the necessity of reforming the social sphere, and most of all, the pension system (something the “successor” addresses in his speeches), should increase the administrative and also the financial resources of this block.

In particular, one of the main aspects of the coming pension reform it is said, is the liquidation of the chronic and swelling deficit of the Pension fund. Currently this deficit is covered by transfers from the federal budget, however the enlargement of the deficit against the backdrop of constantly rising pensions has spurred the backers of a strict financial policy (the head of the Ministry of Finance, Aleksey Kudrin, and also his former deputy and currently the head of the Ministry of Health and Social Development Tatyana Golikova) to “localize” this unforecastable source of budgetary expenditures. According to a government leak, which was later denied, the pension reform contains two main innovations.

First of all, there is a proposal to increase the single social tax (SST). Secondly, the funds from the SST may be redistributed. Currently 6% from the 26% tax rate goes to the social and medical insurance fund, 14% to the PFR (Pension fund), and 6% to the budget. The possible plan of the reform is to eliminate the government budget from the list of recipients and send the “extra” 6% to the PFR. This ***“inflation” of the PFR will increase the administrative weight of its head, which wasn’t that small to begin with.*** In particular, the former head of the PFR, Gennady Batanov was the only head of the structures within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Social Development to quietly set himself in opposition to minister Mikhail Zurabov, even though chain of command in this system was one of the firmest in the whole government of Mikhail Fradkov. It is also possible that the ministry will be divided up into two structures, which would separately be responsible for health and social development.

The financial-economic block might be fundamentally reorganized. Most likely the main role in this will be played by the head of the Ministry of Regional Development, Dmitri Kozak, who has the reputation of a political heavyweight. However this image might not only be a positive, but could be a negative for Vladimir Putin's associate in the reorganization of the executive branch.

First of all, he is known for his uncompromising style and reluctance to "come to agreement". In connection with this, it is very likely that there will be a collision between him and the future prime minister (unless the prime minister will be Vladimir Putin), which is already noticeable in the relationship between Kozak and Zubkov. Moreover, Kozak's Ministry of Regional Development has received the functions of managing the regional Investfund programs, which also after May of 2008 could be the reason for a conflict between him and the curator of the whole economic block, the deputy premier, Aleksey Kudrin (when, most likely, the status and lobbying abilities of the country's main finance official will rise). Kudrin is known as an experienced administrative player, who is always looking to expand his administrative base. In that connection, his first "target" after the redistribution of authority might be the Investfund.

Another intriguing plot line has to do with the future of MEDT. The head of this ministry, Elvira Nabyullina is known as a classic liberal who, for example, previously sharply protested against the "slowing down the pace of reform". It should be noted that her administrative weight and abilities are significantly lower than those of German Gref. First of all, after the redistribution of authority, MEDT practically became a "Center for strategic planning" with the rank of a ministry. Secondly, the new minister is more of a scholar-economist than an official, which a priori testifies to her weak lobbying opportunities.

Taking into account the above said, one can assume that MEDT will either be swallowed up by the Ministry of Finance or will be transformed into a type of analytic center attached to the government under the direction of Nabyullina – this post when taking into account her personal qualities is more attractive. However, the question arises of who will get the highly influential function of managing the state's foreign property, which was recently transferred from the president's administrative office to the MEDT. Its transfer to the Ministry of Finance will significantly solidify the already weighty position of Aleksey Kudrin, which would contradict the basic principle put into place during the presidency of Vladimir Putin of checks and balances.

The major reorganization of the security block of the government is very likely. The security block is only conditionally considered part of the government;

in reality it is under the command of the president. The most stable situation looks to be in the Ministry of Defense, where the necessary structural changes were already put into place by its head, Anatoly Serdyukov throughout 2007.

Most likely, the key line of change in the structure of the security organs will be investigative reform – the bill is already prepared in the Federation council. In connection with this, once again the idea of forming a Federal investigative service is being reanimated. The functions of inquiry and investigation from the Investigative committee, the FSB, the MVD, and Gosnarkontrol, would be transferred there.

The prospects of the quasi-security services also look interesting. Even though they don't possess direct coercive resources (security service, special-ops, etc.), they still have significant influence over the process of the redistribution of assets in the country. First of all we are talking about Rosprirodnadzor, Rosnedrakh, and Rostekhnadzor, on the base of which, most likely, one organ of governmental ecological control will be created. At that, it is possible that Rosnedrakh might be able to uphold its independence, but the merging of Rosprirodnadzor and Rostekhnadzor is almost an already done deal.

The opposition and its prospects

2007 was a disaster for the right-wing non-systemic Russian opposition. What started out as a blustering take-off (the spring "March of the dissidents"), by mid year degenerated into the fragmentation of the ultra-liberals into different directions. The question of a single presidential candidate and the failure of the mainstream right in the elections in December, once and for all demonstrated the systemic crises of the liberal opposition.

On December 3, the leaders of the St. Petersburg branch of Yabloka declared their intention to initiate personnel and organizational changes in the federal leadership of the party¹¹. The parliamentary elections were just the culmination of the crises in the mainstream parties of the right that has been observed for more than half a year, and on the latent level – even longer. In the beginning of the second half of June, meetings of the executive committees of SPS and Yabloka took place which displayed the systemic crisis within these two structures.

The meetings of the right-wing parties, though formally were about the upcoming parliamentary elections, really had two goals – to try to pick one

¹¹ Romanov I. Yavlinskii is buying time // *Nezavisimaya Gazzeta*. 01.30. 2008.

candidate from the “mainstream democrats” for president, and also to get rid of those members in its ranks who sympathize with the non-mainstream opposition, and whose presence could negatively impact the parliamentary prospects of SPS and Yabloka.

The realization of the second goal, from the point of view of maintaining unity within the party, had a large destructive potential. In Yabloka, this question concerned the deputy head of the Moscow branch of the party, Aleksey Navalnii and his supporters, who sympathized with the nationalistic wing of the non-systemic opposition. The deputy head participated in the “Russian march” in November of 2006 (according to him, as an observer from the party) and also in the “March of the dissidents” in 2007.

There was also a conflict maturing in the Moscow branch of SPS connected with the sympathy of a significant part of its members to Other Russia. This manifested itself in their participation in the “March of the dissidents” in the mid-April. The reaction of the federal leadership of the party came immediately – not only did the political council suspend the authority of the leadership of the branch, they ordered all the members to go through a re-registration, as the result of which only 950 out of 2400 people confirmed their membership. In June the decision was made to dissolve the political council of the Moscow branch of SPS without excluding its members from the party – the running of the Moscow branch was handed over to the federal political council of SPS. It is quite possible that this “liberalism” of the leadership had a lot to do with the large number of the “mavericks” and also the fact that they had certain connections with the capital authorities.

The conclusion of the parliamentary campaign exacerbated the state of the “right” even more. First of all, as a result of the elections, Yabloka lost government support, which against the backdrop of the lack of large “independent” sponsors looks catastrophic. The party entered the last stage of its systemic crisis, which ended in Grigorii Yavlinski losing his authority as a leader. Yabloka from the beginning was a “single-man party”. The introduction of co-leaders will just quicken its decomposition and possibly, its restructurization.

The situation in SPS is less categorical. On the one hand, changing the leader of the party won’t bring about its liquidation because its leadership from the beginning was “pluralistic”. Secondly, SPS still has a large sponsor in the person of Anatoly Chubais; government support isn’t that crucial for it. With that, there is a split in the party along two lines. The first is its attitude towards the policies of Vladimir Putin. During the parliamentary campaign there was a radicalization of

the party, which threatened the loss of support from Chubais, who, because of the forthcoming liquidation of RAO EES is worried about his future job placement. By the rules of the current system, a person who isn't loyal to the powers that be cannot occupy a serious post, not only in the government structures but also in the large private companies.

The second dispute centered on the so called "left turn" of the party which is connected with the arrival of the political strategist Anton Bakov to its election campaign. In the beginning in the regional elections this tactic brought success, however later, the losses exceeded the gains. First of all, the traditional liberal electorate became disoriented. Moreover, many regional party leaders, especially in St. Petersburg didn't like the "left turn". These two negative factors together with failure in the elections present a grave threat to the existence of SPS. Party activists were seriously demoralized after the party received less than 1% in the elections.

In this situation, the question of an alternative to the "old right" remains open. Two scenarios are possible here. The first is the creation of a right opposition "from the top", for example on the base of "Civic forces" plus the democratic parties loyal to the Kremlin.

The ideologue of the non-mainstream opposition, Stanislav Belkovskii is trying to realize the second scenario. He is trying to promote the PEOPLE movement, which is headed by the former head of the St Petersburg legislature, Sergey Gulyaev, thus placing his bet on the fusion of liberal, social, and nationalistic ideas. At that, the first one (for example the demand for a "free press") is just an instrument for achieving the next two. Under the conditions of the electorate moving to the left and increasing inter-ethnic tensions, this second scenario looks more realistic and dangerous for the stability of the government.

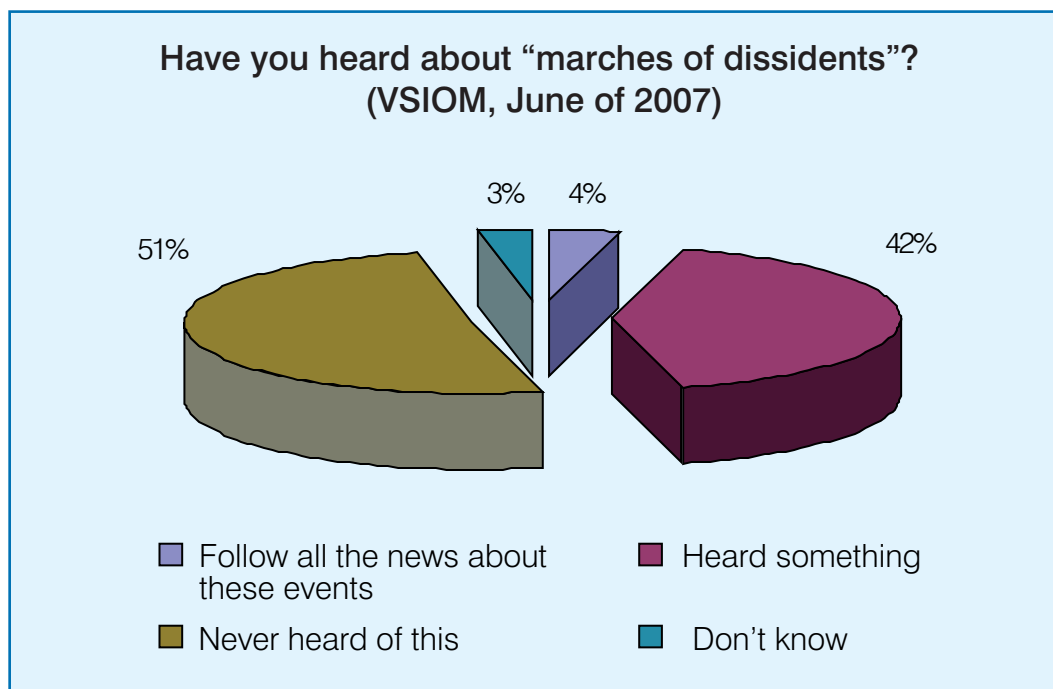
Separate attention should be given to the so called ultra liberals, those who were the main organizers of the "March of the dissidents". On July 6, a statement was released by a number of co-leaders of the All-Russian Civil Congress, which admitted the break-up of the Other Russia (OR) coalition. This event was largely symbolic – OR fell apart on the eve of its one year anniversary. However, this development wasn't that unexpected because the prerequisites for this started appearing about a month and a half to two months before the release of the statement.

First of all, the stability of the coalition was affected by the sharp drop in support for its demonstrations. If in the beginning, 5 to 7 thousand people participated in rushing the OMON (special police) cordons in March of 2007, in

St. Petersburg, then in April, 2 to 3 thousand participated, the demonstrations of the 9 and 11 of June brought about one and half thousand including journalists (the last demonstration in Ryazan was attended by 6 supporters and around 30 journalists). At the same time, these events were being covered less and less.

Most likely, the deciding factor in this case was that the leaders and the slogans of the non-systemic right opposition didn't mesh with the mood in society. Their peak was in the beginning of March in St. Petersburg, where the ban on Yabloka from participating in the regional elections and the unwillingness of the authorities to take into account the dissatisfaction of the locals with the building of a high-rise in the historic city-center played a role in the marches. The fall in support was already noticeable in the May demonstrations in Samara and Voronezh. This was quite understandable – the consolidation of the protest-inclined masses around one center on the basis of negative slogans (“against”), when taking into account their political diversity, is effective only in the short term (which was proved by Other Russia). In order to ride the crest of the wave of public discontent it was necessary to come up with positive slogans (“for” something) – this, the leaders of the non-systemic opposition weren't able to do (a number of slogans that were put forward like “for Putin's dismissal”, by virtue of his massive popularity, were ineffective). Owing to this, there was a sharp drop in support (active as well as passive) among the population for Other Russia – which was reflected in surveys conducted in the end of June and beginning of July.

Together with the above described events, the non-systemic opposition lost another one of its resources – the attention, and more importantly, the sympathy of the media. It is conceived that the new chosen policies of the authorities played a role after they lost the information battle after the mid-April demonstrations. Then, there was a disproportionate use of force by the police against the mass meetings, and also the use of force against journalists led to a significant number of articles sympathetic to Other Russia both in the Russian and international press. The new way in which the authorities reacted to the “dissidents” included placing the emphasis on preventive measures (detaining organizers and activists “one the way” to the protests) and reducing the use of force in the course of the protests themselves. This significantly reduced the media's and the people's interest in these protests. Later, when it was determined that the number of people participating in these protests had fallen, the authorities stopped using these preventive measures – during the June protests only the AKM leader Sergey Udaltsov was detained, but was soon released and was even able to participate in the protest.



In December at the All-Russia congress for the defense of human rights, the head of the Moscow Helsinki Group, Ludmila Alekseeva made an address where she accused the non-systemic opposition of “herding in” human rights activists into politics, whereas “the political web is counter-indicative to the human rights movement” and only through “nonparticipation in the politics” could “its principles and views spread in society as a whole”¹².

In other words, the “moderate” human rights activists tried to distance themselves from the non-systemic opposition – first of all from Garry Kasparov, Eduard Limonov, and Vladimir Ryzhkov. The answer to the question, why was this done only now is obvious for a minimum of two reasons. First of all, United Russia’s victory demonstrated the high level of support among the population for the current president, while the non-systemic opposition is coming out against Putin’s course in general. At that, an appeal that there was a massive falsification wouldn’t look credible – if the data on the copies of the protocols of the observers from the right wing parties was significantly different from the official ones, then the non-systemic opposition wouldn’t have missed the opportunity to organize

¹² Zubchenko E. We have a different mission // *Noviyi Izvestiya* 12.11. 2007.

protests. In this way, the human rights activists realized that in the current socio-political situation it is hopeless to come out against the course of the current president.

Secondly, the authorities demonstrated to the human rights activists their intention to collaborate with them and also to give them the chance to practice their work. In particular, in September of 2007, Vladimir Putin appointed two prominent figures from the human rights movement, Alexander Brod and Alla Gerber to The Public Chamber of the new convocation and the Moscow Helsinki Group received a Russian grant for its human rights activities.

The state of civil society

In 2007, civil society continued to worry the elites as the origin of spontaneous protests. However, the government chose a competent strategy in dealing with it by actively using imitation institutions and simulacrum of civil society, in the first place, The Public Chamber (PC). Almost immediately after the creation of the PC, the “other representatives of society”, first of all, the parliament, showed them their place. This happened during the discussion of the possibility of allowing PC members to attend the sessions of the lower chamber. The “civil society reps” pressed for the right of unhindered access to the parliament and session chamber, and also the right to take part in the discussion of legislation. However, the procedures committee of parliament took a pretty harsh position, allowing only 5 reps from the PC to attend committee sessions, and practically excluded the possibility of them taking part in debates during plenary sessions.

Thus, the PC was sent a clear signal that they wouldn’t be taking part in making decisions that concerned the redistribution of specific resources (financial, administrative etc.). The president didn’t step into the conflict thus indirectly supporting the parliamentarians. At that, the right of the PC to actively take part in parliamentary proceedings was guaranteed institutionally.

By analyzing the results of the PC’s activities in the past year, one can distinguish a few aims that the PC was created to accomplish. First of all, this is the channeling of protest sentiments. In the last year and a half, the activity of civil society, which wasn’t under the control of any government institution significantly increased, and the need arose for an institution that would channel these sentiments to a “safe” place. For example, the deceived interest holders stopped their hunger strike and moved their battle within the walls of the Ministry of Regional

Development after their meeting with members of the PC. The second function was the creation of the appearance, in the eyes of the West, that society supported the authorities. This aim was also accomplished by the new structure.

All in all, the authorities were happy with the activity of the PC – an indication of which was the rotation of its members in the fall of 2007 (the new make-up started serving in February of 2008). Notwithstanding the large rotation rate – about a third – in the vast majority of cases, the corporate affiliations and “political profiles” of the new candidates didn’t change. This was because the president was largely satisfied with the “balanced” work of the PC.

In particular, the actor Alexander Kalyagin was replaced by three of his colleagues – Chulpan Khamatov, Feodor Bondarchuk and Vasili Lanov. A spot was reserved in the presidential list for a representative of the pro-Kremlin youth group Nashi. The rector of the Higher School of Economics was replaced by the Scientific Director of the same university, who, incidentally, has a reputation of being a “bulwark of economic liberalism”, Yevgenii Yasin.

The members of the PC that remained on the list were ones that occupied managerial posts and/or demonstrated a high level of social activity – the secretary of the PC, an academic of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), president of the Russian research center, the Kurchatov institute, Yevgeni Velikhov, president of the RSPP, Alexander Shokhin, the lawyer Anatoly Kucheren, the famous pediatrician, Leonid Roshal, the head editor of *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, Pavel Gusev.

Among the visible “novelties” in the personnel make-up of the PC were the world famous human rights activists, the president of the fund Holocaust, Alla Gerber, and the head of the Moscow bureau on human rights, Alexander Brod. Their presence in the PC will increase the media attention around it, and also allow the authorities to demonstrate their loyalty to the principle of human rights and freedoms and also pluralism of opinions.

It is interesting that the anti-fascist Alexander Brod, together with other social activists joined the human rights group that was formed under the aegis of the PC, The Person and the Law. Its head, the editor of a journal with the same name and member of the PC Vladislav Grib, said that the main purpose of the group will be to monitor the security organs. The organization The Person and the Law, besides having the presence of qualified lawyers and branches in 500 cities will have extra weight added to it by who its organizers are – a couple dozen non-governmental organizations and its “public faces”. In particular, the organizational committee includes the priest, Georgii Ryabikh, the anchorwoman, Oksana Federova, the

secretary of the journalists union of the Russian Federation, Mikhail Fedotov, the president of the entrepreneurs union Opora, Sergey Borisov, and the president of the Moscow lawyer's board, Genri Reznik.

Under the conditions of ideological crisis and a lack of resources, it is unlikely that the non-systemic opposition will be able to offer an alternative to this organization that is being set up. In many respects, whether it will be successful depends on whether the "dissidents" will be able to reorient themselves towards the protection of social-economic rights (infill construction, forced resettlements, raising salaries, etc.) instead of the outdated "general-liberal" theme. Moreover, the question still remains open, of whether this organization is being set up just to channel public discontent in a safe direction, or to actually help the socially vulnerable layers of society.

It should be noted that, in 2007, out of all the institutions of civil society, the one that had the most potential was organized labor. Recently, so called alternative professional unions, which guarantee its members more effective protection of their interests in conflicts with employers are becoming more famous. In particular, quite popular in this sense, is the Union of Socialist Labor Organizations "SotsProf", which is headed by Sergey Khramov. This structure appeared in 1989 as a union umbrella organization, then fell apart, and once again returned to the scene in 2001, which seemed quite natural against the backdrop of the falling potency of the FNPR.

Currently, two tendencies in the political evolution of the independent labor organization movement can be observed. First of all, Russian "trade-unions" are concentrating more and more on specific actions in the protection of the rights of its members in specific companies, and also the inclusion of active and well recommended new cells into the umbrella group. In particular, SotsProf in 2006 found itself in the conflict between Surgutneftegaz and its workers, which were organized by the union ProfSvoboda. In July of 2006, this union staged a demonstration in Surgut that numbered about 2 thousand people (the largest demonstration that has been organized by an organization that did not belong to the FNPR), and in December was registered as a new cell of SotsProf.

Labor unions conducted analogous actions at a number of factories of Western companies in Russia. The first that decided to do this was the labor union at the all-Volga Ford plant, headed by Aleksey Etmanov. Currently, labor unions are becoming more active in factories where there is majority Western capital. In particular, on April 13, an "Italian" strike began at a factory belonging to OOO Pivovarnya Heineken (Its organizers came forward as representatives of SotsProf

and FNPR), and on the April 20, the workers at a factory of the Cocoa-Cola company started picketing, with the demand of a 30 percent increase in wages and the return of social benefits. If these demands weren't met, the picketers promised to go on strike. These demonstrations also have an original "relay race" character to them. Representatives of the Ford labor union took part in the action at the Heineken plant, while the Heineken labor unions gave consultations to their colleges at Coca-Cola.

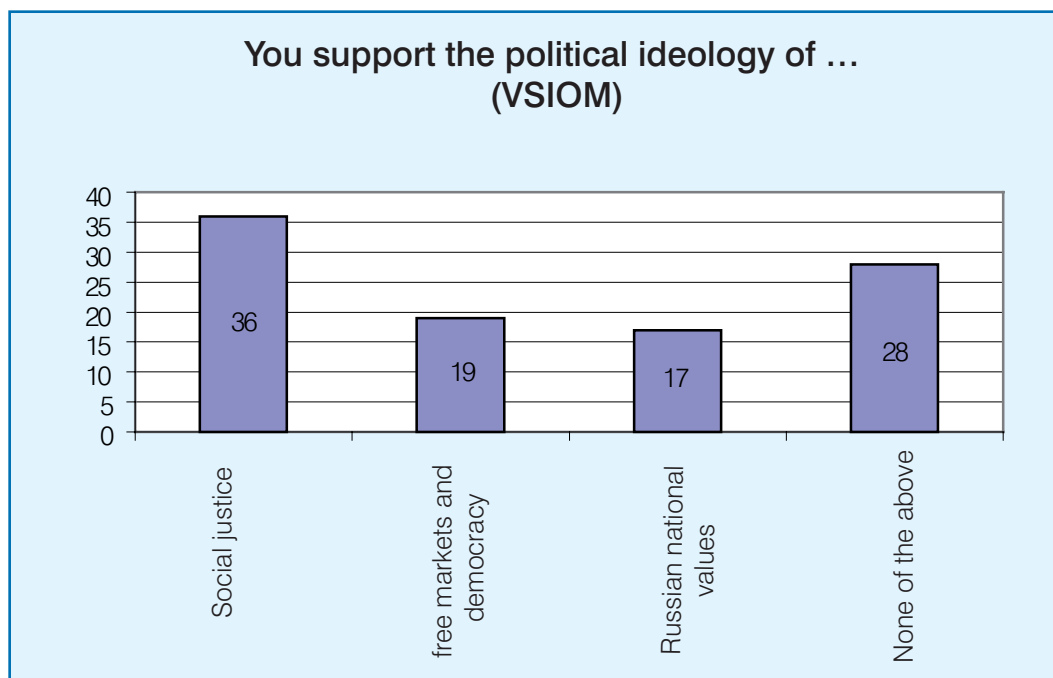
Another tendency in the activity of the independent labor unions in Russia is their gradual gravitation into the sphere of influence of the non-systemic political opposition. Until recently, SotsProf and its leader Sergey Khramov were one of the founders of Partiya Truda, which later merged with the Russian Patriots of Gennady Semigin. However, in August of 2006, SotsProf tore up its agreement with Semigen's party and after the regional elections in October, stopped collaborating with them. At that, the representatives of ProfSvoboda and Nabat (unifies the workers of the aluminum factory SUAL-UAZ) were noticed at the "March of the dissidents" in St Petersburg on March 3. One of the active participants of the marches, the leader of the Vanguard of the Red Youth movement, Sergey Udaltsov, took part in the actions of the labor unions in Surgut. The crisis in the non-systemic opposition will bring about the change not only in their format, but also of their leaders. It is quite possible that on the wave of the "economization" of the protest sentiment, the functionaries of the alternative labor unions will find themselves among the leaders of the new opposition.

The search for the ideological foundation of Putin's project. Sovereign democracy

Notwithstanding the sufficiently noticeable lack of ideology among the Russian elite, who, more likely, think along the lines of personnel-administrative expansion, during the course of 2007, there was an attempt to put forth an ideology that would consolidate the whole population on the base of patriotic and paternalistic ideas. Among these attempts, the most successful were the theory of sovereign democracy and the Russian doctrine, both of which supplement each other. If the first one, on the whole, is within the discourse of Western political science and operates with the concepts of "sovereignty" and "democracy", then the second one represents an attempt to place an ideological base under the order that has come in the 2000s, by using traditionalist and orthodox phraseology.

The conceptual foundations of “sovereign democracy” were already laid at the end of 2006, when the deputy head of the presidential administration, Vladislav Surkov, published an article in the journal *Expert* called *The Nationalization of the Future*¹³, in which he made an attempt to decipher the meaning of “sovereign democracy”.

There were two serious political directives: national values and the national question. As for the national values, the author offers the triad: freedom, fairness, and material well-being. It isn’t hard to notice here the tradition of the triad from the Great French Revolution: freedom, equality, and brotherhood. And if freedom remained the unchanged value (a tribute to liberalism), and fairness could be construed with known stipulations as equality (a tribute to socialism), then brotherhood was replaced by material well-being (again, most likely, the liberal category). Most likely, this ideology is called on to reflect the spirit of the times of a consumer society with the primacy of the computational values over values of another sort. Together with that, the fundamental, for Russian democracy, idea of “preserving the people”, which was put forth by the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, was also presented.



¹³ Surkov V. *The Nationalization of the Future* // *Expert*. 11.20. 2006. №43

It was practically the first time that national ideas were heard from a high ranking Kremlin official so clearly and sharply – again, for the most part, because of the polemic spirit of the text. Although one of the chapters of the article is titled “Russians”, the ideas that it contains are on the whole, quite traditional for Russian political thought (it is enough to remember Vladimir Solovyov, Nikolai Berdyaev, or the highly respected by practically all the groups of elites, “the conservative” Ivan Ilin): about Russian toleration, about the role of the Russian people as a political and spiritual magnet, about the “Third Rome” and so on. The author’s thought on the expulsion of Russians from multi-national Russia, which will be brought about by xenophobia that is being cultivated by certain powers, is fresh and original. And, the author understands, the nation, not as Stalin did (the definition according to the leader of the people was one language) but rather in an “supra-ethnic aggregate of all the citizens of the country”. In this way it could be said that the author doesn’t touch upon the national question but tries to operate on the “supranational” level (in this way these positions are close to the classic doctrine of Eurasianism with its “supranational empire on a national base”).

The author is merciless in his assessment of the current state of affairs and the intellectual condition of the Russian Federation. He fiercely criticizes the defeatism of the “off-shore aristocracy”, laziness, indifference, ignorance, weakness, and also the technical backwardness, common disorder, and the total lack of consolidation among the creative powers of Russian society. In his argumentation, the author doesn’t point to the power (except the abstract “Russian people”) that could take upon itself the work necessary to change the current situation and propel Russia into the future. The author also doesn’t share the mechanism of this propulsion, or its administrative provision. It is possible that these questions will be brought up by United Russia, in one form or another, at their “ideological” congress.

It is likely, that to such an ideological challenge, the political opponents of the current authorities will be forced to answer. It will be easier for them, because the position of the one criticizing is always more advantageous. In this sense, the author “took a risk”: he pretty rigidly laid out the ideological contours of the “ruling party” on the eve of the 2007-2008 election season.

Throughout the whole text there is a “common thread” of the idea of competition, of the competitive character of the modern era, about the fact that for a sovereign nation to survive in the world, it must strain all its powers in the battle, first of all, with its own weaknesses. This framing of the question is irrelevant to the current state of the country, both materially and spiritually. It is unlikely that

calls to mobilization (intellectual or economic) will fall on fertile ground in today's Russia – one that is still divided by social and economic barriers, and fairly tired of great upheavals and mobilizations and also calls to build a Great Russia. Whether United Russia will be able to create a deserving program from the positive directives in this article and on this base, a viable administrative product, only time will tell.

Nevertheless, the idea of sovereign democracy has already played a certain conceptual role. First of all, under the conditions of an “ideological vacuum”, it was able to start a discussion of global problems and the subsequent development of the Russian Federation. Secondly, under the conditions of the “complex configuration” of the different groups of elites, it was able to consolidate the leading administrative groups, the “*siloviki*” (they are impressed with the term sovereign) and the “liberals” (for whom the term democracy is intended for, together with the formal retention of liberal practices and procedures).

The second ideological construct – the Russian Doctrine – was released on August 20, 2007, when it was given a hearing by the Worldwide Council of the Russian People¹⁴. The draft version of the Russian Doctrine was prepared in seven months time; however the text was discussed for two years at various round table events and seminars, which allowed its serious adaptation to current realities. And even though, formally, the material was prepared predominantly by “civil” experts, the strong support that the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) gave this project left its imprint on the concepts and main ideas of the document.

The key thesis of the project is modernization buttressed by tradition. The author's proposed course is not one that is about catching up but is rather in a different categorical plane than Western projects of development. The document, in large part, is built upon the repudiation of the Russian experience of the reforms of the 1990s, which is especially noticeable in the economics section. It also deems unacceptable the neo-liberal model of socio-economic transformation, which all in all is still being brought to life in Russia today (at the same time that that the role of government is increasing as a regulator of the process). The participation in the creation of the project by experts close to the head of RZhD, Vladimir Yakunin, also left its imprint in the accents in the economic portion of the program. In particular, one of the break-through sectors of economic development that was stated was the development of the transcontinental transport corridors North-South and West-East, which, according to the authors, are capable of becoming magnets

¹⁴ <http://www.rusdoctrina.ru/>

for domestic and foreign capital investment and would open new niches and markets for Russian business.

At the same time, the authors and supporters of the project propose a more radical approach to the current social system. According to them, to overcome the alienation between the authorities and society it is necessary to reconsider the principles (which discredited themselves), which formed in the 1990s, of the distribution of material goods, and to expand the availability of medical and educational services to practically all layers of society. This thesis, as a whole, is relevant in 2007, when the social mood took a “left turn”, and it thus obtains a political tone. At the same time, it should be noted that while the ROC is insisting on the “de-materialization” of public life, it is at the same time lobbying MEDT to pass a law, which it is currently working on, which would transfer all of the property which the church is currently using (without any time restrictions), to the church itself.

All in all, the conception of the document’s authors can be characterized as the return to the government its “lawful” sources of income, and to the people, social justice. The first fits into the internal political doctrine of being an energy superpower, which implies the sovereign control over strategic resources. Moreover, it is in correlation with the global trend of “resource nationalism”, which has entered its active phase last year.

The second part is in line with the increase in expenditures on social programs that has started since the fall of 2005 within the framework of the national projects. At that, the current distribution of income from the resource sector of the economy is deemed unfair, and needs to be reconsidered. In other words the decile coefficient was recognized as too large.

This document demonstrates ROC’s desire to expand its influence to the socio-political sphere, which finds support among some influential groups in the elite.

One of the possible reactions to this manifested itself in the form of a letter from the representatives of the scientific community, in which they protested against the “clericization” of public life and the growing presence of the ROC in politics and economics. Nevertheless, the benevolent attitude of a number of influential government officials to the church, allows one to assert that it can count on the support of the main groups within the elite – that is as long as it doesn’t insist upon the total revision of the current system of income distribution.

Besides these two strategic ideological projects of 2007, there were some attempts to create an ideology for separate social or professional groups. However,

overall these were of a situational character and were mainly the derivatives of administrative-personnel battles. In particular, to the attempt to create the “*chekist*” ideology can be attributed to this.

In October the newspaper Kommersant published an article by the head of Gosnarkokontrol, Victor Cherkosov¹⁵. Open letters for the head of Gosnarkokontrol isn’t a new exercise – in 2004 he published an analogous article in Komsomolskaya Pravda, in which he put forth similar theses¹⁶. In particular, in both publications he pointed out the role of the “*chekist* corporation” as the main force in stooping the disintegration of Russian nationhood. Moreover, he pointed out the danger of internal conflicts in this corporation (FSB vs. FSKN), which could have destructive consequences for the whole country.

His current publication didn’t distinguish itself from the previous one – not in its theses, nor its theme. If almost three years ago Cherkosov just pointed out the possibility of conflict (with the help of interested parties, both at home and abroad), then now he verified its sharpness. Besides the FSB, the Investigative Committee also became an “opponent” of the FSKN, which is quite understandable – in the realities of the security situation of 2004, there wasn’t a highest authority. Finally, there was a change in the addressee of the article. If the previous article was an appeal to the head of state and to various sub-groups of the *chekist* corpus (first of all, to the FSB), then now, it was only to Vladimir Putin.

This extraordinary step is testimony to the fact that Victor Cherkosov tried to use the last resource available in the battle against his opponents in the security field. If in 2004, the article was just one of the elements in his strategy to advance the positions of the FSKN, then currently it seems to be an attempt to preserve his positions from the expansion of other departments. Moreover, after reading the text it is clear that Victor Cherkosov has lost direct access to the president, which forced him to use alternative channels of communication.

¹⁵ Cherkosov V. It can’t be allowed that warriors turn into traders // Kommersant. 2007. №184 (3760)

¹⁶ Cherkosov V. Non-departmental thoughts on the profession // Komsomolskaya Pravda. 12.29. 2004

| Please assess, on a 5 point scale, the named services in your region (VSIOM) | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|----|----|----|---------------|------------|
| | 1 – very negatively | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 – excellent | Don't know |
| FSB | 2 | 6 | 25 | 28 | 10 | 29 |
| Gosnarko-kontrol | 13 | 15 | 23 | 16 | 6 | 27 |

Besides everything that was stated above, the situation surrounding FSKN signifies the possible erosion of the system of “checks and balances” of the security services that Vladimir Putin has created during his rule. FSKN, which was created as an independent body in the fall of 2003 by presidential order (before that, it was named the Government Committee for the Control of Drug Trafficking and psychotropic substances), immediately made a claim to be not just a serious law-enforcement agency, but also a security service. Besides the official reason (toughening the battle against drug-trafficking), its creation also had the aim of creating a structure which would collect and analyze information on internal political processes that was separate from the FSB.

The “appointment” of Dmitri Medvedev as the “successor” will bring noticeable changes to the ideological discourse. Most likely, while keeping retaining the “leading and guiding” role of government, there will be a certain liberalization of the interpretation of its function in the economic and social life of the country. This can be explained by Dmitri Medvedev’s solid reputation as a “reformer” and also the ideological views of the leaders of the groups within the elite that support him – above all, this is the ideologue of the Russian privatization, Anatoly Chubais. However, the overall course of government patriotism and sovereignty will remain unchanged. This will be conditioned by the necessity of keeping in line with the general mood in society, and also by the creation of the ideology of “resource imperialism” which substantiates the expansion of Russian companies into world markets under the conditions of harsh global competition.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that currently, Russian society is pretty “de-ideologized” and isn’t waiting for an indication from the government of a concrete ideological reference point. The world view of the Russian population can be characterized as “compilationist”, where great-power, social, and liberal values

freely and sometimes paradoxically mesh. Attempts to mobilize Russians on an ideological basis, as 2007 showed, are doomed to failure. In this sense, the events of November 4 (the “pro-government” holiday Day of National Unity) and November 7 (the “communist” day – anniversary of the October revolution) are quite revealing.

The holiday on November 4 was first thought up to be an alternative to celebrating the October revolution. In 2005, when it was first celebrated, the authorities still had the apprehension that KPRF might try to mobilize the protest voters for a mass demonstration – in 2003-2004, the leader of the party, Gennady Zuganov still tried to play “his own” game, and harshly oppose the authorities. However, in 2004, the current leader of Russian Patriots, Gennady Semigin, struck the communist party hard, provoking a split. The transfer of the holiday was supposed to prevent KPRF or any other potential opposition group from the left from mobilizing the protest voters by appealing to the historical events of October 1917. Also, by repealing the holiday status of November 7, a lot less people could show up to take part in the leftist demonstrations. Moreover, the new holiday was supposed to be a day of “consolidation” between the authorities and the people.

However, the proposed aim was only partly achieved – the leftist demonstrations were left without “the working” population, who could no longer attend the “workday” demonstrations. Moreover, the repealing of the holiday status of October 7 decreased the media attention that it usually got. However, the attempt to make November 4 the day of National Unity failed – unexpectedly, this day was used by the nationalists, who over the course of the previous decade were marginal, few in number, and not capable of coordinated activity. However, in 2005 they were able to carry-out a relatively large and loud demonstration under the title of the “Right march”, which unified the representatives of practically all the nationalist-patriotic groups – from “Eurasianists” and “orthodox gonfalonists” to real Nazis.

In 2006, there was a tendency for a split among the nationalist-patriotic camp into a “semi-official” and “non-systemic” part. The “Eurasianists” of Alexander Dugin could be counted among the first camp, while the second is represented by the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (MAII), which is headed by Alexander Belov (Potkin). At the same time, the indicated division is pretty conditional – for example, the leaders of MAII, later stated their intention to act exclusively within the bounds of the law. The events in Kondopoga exacerbated the situation around the “Russian march-2006”. This manifested itself in the increased hype in the media about expected riots, which for its part provoked negative expectations

about the event. On the whole, November 4 went through without excess, which showed the “controllability” of the nationalist movement in Russia.

In 2007, the authorities were able to outplay the nationalists once again in the media plane, by acting in two directions. First of all, the fragmentation of the nationalists continued. In particular, if in 2006, the former participants of “Right march-2005” divided up into “imperialists” and “pure nationalists”, in 2007 there was a split among the second group. Secondly, the authorities were able to outplay the nationalist-patriots in the media plane – thanks to wide coverage of meetings organized by pro-Kremlin youth groups in the center of Moscow. This move brought results – although November 4 didn’t become a day of unity between the people and the authorities, the monopoly that the nationalist-patriots put on this holiday was destroyed. On the whole, this holiday demonstrated the lack of a mobilizing ideology in today’s Russia, since the largest meetings were of those movements who could use the administrative resource.

Despite the good round figure – 90 years since “Great October” – the forces of the left weren’t able to mobilize that many supporters under their banners, and the media hardly covered the event. This failure can be explained by a number of factors. First of all, the low level of media coverage was predetermined by the low turn-out (with the exception of Moscow and a number of other large cities), which in large part was the consequence of November 7 losing its holiday status. Secondly, a more attractive story was being played up in the media – the letter from the United Russia representative about establishing the institution of national leader for Vladimir Putin.

Thus, the holiday events of November 4 and 7 demonstrated the lack, in today’s Russia, of a “non-personified” ideology that has a mobilizing potential. In particular, the nationalists, against the backdrop of rising xenophobic attitudes in the country and in Moscow in particular, weren’t able to gather a significant number of supporters. About the same situation could be observed on the left flank – against the back drop of rising leftist sentiment, KPRF wasn’t able to gain any core supporters, and as for other forces that position themselves as “socialist”, they don’t have any significant support from the population.