

EDITORIAL

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“Intellectual Feebleness”¹ of the Ruling Elites and the “Deep People” of the “Long State”



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Abstract. In 2018, Russian society faced a contradiction, caused by the discrepancy between the official political rhetoric and the real actions of the Government. Instead of the priorities stated in the President’s Address to the Federal Assembly and in the “May decree” (reducing poverty twofold, Russia’s joining the top five economies of the world, etc.), the society was faced with the need to take a “bitter medicine” in the form of raising the retirement age. Moreover, the news about the changes in pension legislation reached the general public just after the inauguration of the President (the inauguration took place on May 7, 2018, and the draft law on the pension reform was submitted to the State Duma on June 16). The initial reaction to the pension reform was adamantly negative: according to the surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation, almost 80% of Russians were against the reform. Over the following months, a wave of protests swept across the country and stopped only after Vladimir Putin made an official appeal to the Russian people on August 29 and explained that the pension system has to be reformed;

¹ Noskovich O.I. How to build a long state? *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 2019. March, 18th. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-03-18/7_7533_ideas1.html

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he proposed some adjustments that would soften some conditions of the reform for certain population groups. However, despite the fact that the visible signs of public discontent (protests, critical articles, etc.) are gradually fading, the level of people’s support for the authorities, including the President of the Russian Federation, continued to decline; fundamental changes began to take place in the public consciousness, and such changes are of a long-term nature. This fact proves that the pension reform only triggered a more profound internal discontent that has been accumulating over the last years. Thus, at the beginning of 2019, the fundamental question concerning the legitimacy of power in Russia became one of the most pressing and urgent for society and authorities with regard to actual implementation of the tasks set out in the “May Decree”, qualitative growth of the standard of living and, by and large, preservation of the Russian statehood. A deep and ideologically saturated article of V. Putin’s personal adviser V. Surkov, which was published in February 2019, addresses this very issue (as some experts think), and it has caused a wide resonance in the academic, political and social environment. The following materials present our views on Surkov’s article and on a significant set of issues raised in it. The conclusions we come to are supported not only by the results of our own studies of the long-term dynamics of public opinion, but also by expert assessments, which largely reflect the real situation in the country.

Key words: “long state”, “deep people”, public opinion, public administration efficiency, President.

I. Main theses and key concepts of V. Surkov’s theory of the “long state”.

The terms “long state” and “deep people” were coined by V. Surkov, Assistant to the President. In March 2019, his article entitled *V. Putin’s Long State* was published, which presented an attempt to build an ideological concept of the policy of the incumbent President and virtually the entire post-Soviet Russia.

The publication gained wide resonance in political, public and journalistic circles and even got a response from the Kremlin. Dmitry Peskov, Press Secretary for the President, gave the following commentary to Surkov’s publication: *“The article is quite complex and requires reflection. It contains a personal approach and provides a personal worldview... Probably, it is needless to say that the article will be interesting to many, and that it is very informative and deep. Everything else can and probably should be discussed”*².

So what do the notions of “long state” and “deep people” mean?

Against the background of the heated discussions caused by the approach of 2024, when V. Putin cannot be re-elected President of Russia under the

Putin owns the political present of Russia, but he will have no influence on the future, which will come immediately after him. The situation was the same with Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Their successors conducted a completely different course, regardless of what their predecessors had done. Granted, something passed from era to era through institutional inertia, but the main vector changed radically. **Putin’s truth is that his control does not extend to the future ...** he has not created any special political model; he has only corrected the most monstrous forms of pro-Western liberal democracy that was established in the 1990s against the will of the people. That is, politically, we still have the same **liberal paradigm** tamed by an authoritarian ruler with personal patriotic and vaguely conservative sympathies. This is not enough for a new political model.

Without Putin, the elite and the government as a whole will be completely illegitimate, as they were under Yeltsin. At the same time, for all these years, no structures which would reflect the views of the people were created³.

current Constitution, the fears of many experts about the fate of the country in the broadest sense of the word are exacerbated.

² News of the business portal “Business.FM”. 2019. February 11. Available at: <https://www.bfm.ru/news/406623>

³ Dugin A. Putin or Super-Putin. *Official website of the Izborsk Club*. 2019. February 12. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/16492>

Putin's big political machine is only starting to gain momentum and is preparing to a long, difficult and interesting work. Its output at full capacity is far ahead, so that in many years Russia will still be Putin's state, just as modern France still calls itself the Fifth Republic of de Gaulle, Turkey (despite the fact that antiKemalists are now at the helm there) is still based on The Six Arrows ideology of Atatürk, and the United States still turn to the images and values of the semi-legendary Founding Fathers⁴.

The “long state” model by Vladislav Surkov suggests that “Russia in the era of V. Putin's rule is “a state of a new type, which we have not yet had. Having formed as a whole to the mid-2000s, it is still studied insufficiently, but its originality and viability are obvious. The stress tests, which it has passed and is now taking, show that it is this organically developed model of political system that will be an effective means of survival and elevation of the Russian nation not only in the coming years, but also decades, and most likely in the entire coming century...”⁵ This is the “long state” – a state that has just begun to form and will not end with the departure of Putin from the political Olympus of the country. Surkov, as some experts note, “voiced a fundamental thing: even in the absence of its boss, “Putinism” as an ideology, as an emanation of the supreme spirit, will remain for a long time. Even when the new President comes”⁶.

“Deep people” is a more complex concept and it probably requires certain mental qualities for its understanding. V. Surkov writes: “The elite shines on a glossy surface; century after century it actively (let us face it) involves the people in some actions – party meetings, wars, elections, economic experiments. People participate in the activities, but somewhat aloof, they do not rise to the surface, but live a very different life in their own depth.

⁴ Surkov V.Yu. Vladimir Putin's long state. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, February 11. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-02-11/5_7503_surkov.html

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Assistant to the President of Russia proclaimed the era of Putinism (interview with M. Delyagin). *Argumenty nedeli*, 2019, no. 7 (651), February 21.

The two national lives – surface and deep – are sometimes lived in opposite directions, sometimes in coinciding ones, but they never merge into one”⁷.

The deep people always have their own agenda, they are inaccessible to opinion polls, agitation, threats and other methods of direct study and influence. The understanding of who they are, what they think and what they want often comes suddenly and late, and not to those who can do something... With their giant supermass, the deep people create an irresistible force of cultural gravity, which connects the nation and attracts (presses) the elite to the earth (to its native land), the elite that from time to time tries to soar with cosmopolitan views⁸.

The “depth” of the Russian people, thus, is its mental feature, allowing the country as a whole to pass successfully a variety of “stress tests” and be guided not so much by logic and common sense, as by cultural and historical features that have developed over the centuries of existence of the Russian state. This is not understood by the “Western man”, but this is where the advantage of Russia lies, it will provide Russia with a bright future, despite any threats, sanctions and other conditions created by our “foreign partners”.

The easiest way to show the real effect of the “depth” of the Russian people is to provide concrete examples. “Deep people” for example, can live for decades in conditions of such a level of social inequality, in which a social explosion would have occurred in Western society long ago. And they not just live in such conditions, but sincerely show consolidated support to the current political course and specific people implementing it; they provide the ruling party with a constitutional majority in the State Duma, and the head of state – with unprecedented support at presidential elections.

⁷ Surkov V.Yu. Vladimir Putin's long state. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, February 11. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-02-11/5_7503_surkov.html

⁸ *Ibidem*.

According to the Federal State Statistics Service, the ratio of the richest 10% to the poorest 10% (R/P 10%) in Russia is 16.

According to experts, eight is the critical value of R/P 10%, the achievement of which indicates “a high level of risks in the functioning of social relations, the threat of transition to a state of increased instability, poor predictability and, consequently, the need for swift intervention of the authorities to alter the dangerous trends”⁹.

According to the UN recommendations, this indicator should not exceed 8–10, “otherwise the situation in a democratic country is fraught with social cataclysms”¹¹.

“Deep people” – it is when a long-term and unrealized need to improve the standard of living and quality of life suddenly gives way to euphoria from the return of Crimea and Sevastopol to its native Harbor.

It is a society that does not remember the promises of the current government, does not try to remember them and does not try to analyze the effectiveness of their implementation, drawing appropriate conclusions and posing relevant questions before the head of state. Instead, from year to year, the “deep people” perceive and sincerely support new and even more ambitious tasks for the near future, even if they are to be implemented by the same team of officials.

These are people who are sincerely happy that the President, delivering his Address to the Federal Assembly, draws the attention of the Government to the incorrect indexation of pensions; the “deep people” realize that now this injustice will be eliminated and no longer wonder how this was possible at all.

⁹ Glaz'ev S.Yu., Lokosov V.V. Assessment of critical threshold values of indicators of the state of Russian society and their use in the management of socio-economic development. *Vestnik RAN*, 2012, vol. 82, no. 7, pp. 587–614.

¹⁰ Lokosov V.V. The method of critical threshold indicators and the evaluation of human potential. *Ekonomika. Nalogi. Pravo*, 2012, no. 5, p. 75.

¹¹ Kalabekov I.G. Russian reforms in facts and figures. Available at: <http://refru.ru/income16.pdf>

The “deep people” enthusiastically perceive the arrest of another embezzled official and do not ask questions about how he managed to accumulate his multi-billion dollar fortune, who put him in this position and where his confiscated funds went. Even if this official is the Minister of Economic Development.

Finally, the “depth” of the Russian people allows the authorities to communicate with them through the media in the language of global “mega-concepts” such as Nord Stream, Kerch Strait Bridge, Leaders of Russia, ultra-modern thermonuclear reactors, etc., ignoring the problems that concern people in the first place: poverty, inequality, injustice, social insecurity, etc.

We can provide a lot of examples of the “deep people” in action. **The fact is that it is this mental feature of Russian society that acts as the foundation cementing the entire system of V. Putin’s “long state”. And (according To V. Surkov’s viewpoint) this foundation is much stronger than Western pragmatism, individualism and financial and legal literacy combined.**

In V. Surkov’s concept there is one more moment which is necessary to understand “on the shore”. The “long state” is a kind of system in which three types of subjects are closely interconnected – the President, the elite and society (the “deep people”). Each of them performs its role and is an important part of the “long state”, and each of them by its very existence ensures the long-term (and even centuries-old) continuity of functioning of the state. The elite does it as well. Here is how V. Surkov himself writes about the role of all three subjects.

1. The elite. “In the new system, all institutions are subordinated to the main task – trustworthy communication and interaction of the supreme ruler with the citizens. The various branches of government converge on the personality of the leader, and they are valuable only to the extent that they provide a link with him. Besides them, there are informal ways of communication that bypass formal structures and elite groups. And when the stupidity, backwardness or corruption create a

disturbance in the lines of communication with the people, then certain vigorous measures are taken to restore the audibility”.

2. The President. “The ability to hear and understand the people, to see through them to the fullest depths and to act accordingly is a unique and major advantage of Putin’s state. It is in conformity with the people, and therefore it is not subject to destructive overloads from the counter currents of history. Therefore, it is effective and durable”.

3. The “deep people”. “Society trusts only the top official of the state... The modern model of the Russian state begins with trust and is based on trust. It is Russia’s fundamental difference from the Western model, which cultivates distrust and criticism. And it is Russia’s strength”.

Thus, according to V. Surkov’s concept of the “long state”, the ruling elites are given a significant place in the system of government: people’s growing irritation toward the elites is automatically translated into the growth of trust in the President, and this becomes the foundation of the sacred relationship between society and the head of state, which ultimately ensures the uniqueness and durability of the new Russian state built by V. Putin.

This is how (in general terms) V. Putin’s “long state” functions. Let us note that V. Surkov’s theory has immediately found supporters and opponents.

Some experts found “**a sign of maturing Russian political thought**”¹² in the article. They say that V. Surkov “describes the basic principles of the current Russian state quite thoroughly”¹³ and that his theory is one of the few (and, most importantly, very timely) attempts at a deep philosophical understanding of what Putin’s Russia is: what it relies on, where it is moving and what competitive advantages will ensure its prosperity in the near future.

¹² Voevodina T. Peoples have no power in their institutions. *Gazeta “Zavtra”*, 2019, February 17. Available at: http://zavtra.ru/blogs/narodi_ne_vlastni_v_svoih_uchrezhdeniyah

¹³ Noskovich O.I. How to build a long state? *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 18. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-03-18/7_7533_ideas1.html

Vladislav Surkov’s article “Putin’s Long State” clearly highlights the main problem of modern Russian society and the Russian state; this problem is that we don’t know what we are building... Is Putin’s state in its present form able to carry out pressing historic transformations?¹⁴.

Others believe that the theory of V. Surkov, who “claims to be Putin’s major PR ideologist”¹⁵ and who put forward the concept of “sovereign democracy”, is nothing more than an attempt to explain the rapidly falling ratings of the government due to the adoption of the pension reform¹⁶; including the falling rating of the President whose level of approval in mid-June 2018 fell from 77 to 62% and since then has been fluctuating in the range of 62–65%¹⁷.

I think that in Surkov’s article the main message is sincere and it reflects the will of the current elites to preserve themselves and to preserve the current regime in the post-Putin period as well. To prevent Putin from unexpectedly deciding to change anything on his own at the end of his presidency, they soothe him: everything is already perfect. But sincerity does not mean truth. The solipsism of the ruling elite still cannot replace history and political logic. Therefore, Surkov’s analysis of the current political regime in modern Russia is entirely **false** in its very foundations¹⁸.

It is still unknown whether this attempt will be successful, but we cannot but admit that V. Surkov’s theory contains a “rational kernel” that explains why one cannot understand Russia with the mind

¹⁴ Noskovich O.I. How to build a long state? *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 18. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-03-18/7_7533_ideas1.html

¹⁵ Dugin A. Putin or Super-Putin. *Official website of the Izborsk Club*. 2019. February 12. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/16492>

¹⁶ Uglanov A. What is on the mind of the deep people? *Argumenty nedeli*, 2019, no. 6 (650), February 14.

¹⁷ VTsIOM data. Available at: https://wciom.ru/news/ratings/odobrenie_deyatelnosti_gosudarstvennykh_institutov/

¹⁸ Dugin A. Putin or Super-Putin. *Official website of the Izborsk Club*. 2019. February 12. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/16492>

alone, as the Russian poet and statesman Fyodor Tyutchev wrote in his short philosophical poem: “Who would grasp Russia with the mind? For her no yardstick was created” [Translated by John Dewey. *Translator’s note*]; it was true in the 19th century and is still relevant today, in the 21st century.

II. The results of the 2018 – the doubts concerning the “long state”.

Many experts in different years pointed out that with the unchanged political course and without making tough decisions on the part of the President, Russia is inevitably moving toward “degradation and a large-scale revolutionary crisis”¹⁹. However, it did not happen, is not happening and (according to V. Surkov’s concept) will not happen. Even the pension reform, which affected almost all residents of our country, although its adoption was accompanied by a number of mass demonstrations organized by the non-systemic opposition, by September 2018 became something routine²⁰ and today the majority of Russians regard it as an objective condition in which they will have to live.

Nevertheless, some of the key changes taking place in the public consciousness of Russians make us doubt that the “depth” of the Russian people and their sacred connection with the national leader will be enough to ensure the prosperity of the “long state” for many decades to come.

The catalyst for these changes were the events of the “Crimean spring” and (what is important) a new round of the economic crisis that Russia faced in early 2015. The crisis caused by economic sanctions was, of course, not as tangible as the crisis of 1991 and even 2008. However, the irony lies in the fact that people faced the crisis while experiencing the “Crimean euphoria”: the feeling that “Russia is entering into a new bright and life-affirming

¹⁹ Sulakshin S.S. *Is Russia Waiting for a Revolution? Issues of Transition to the Post-Liberal Model of Russia (Algorithm and Scenarios)*. Moscow: Nauka i politika, 2016. P. 683.

²⁰ *Trust ratings of politicians, ratings of approval of the work of state institutions, ratings of the parties: VTsIOM press release*, 2018, no. 3788, October 12. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9363> (comment by M. Mamonov, head of the practice of political analysis and consulting of the research department).

century”²¹, faced with the need to once again “tighten the belt” and wait for better times.

It is at this moment that the trend of the need for change is emerging in Russian society, and this need has acquired a long-term nature for the first time during the entire period of V. Putin’s rule (*Fig. 1*).

Scientists note that today’s stability of Russia’s political and economic situation, which V. Putin’s team achieved with such difficulty in the early 2000s and which has always been valued by the “deep people” who survived the hardest period of the “turbulent” 1990s is perceived by them as “conservation of stagnation and crisis phenomena”²². “In Russia, there is a growing understanding that *without a serious reassessment of the strategies and priorities that proved their worth in the past decade that was relatively successful, the country is unlikely to be able to move forward effectively*”²³. It is not surprising that the course

It is up to us to decide how effectively we will be able to use the enormous opportunities of the technological revolution and how we will respond to its challenge. In this sense, the coming years will be decisive for the future of the country. I emphasize this: they will be decisive...

The speed of technological change is growing rapidly and is increasing sharply. Whoever uses this technological wave will get far ahead. This wave will just overwhelm and drown those who can’t do it. Technological backwardness and dependence mean a decrease in the security and economic opportunities of the country, and as a result – the loss of sovereignty. This is exactly the case, and not otherwise²⁴.

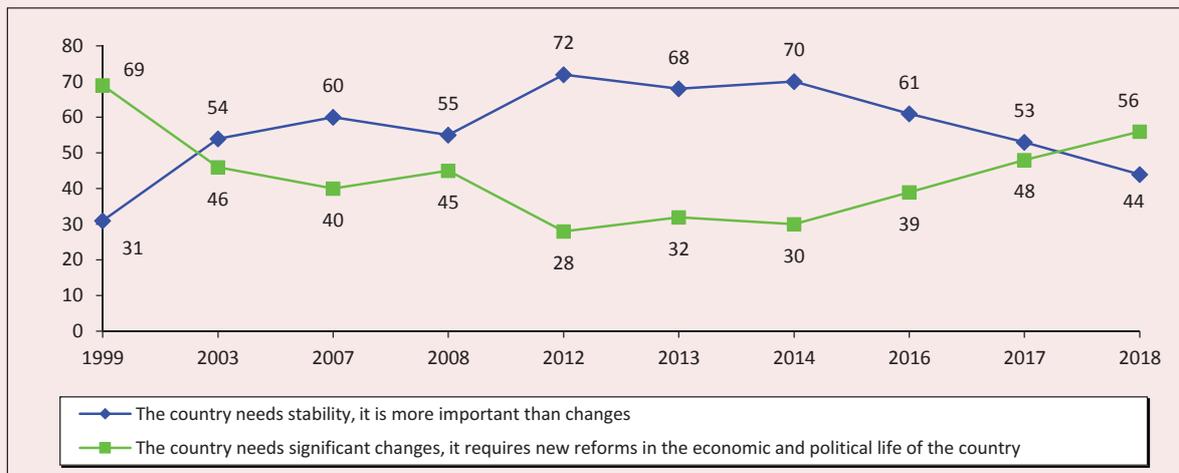
²¹ Osipov G.V. We should not miss the chance we have been given! In: *Sociology and Economics of Modern Social Reality. Social and Socio-Political Situation in Russia in 2013*. Moscow: ISPI RAN, 2013. P. 17.

²² Petukhov V.V. Dynamics of social sentiment of Russians and the formation of request for changes. *Sotsis*, 2018, no. 11, p. 43.

²³ *Russian Society after the 2018 Presidential Election: a Request for Changes: Information and Analytical Summary*. FNISTS RAN. Moscow, 2018. P. 7.

²⁴ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>

Figure 1. Dynamics of the orientation of Russians toward stability and change (% of respondents)



Source: *Russian Society after the 2018 Presidential Election: a Request for Change: Information and Analytical Summary*. FRSC RAS. Moscow, 2018. P. 7.

Table 1. On March 1, 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his annual Address to the Federal Assembly. In your opinion, how realistic are the tasks that the President voiced in it, and will they be fulfilled or not? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of those who listened to the Address or learned about its content from the news)

Answer	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2018
The President announced specific and real tasks and, most likely, they will be fulfilled as soon as possible	28	31	31	36	29	49	34
The President announced specific and real tasks, but they will not be fulfilled due to corruption and bureaucracy in power	49	47	40	42	46	31	47
The President's proposals are too general, vague and impossible to implement	11	12	17	16	20	8	6
Difficult to answer	12	10	12	6	5	12	13

announced by the President in March 2018 and aimed at the “breakthrough development” of the domestic situation in the country (not just as a new vector of state policy until 2024, but a necessary condition for survival in the rapidly developing world) found support in the broad strata of Russian society and provided V. Putin with a record number of votes.

Thus, reasoning in line with V. Surkov’s concept, we can say that for many years the “deep people” were nourishing the need for a change, and this need went through the channels of sacred communication and found its embodiment at the “top”, in the President’s Address to the Federal Assembly, and was

communicated as an order to the elites in the form of the “May decree” and national projects.

Seventy eight percent of Russians (a record number for the entire period from 2009 to 2018) noted that the President in his Address “announced concrete and real tasks”. However, most of them (47%) considered that these tasks “will not be fulfilled”, and it is “because of corruption and bureaucracy in the government” (*Tab. 1*).

By and large, the President himself said that the country was facing “very difficult tasks” and for their implementation it would be necessary “to make long overdue, difficult, but extremely necessary decisions”, “to use all resources, to

gather all the strength, to show the will for bold and productive work”²⁵.

...As it was in the 1990s in our modern history: a huge number of regulations were adopted that were like music to common people’s ears, and we can say with confidence that more than half of them were not executed and could not be executed due to the very difficult financial and economic situation in the country. What did that mean? People were deceived, it was just a hoax. The authorities passed the laws knowing that they would never be implemented, and they introduced a huge number of benefits, realizing that the budget is not able to implement these decisions. We can never go back to this practice²⁶.

Moreover, a year later at a meeting of the Board of the Prosecutor General’s office, the President once again confirmed his intentions, stressing that in any case it is impossible to return to the practice of the 1990s, when the government took “a huge number of useful decisions”, knowing in advance that it is impossible to implement them; it is “cheating people, just cheating and nothing else”.

However, ironically, it is not the isolated cases, but the current **practice** when the Government does not execute direct orders of the head of state is an attribute of “oligarchic capitalism” that exists in the current political system of the “long state”. This practice was the reason for the failure to comply with the May 2012 decrees (*Insert 1*): “there still remain some points that have not been executed”²⁷, as the President put it very mildly; or frankly speaking, according to experts, they were “safely forgotten”²⁸.

²⁵ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>

²⁶ Transcript of the meeting of the Board of the Prosecutor General’s office, March 19, 2019. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/60100>

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ It will cost 5 thousand rubles to obtain an international passport: why is it so expensive? *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 2018, June 19. Available at: <http://www.mk.ru/social/2018/06/19/ofornlenie-zagranpasporta-oboydetsya-v-5-tysyach-rublej-pochemu-tak-dorogo.html>

The same practice formed the basis for the incorrect indexation of pensions in 2019, to which the President pointed out quite clearly: “It was necessary to take into account all the nuances but this was left undone, and of course, this should not be allowed to happen. This injustice, and it is certainly an injustice, should be sorted immediately”²⁹.

The first signal indicating that the May 2018 Decree and the election promises of the President (and with them the hopes of the “deep people”) will be once again sabotaged, consisted in superficial reshuffling of the Government, which actually means that the implementation of the “decisive breakthrough”, which Russians need so badly, will be entrusted to the same team that could not solve this problem over the previous 18 years.

It is not very clear what is the point in starting new “May decrees” when the previous ones have not yet been implemented. Moreover, **the implementation of the previous “May decrees” over the past 5.5 years gives the impression of brazen and cynical sabotage**. It got to the point that the Government stated that it did not have one trillion rubles for the implementation of the “May decrees” in the same year when the unused balances in the accounts of the federal budget, that is, the budget reserve of the same Government, increased by one and a half trillion rubles, that is 1.5 times the required amount. So the very idea of the President’s “May decrees” is compromised, on the one hand, by the Medvedev government, and on the other hand – by the humanism of the President, who tolerates all this³⁰.

The final doubts were dispelled by the pension reform, which people learned about in June 2018. As experts note, it became a turning point for society, because it brought to the end what the reform of monetization of benefits could not bring.

²⁹ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, February 20, 2019. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59863>

³⁰ Polovnikov A. New “May decrees”: does all the future exist in the past? (interview with M. Delyagin). *Portal “Nakanune.ru”*, 2018, February 26. Available at: <https://www.nakanune.ru/articles/113723/>

Insert 1

Information on achievement of indicators on some orders established in the “May decrees” of the Russian President³¹

Source	President's order	Fact*	deviation
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 596 “On long-term state economic policy”	“Improving the position of the Russian Federation in the World Bank’s Doing Business ranking from 120th in 2011 to 50th in 2015 and 20th in 2018”	35th place** (2018)	-15 units
	“Increasing the share of high-tech and science-intensive industries in gross domestic product by 2018 in 1.3 times compared to the level of 2011”	22.1% (2017)***	-3.5%
	“Creating and upgrading 25 million high-performance jobs by 2020”	15,983.279 thousand units (2016)	-9.02 million
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 597 “On measures to implement state social policy”	“Raising real wages in 1.4–1.5 times by 2018”	100.8% (2016)****	-56%
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 598 “On improvement of state policy in the field of healthcare”	“Reducing mortality from neoplasms (including malignant neoplasms) to 192.8 cases per 100 thousand population”	196.9 per 100 thousand population (2017)	-4.1 per 100 thousand population
	“Reducing mortality from road accidents to 10.6 cases per 100 thousand population”	13.6 per 100 thousand population (2017)	-3 per 100 thousand population
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 599 “On the measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science”	“Increasing expenditures on domestic research and development up to 1.77% of gross domestic product by 2015”	1.10% (2016)	-0.67%
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 600 “On the measures to provide citizens of the Russian Federation with affordable and comfortable housing and to improve the quality of housing and utilities services”	“Until 2020 – providing affordable and comfortable housing to 60% of Russian families in need of improving their living conditions”	5% (2016)	-55%
Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 No. 606 “On the measures to implement the demographic policy of the Russian Federation”	“To ensure an increase in life expectancy in the Russian Federation to 74 years by 2018”	72.7 years (2017)	-1.3 years

* Data of the Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: www.gks.ru.

** Source: Doing Business 2018. The World Bank has published a ranking of countries on the ease of doing business. Available at: <http://inovorusrmir.ru/archives/31784>

*** In 2011, the share of high-tech and science-intensive industries in gross domestic product was 19.7%. According to the President’s instruction, it is necessary to reach the level of 25.6% by 2018.

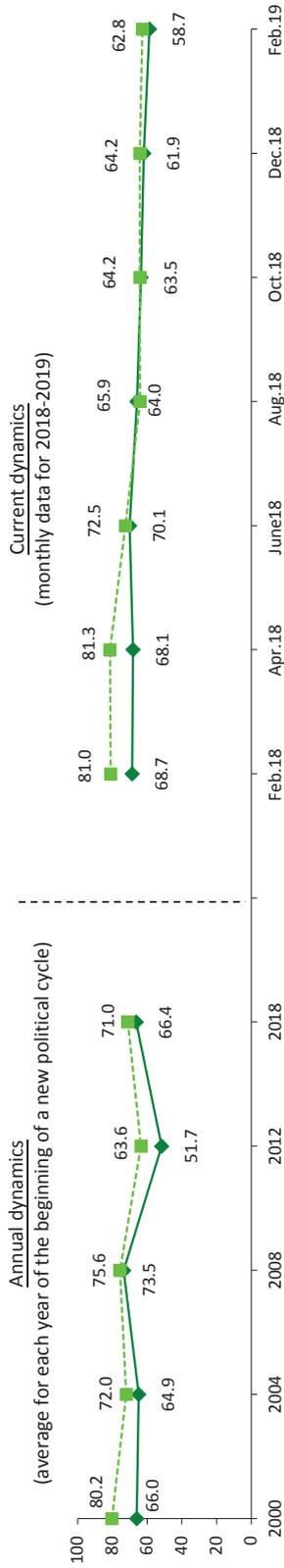
**** In 2012, the real accrued wage was 108.4% compared to the previous year.

According to Rosstat, for 2016–2017, many of the President’s instructions contained in the May 2012 decrees remain unfulfilled, and this applies to a variety of areas: economy, science, demography, standard of living and quality of life. In the Address to the Federal Assembly in 2018 the President mentioned that during the implementation of the May decrees “some orders were not executed to the fullest extent”, but they are quite enough to arouse the suspicion of experts: “The work on Correction of mistakes that was not carried out makes you think what of the current bulk of plans is difficult to implement, what got into the text in a hurry or in the hope that the people have a short memory?”³².

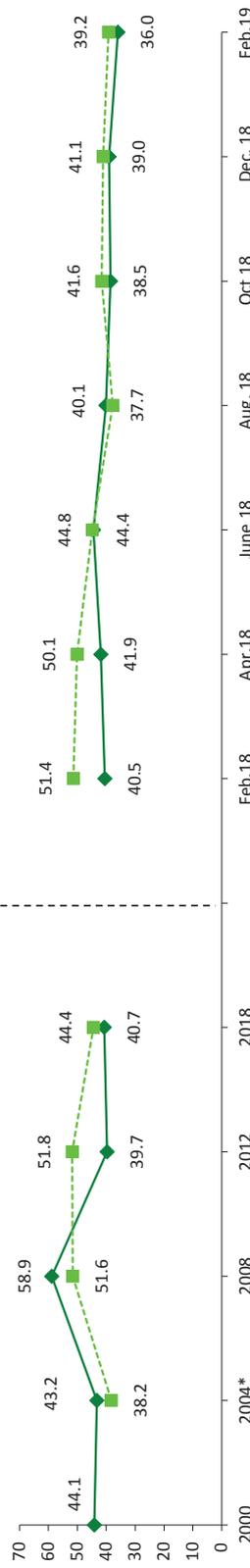
³¹ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. “Russian Federation – a welfare state?”: assessing the results of 25 years of implementation of Article 7 of the Russian Constitution. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial’nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 6, p. 20.

³² Komrakov A. Sociologists evaluated the reaction of the population to Vladimir Putin’s promises. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2018, March 14. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/economics/2018-03-14/4_7189_putin.html

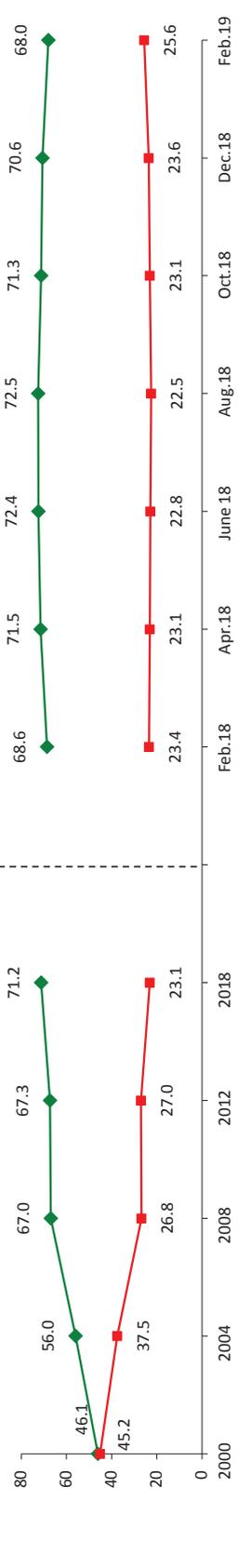
Insert 2



Level of approval of the work of the RF President (% of respondents)



Level of approval of the work of the RF Government (% of respondents)



* National data – as of 2006

What would you say about your mood in the latest few days?(VoIRC RAS data on the Vologda Oblast, % of respondents)

From that moment, according to opinion polls, the pre-election enthusiasm in society vanished and was replaced by falling ratings of the authorities and deterioration of social mood. And if the position of the President was in some way saved by his August address to the people that was broadcast on federal television channels, with explanations and adjustments of the pension reform (it is no coincidence that since September 2018 the rate of decline in support of the President somewhat slowed down, although it is still premature to talk about the return of the positive trend), then the assessment of the work of the Government continues to fall (*Insert 2*).

If we turn to the monetization of benefits that took place in 2005, then we see that the surge of protests was not supported by the fundamental factors such as the change in mass consciousness. Therefore, it came to naught in less than a year, and most of the sociological indicators returned to a relatively “calm” track. But now that the unpopular decision of the authorities has played the role of a trigger to activate more fundamental changes, the consequences can stretch for a longer time³³.

Taking into account the fact that Russians no longer believe in their ability to exert at least some influence on the situation in the country³⁴ and prefer to build their lives “without looking” at what the

³³ Belanovskii S.A., Dmitriev M.E., Nikol'skaya A.V. Signs of fundamental shifts in the mass consciousness of Russians. *Obshchestvennyye nauki i sovremennost'*, 2019, no. 1, p. 16.

³⁴ This is evidenced by the data of international, national and regional studies:

1. Thus, according to the European Social Survey, in 2016, about 74% of Russians believed that they “are not able to personally participate in politics”. It is the 13th place among 16 countries of Western Europe. Only 6% of the population held the opposite point of view (for comparison: in Germany, Norway, Switzerland, this figure is 23–25%).

2. According to the VTsIOM, in 2017, 70% of Russians said that they could not influence the situation in their settlement, in their region, and in the country as a whole; 51% claimed that “Russian citizens do not have the ability to control the work of the authorities or in any way influence the decisions taken by the authorities”.

3. According to VolRC RAS, 82% believe that they cannot influence the state of affairs in their region or in the country; 74% – point out the same about the state of affairs in their municipality.

state is doing³⁵, “routinization” of the issue of pension reform was inevitable.

... After the announcement of the pension reform, citizens' confidence in the government has seriously shaken, skepticism remains and the situation cannot be quickly corrected with the help of statements... On the other hand, the measurements of ratings before and after the Presidential Address would have made more sense if the ruling elite in Russia lived in conditions of strong political competition. But there is no such competition. Citizens who cease to trust the authorities at the same time are not ready to be included in politics. On the contrary, they want to distance themselves from politics and its procedures, including elections. This can be called the potential for political apathy³⁶.

However, all that the state has achieved is another round of struggle for the return of the lost trust. It is hardly necessary to talk about the former unity of society and power in the awareness and readiness to implement the goal of breakthrough development today. And it is not just about the pension reform. “The bitter, but necessary medicine” would be accepted by society with much smaller losses if this process was “sweetened” by equally weighty measures, **directly** (instead of once there “long”) focused on the solution of the main problems of the population – overcoming of poverty and social inequality. Instead, the Russians see that certain less visible reforms that are nevertheless “draining the wallets” of ordinary citizens are taking place against the background of discussions about the changes in pension legislation. Such reforms are as follows: raising VAT, raising tax on purchases in online stores, “piloting” of taxation of self-employed, raising tariffs for the disposal of solid waste, etc. And this is happening against the

³⁵ This is evidenced by the increase in the number of “self-sufficient” Russians, whose share for the period from 2011 to 2016 increased from 34 to 48%. At the same time, “self-sufficient” Russians are people who do not need the care from the state or simply do not believe in its effectiveness” (source: Petukhov V.V. Dynamics of social sentiment of Russians and the formation of request for changes. *Sotsis*, 2018, no. 11, p. 50).

³⁶ Protest potential or political apathy? (editorial). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 4. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/editorial/2019-03-04/2_7523_red.html

Table 2. Structure of the most urgent problems that people are concerned about* (% of respondents)

Problem	1999		2000		2007		2012		2018	
	%	Rank								
Inflation	54.5	2	44.7	2	43.8	1	55.3	1	53.7	1
Low standard of living, poverty	57.1	1	50.8	1	40.4	2	43.2	2	51.1	2
Stratification of the population on “poor” and “rich”	21.3	9	27.7	7	31.0	4	37.5	3	35.9	3
Problem of housing, low affordability of housing	11.8	14	16.8	9	31.8	3	28.6	4	23.5	4
Political instability	21.9	8	16.0	10	7.9	15	11.2	16	23.1	5
Economic instability, shut down of enterprises	39.6	4	29.1	6	14.5	13	16.5	11	22.5	6
Corruption, bribery	14.8	11	15.4	11	15.0	12	19.8	9	21.9	7
Poor quality of engineering infrastructure (utilities, roads, transport, etc.)	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	25.3	7	20.1	8
Social insecurity of citizens	32.5	6	34.4	4	26.7	7	22.3	8	19.9	9
High crime rate, vulnerability to crime, hooliganism	33.4	5	36.9	3	30.2	6	25.5	6	19.0	10

* Ranked according to the data for 2018; in total, there are 23 problems in the survey, the table shows the 10 most relevant ones in 2018.
Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring.

backdrop of an increasingly open demonstration by the authorities of their disdainful (if not derogatory) attitude toward the people...³⁷

In December 2018, the Government of the Russian Federation developed national projects – concrete tools for the implementation of the “May Decree” of the President. National projects did not become an exception to the rules, but smoothly continued the line of the Address and the May 2018 decrees: they contain all the same correct messages, ambitious indicators, “blurred” instruments of achievement and the same responsible persons. But the most important thing is that among the 12 national projects, “the main task of which, according to the President, is to achieve real positive changes in the life of every Russian citizen and every family”³⁸, there was no place for a project to

overcome poverty and inequality³⁹, that is, there was no place for registration of the officially adopted way, plan, mechanism and tool to solve the very problems that people have been concerned about for the last 20 years (*Tab. 2*).

Moreover, against the background of the deteriorating statistics provided by Rosstat, “the Government more and more often calls for changes in the methods of calculating statistical indicators. These appeals concern indicators that reflect the situation with the most pressing issues such as poverty level and income dynamics”⁴⁰. According to T. Golikova, “in a short period we have to rethink the approaches to poverty assessment, to its measurement and to move to more modern standards”⁴¹. M. Oreshkin points out that “the decline in people’s real disposable incomes is a technical indicator...In fact, incomes are growing;

³⁷ See, for example: Shaburov A. “The state does not owe you anything”. Why officials changed their tone in communicating with the people. *Information portal of the town of Bakal*, 2018, November 22. Available at: <http://vbakale74.ru/power/5223-gosudarstvo-vam-ne-dolzno-pochemu-chinovniki-smenili-ton-v-obschenii-s-narodom.html>

³⁸ Transcript of V. Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Council for Strategic Development and National Projects, October 24, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58894>

³⁹ The fight against poverty is going on, but for some reason not within the national project (editorial). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, February 20. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/editorial/2019-02-20/7513_2_red.html

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ The Government will develop new approaches to poverty assessment (from T. Golikova’s speech at the Gaidar Forum 2019). *RIA Novosti*. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20190115/1549363040.html>

it is a methodological issue”⁴². A. Siluanov notes: “Rosstat is the most important agency that uses outdated technologies and outdated tools. The organization needs serious reform... Real wages, which make up the majority of real incomes of the population, are considered to be more or less clear and reliable. As for the calculation of real incomes of the population, the claims are considerable”⁴³.

According to Rosstat, for the period after 2013, the number of the poor in Russia increased by about 26%: in 2013, 15.5 million people were below the poverty line, in January–September 2018 – 19.6 million people. **The country “celebrated” the five years of decline in real disposable incomes of citizens** – incomes adjusted for inflation and mandatory payments. According to the updated assessment of the statistics agency, people’s incomes in 2018 decreased by 0.3% in annual terms (taking into account the one-time payment from 2017). **Now the sixth year of the impoverishment of the citizens has begun.** In January, according to Rosstat, people’s incomes decreased by 1.3% in annual terms⁴⁴.

Thus, the first year of the new political cycle has shown that the elites are “intellectually feeble”⁴⁵, and this requires “vigorous measures to restore the audibility”⁴⁶ between the “deep people” and the President. However, first of all, the continuing and long-term growth in the number of Russians who demand changes suggests that sooner or later this trend will result in something, and this means that

⁴² Oreshkin called the decline in people’s real disposable incomes a technical indicator. *Novosti TASS*, 2017, August 21. Available at: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/4496233>

⁴³ Siluanov accused Rosstat that it “makes a terrible account” of real incomes. *Novosti RBK*, 2018, December 24. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/24/12/2018/5c2118a39a7947e242a659c4>

⁴⁴ Methodological crisis of the Government (editorial). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 14. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/editorial/2019-03-14/2_7530_red.html

⁴⁵ Noskovich O.I. How to build a long state? *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 18. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-03-18/7_7533_ideas1.html

⁴⁶ Surkov V.Yu. Vladimir Putin’s long state. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, February 11. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-02-11/5_7503_surkov.html

even the “deep people” have their limits. Second, whatever theory explains the specifics of the complex and multifactorial relations between the main actors of the “long state”, there are objective conditions – the limits to V. Putin’s term in office a President and the very “lag” behind the developed countries, which the President spoke about as “the major threat and our main enemy”, which will “inevitably increase”⁴⁷, if we ignore it.

The first year out of the six years remaining before the presidential election and out of the four years remaining before the elections to the State Duma has passed. Regarding its results, we can use the phrase, with which the experts from RAS Institute of Sociology described the Russian society five years ago: it is “divided into two groups comparable in size”⁴⁸. Only this time, it is divided not by people’s attitude toward the present and future of Russia, but by their behavior and actions dictated by the existing conditions of life: those who have personal resources or can count on their immediate environment, joins the ranks of “self-sufficient” Russians, and those who do not have such an opportunity, continue to wait and hope for the moral responsibility of the state and the President. And it is not because now everything has changed and the agenda of the authorities has finally become concrete and aimed at addressing internal problems, but because there is nothing to hope for anymore.

III. The foundation of the “long state”.

The historical experience of our country shows that the power based exclusively on the patience of the people, ignoring their needs, inevitably comes to an end and often this end becomes extremely tragic for both of them. In this regard it is hardly possible to say that the sacred connection of the “deep people” with the national leader alone will be enough to ensure the long existence of the state built by V. Putin.

⁴⁷ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>

⁴⁸ *Russian Society in the Context of New Realities: Information and Analytical Summary*. IS RAS, 2015. P. 3.

One cannot deny the unconditional personal contribution and the historical role of the President due to the fact that he built the framework of a new type of state and managed to protect it from any external effects. To do it, he has to use a “hands-on” approach to the entire state system, and for the time being it was enough to fulfill people’s need for stability.

However, today, when the need for stability within the country tends to zero, and society is increasingly responding to specific episodes that prove the inefficiency of public administration; when the factors of the external geopolitical environment force Russia to make a powerful and, most importantly, rapid breakthrough in its development, it becomes more and more clear that the efforts of one person are not enough to respond to these internal and external challenges.

Hence, there is a need to search for new, more fundamental elements of the foundation that can ensure the stability of the Russian statehood established in the 2000s. In our opinion, there are at least two such elements.

The first element consists in the fact that Russia has accumulated significant scientific and philosophical potential, which has always been based on the priority of the goal of preserving and strengthening the Russian statehood both in the external and internal political arena and which at the same time openly and regularly points to the low level of public administration efficiency and offers concrete practical measures to solve this problem (which, however, continues to be ignored by the authorities).

Accidentally (and maybe not), V. Surkov’s concept says about the expert community; in the triad “President – elite – “deep people”, on which V. Putin’s “long state” rests, there is no place for the expert community. This fact is understandable, because academic institutions, according to priority guidelines of scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation, are implementing the “decisive breakthrough” and are “bridging the gap” in the sphere of high technology; therefore, the socio-humanistic science, in line with

In the next 10–15 years, the priorities of science and technology development of the Russian Federation should be those areas that will produce scientific and technological results and create technologies that are the basis for innovative development of the domestic market of products and services and that can ensure a stable position of Russia in the foreign market, and will provide the following:

- a) transition to advanced digital, intelligent manufacturing technologies...
- b) transition to environmentally friendly and resource-saving energy...
- c) transition to personalized medicine...
- d) transition to highly productive and environmentally friendly agriculture and aquafarming...
- d) countering anthropogenic, biogenic, social and cultural threats...
- e) connectivity of the territory of the Russian Federation through the development of intelligent transport and telecommunications systems...
- g) possibility of effective response of the Russian society to big challenges taking into account the interaction between an individual and nature...⁴⁹

which it is possible to reflect upon the events and processes taking place in the country, is “on the background”.

In the “long state”, the expert opinion that does not coincide with the point of view and actions of the ruling elites can be voiced, but no one listens to it. After all, there is no place for alternative points of view on the implementation of the economic course either at the Gaidar Forum or at the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum...

Meanwhile, it is experts – not only scientists (economists, sociologists), but also politicians, public figures, etc. – point to the vulnerability of the “long state”, ask acute but necessary questions and, most importantly, offer strategic directions and concrete actions under which **the “long state” would be based not only on the patience of the “deep people”, but also on balanced, scientifically substantiated management decisions aimed at overcoming key problems that people are concerned about (Insert 3).**

⁴⁹ *Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation (approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation from December 1, 2016 No. 642).* Available at: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71451998/>

Insert 3

Some assessments of representatives of the expert community (ranked in chronological order of citation)

<p>Fadeev V.A. Inequality and poverty. Ekspert, 2019, no. 4, pp. 18-22.</p>	<p>"We need a discussion, the purpose of which will be to develop solutions to overcome inequality, improve justice in society and, as a consequence, enter the trajectory of economic development, though it may seem a paradox to orthodox economists who rule in Russia today... Such a national dialogue, which reveals the problems of inequality and injustice, will not stir rebellious sentiments, but on the contrary, will contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of trust in society, trust between the government and society. It will show that the government does not shy away from discussing the most pressing and acute problems, does not try to escape from these problems with the help of propaganda, but is ready to solve them together with society".</p>
<p>Betelin V.V. Russia needs to abandon the "economy of services" and shift to the economy of industrial production. Ekonomist, 2019, no. 2, pp. 3-12.</p>	<p>"In the post-reform Russia, industry produces money for shareholders rather than industrial products... Thus, in the post-reform Russia, the economy of industrial production is replaced by the "economy of services". As a result of liberal economic reforms, systemic prerequisites were created for the formation of a "service economy" in Russia, the essence of which consists not in the production of industrial products, but in the provision of services on its basis, regardless of where and by whom these products are produced. The purpose of the system of the "economy of services" is to train consumers and users of mass industrial products of companies-leaders of global markets, rather than to train personnel for the industry of science and education in Russia... A necessary condition for Russia's joining the five largest economies of the world is to return to the economy of industrial production on the basis of diversification of production at the enterprises of the national military-industrial complex".</p>
<p>Bobkov V.N. Pension reform: simplicity of tactical decisions is fraught with strategic failure. Rossiiskii ekonomicheskii zhurnal, 2019, no. 1, pp. 31-40.</p>	<p>"The whole range of possible alternative solutions aimed at raising the standard of living and improving the quality of life of Russians, related to the transfer of the Russian economy to the trajectory of rapid, sustainable and high-quality growth (which involves the systematic improvement of social and labor relations), has been ignored by the authorities and has not been brought to the public. Simple, "arithmetic" solutions have prevailed: to reduce the number of pension recipients and to increase the number of Pension Fund payers... The adopted legislation on raising the retirement age proceeds from the logic related to the forced inclusion of additional labor resources from among the elderly in the economy, and thus – to the preservation of cheap labor, creation of barriers to productivity growth with a decrease in the standard of living and quality of life. This clearly contradicts the imperative of modern socio-economic progress. If we evaluate the average monthly amount of old-age pension – 20 thousand rubles, which is officially planned to be achieved in 2024, through the prism of criteria of belonging to social groups with different living standards, it becomes obvious that this amount will not allow pensioners to overcome the border of low security. This, of course, is not the milestone that should be set by a state that intends to provide "breakthroughs" in the socio-economic development of the country".</p>
<p>Gubanov S.S. Pension aggravation: what it means and what it will lead to. Ekonomist, 2018, no. 9, p. 24.</p>	<p>"It is useful to recall our historical experience. It convincingly proves that each "comprador" reform, beginning with privatization of property and liberalization of prices, was accompanied by a deafening cannonade of babbling about universal values, freedom and democracy, rapid prosperity and care about people's welfare. In fact, each "reform" was a systemic war of the comprador clan against the people and the country, and it resulted in devastation, poverty, backwardness, loss of social gains, enslavement and mass mortality".</p>
<p>Grimberg R.S. Pension reform as the self-defamation of Russian liberalism. Nezavisimaya gazeta, 2018, September 24. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/scenario/2018-09-24/10_7317_pensii.html</p>	<p>"The taxation of income of individual entrepreneurs is arranged in such a way that after reaching the revenue of 300 thousand rubles, and more, there begins a zone of reducing tax rates, that is, the more you earn, the smaller the share of your income is transferred to the state treasury. And if you manage to earn more than 18 million rubles a year, you will get full exemption from participation in the replenishment of the Pension Fund. In general, as they say, money makes money. But this is the case when, instead of social equalization, there is an increase in the inequality that is already socially dangerous".</p>
<p>Belousov A.R. Speech at the Eastern Economic Forum, Vladivostok (September 11-13). RIA Novosti, 2018, September 12. Available at: https://ria.ru/economy/20180912/1528347713.html</p>	<p>"We have created an excellent system in which crooks and criminals feel comfortable. That is, we have created a system of control and supervisory activities, under which the people who are engaged in illegal business, which, in fact, is subject to criminal prosecution, feel more comfortable, nothing can be done to them".</p>

Continuation of Insert 3

<p>Glazhev S.Yu. About the beneficiaries of the economic policy. Website of the Russian Academy of Sciences. 2018. September 6. http://www.ras.ru/digest/showdnews.aspx?id=14fb2029-3d9e-44e2-972c-8af4f8692eca</p>	<p>“The Central Bank has three main tools of monetary policy: the interest rate, the exchange rate and the volume of money issue. So, the leadership of the Central Bank believed the nonsense of the IMF, which claims that you cannot manage these three tools at the same time... The monetary authorities are held captive by the most absurd dogmas imposed by Washington financial institutions on the national economies in order to deprive them of the possibility of independent development. Guided by these dogmas, our monetary authorities have deprived the economy of credit, without which it cannot develop. Second-year students are taught: the number of control parameters must correspond to the degrees of freedom of control objects. And the Bank of Russia throws the monetary system to the mercy of fate, or rather, gives it into the hands of currency speculators and court bankers”.</p>
<p>Obukhova E., Pahunov K., Ivanter A. This is a reform, baby! Ekspert, 2018, no. 26 (1080), June 25.</p>	<p>“The reasons why it is necessary to carry out such a tough time-bound change in the retirement age reform are not yet visible. Our analysis, and we consider it impartial, shows that the economy in this case can not only win nothing, but even lose — due to the growth of spending on preferential types of pensions, unemployment and, most importantly, the potential reduction of the wage fund, which is the basis for the formation of the Pension Fund”.</p>
<p>Shirov A.A., Potapenko V.V. About a fair pension system. Ekspert, 2018, no. 24, June 11-17.</p>	<p>“There are no reasonable demographic arguments in favor of raising the retirement age for men immediately... Attempts to solve fiscal problems on the basis of changing the parameters of the pension system carry long-term risks, the main of which consists in the undermining of people’s trust in the social policy of the state... In general, with the inertial development of the economy, the only way to maintain the growth of the level of real pensions is not just to raise the retirement age, but also to increase the expenditures on pensions in relation to GDP to the levels typical for the countries of Eastern Europe. Elimination of the budget deficit of the Pension Fund of Russia, ceteris paribus, leads to a significant reduction in the standard of living of pensioners and has a negative impact on the growth rate of the economy”.</p>
<p>Katsonov V.Yu. “The goats in spectacles” milk mosquitoes. Information portal “Novaya Rossiya”. 2018. May 28. Available at: http://russnov.ru/valentin-katsonov-ochkastye-kozy-doyat-komarov-28-05-2018/</p>	<p>“I have an impression that someone is conducting all this performance called “Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum”. And everything possible and impossible is done to attract the attention of the audience to behind-the-scenes and sometimes open squabbles. But this is all a pennyworth dispute, by and large. I found no serious discussion either at the forum, or on the Internet about the forum... Oreshkin, Kudrin, Siluanov, and all the officials ignore the key issues. And these issues are discussed very rarely, and then not in the federal mass media. A lot of time has passed since the formation of the Government, there are already many signs that the Government will continue its previous liberal course. This course will continue to erode the remnants of our economy”.</p>
<p>Ivashov L. The fight against corruption should begin not in Dagestan, but in the Kremlin! Portal Publicist.ru. 2018. February 9. Available at: https://publicist.ru/blogs/108984/23242/</p>	<p>“If we look at our government and a number of arrested governors, let’s face it: after all, they were given regions and the work of their inhabitants to supervise. And the radical measures that are being taken today in Dagestan, the arrests of high officials — this is most likely not a systemic fight against corruption. Because corruption starts, alas, not in Dagestan, not in Kamchatka, not in Khabarovsk Autonomous Okrug... When starting a fight against corruption, Putin must begin with the Kremlin, for all officials who have been arrested in Dagestan, have the protection in Moscow”.</p>
<p>Prokhanov A. Defense consciousness. The enemy is at the gate. Gazeta “Zavtra”, 2018, February 7. Available at: http://zavtra.ru/blogs/oboronnoe_soznanie_vrag_u_vorot</p>	<p>“Today the Russian state has no money... The funds are empty. The accumulations have been spent. Billionaires have money and keep them in offshore zones and U.S. securities. These untold riches are the result of shameless exploitation of the Russian people who have been put on the brink of poverty and extinction. Urgent tasks for the Kremlin and for Putin are to return all this money to Russia, to direct it to development, to provide a breakthrough with it”.</p>
<p>Fursov A.I. The one who wins will live. Gazeta “Zavtra”, 2018, January 22. Available at: http://zavtra.ru/blogs/elita_hhi</p>	<p>“The elite, which associates itself with “Barvikha Luxury Village” and which will certainly hand over everything for this “Barvikha Luxury Village” and will lose... therefore the most important, necessary condition of a victory consists in the fact that the elite has to associate itself with society of which it is part”.</p>
<p>Korotaev S.A., Shkaratan O.I. Post-soviet statehood and society: the evolution of social contract and legitimizing of authority. Part 3. The strengthening of statehood and social contract between society and authorities. Social Sciences and Contemporary World, 2018, no. 1, p. 70.</p>	<p>“The Russian elite is not characterized by citizenship and state thinking. Its lack of interest in resolving the situation concerning the poverty of the majority of citizens and its indifference toward the future of domestic science and innovative economy are explained by the syndrome of rapidly enriched people who care only about themselves and their environment. This “set” of values largely determines not only the essence, but also the form and methods of public administration”.</p>

Continuation of Insert 3

<p>Gorshkov M.K. Television program "An evening with Vladimir Solovyov", aired June 15, 2017.</p>	<p>"In order to assess the efficiency of officials, it is necessary to add subjective indicators to the dry figures of objective indicators of economic development. How high is the satisfaction of people with different aspects of life: are you satisfied with the standard of living? With your salary? With the quality of healthcare? With the education your children obtain? With the quality of your leisure?... We have 15 points of such indicators. Does anyone take them into account? Is anyone interested in them? If these figures were included in the total volume of state statistics, I am afraid that half of the officials would be fired".</p>
<p>Starikov N.V. It's time to adopt a law on the convening of the Constitutional Assembly. Official blog of N. Starikov. March 6, 2017. Available at: https://nstarikov.ru/blog/76003</p>	<p>"We are concerned with the following question: why for 23 (!) years since the adoption of the Constitution, a working version of the most important federal constitutional law has not yet been developed and adopted? The text of the Constitution itself was drafted and adopted in a matter of months. The law on the Constitutional Assembly has not been adopted so far. Have we suddenly run out of competent lawyers and constitutional law specialists? Or is it a question of political will? Most likely – the latter..."</p>
<p>The implementation of "Growth Strategy" will allow Russia to double the GDP by 2035: an interview with B.Yu. Titov (February 20, 2017) / Website of the Stolypin Club. Available at: http://stolypinsky.club/2017/02/20/boris-titov-realizatsiya-strategii-rossiya-pozvoit-rossii-k-2035-godu-udvoit-obem-vvp/</p>	<p>"Now the World Bank estimates the possibility of growth of the Russian economy by 1.2% until 2025. The same assessments are given by our Government. We believe that the Russian economy cannot develop at the rate of 1% of GDP per year if the average rate of the world economy is 3%. If we do not have a 4%–6% growth, it will lead to further stagnation and Russia will move to the second and then to the third tier of countries by economic indicators... The growth rate of less than 2–3% means that Russia may lag behind the leading countries of the world forever..."</p>
<p>Spitsyn E.Yu. A lecture in the "Polykafe" (Moscow, December 27, 2016). Official blog of N.Starikov. available at: https://nstarikov.ru/blog/73788</p>	<p>"Our problems in all spheres of life – in the economy, in education, in health care and in foreign policy – are largely due to the fact that our political leadership (top and middle), officials of different levels, profess doublethink and sit on two chairs. It is impossible to carry out any political course while sitting on two chairs. Sooner or later, these chairs will be drawn apart and you will fall and hurt yourself really badly. And we won't get any further while on the one hand we have a kind of patriotic rhetoric and on the other hand – a completely blatant anti-patriotic course. Therefore, sooner or later such things will put the following dilemma before our leadership: to make this choice (maybe a metaphysical one) – what way should today's country move along?"</p>
<p>Boldyrev Yu.Yu. How the liberals were selling Russia: "A rat will eat three corns, and spoil a million more". Moskovskiy komsomolets, 2016, December 8.</p>	<p>"Ignoring the norms of the Constitution is an issue that concerns exclusively the representatives of the comprador elite, who consciously give priority to their private interests to the detriment of the interests of Russian society. And it also concerns "the central government – the President and Parliament, who have all the powers".</p>
<p>Delyagin M.G. The liberals treat Russia like a cutlet – an object of consumption. Online newspaper "Biznes-online", 2016, November 9. Available at: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/327971</p>	<p>"The President should deal with the strategy, the Government should deal with the economy, and the Bank of Russia – with the financial system. But the fact that the President, having delegated the duties, does not control their execution properly and even puts up with the chronic sabotage of his own "May decrees" is not so much a manifestation of humanity as a deep vice of our entire system of governance. This is where the threat to our entire future comes from. The problem of the economy lies not in cheap oil or sanctions, but in that all the activities of the liberals holding key positions in the Medvedev's Government and Nablullina's Bank of Russia, as far as can be judged by their actions, are subordinated to the task of hampering the development of our country. And in general, because we tolerate them, they succeed in it..."</p>
<p>Gaganov A.A. Does Russia have strategic planning? Sulakshin's Center (Center for Scientific and Political Thought and Ideology). 2016. January 28. Available at: http://rusrand.ru/analitics/est-li-v-rossii-strategicheskoe-planirovanie</p>	<p>"We have a law on strategic planning, but so far it is useless. The executive authorities are mainly engaged in finding tactical solutions to acute issues. The function of strategic planning is implemented haphazardly, in the medium and short term, which does not the existing acts to be turned into real strategic management tools. The lack of long-term planning has led to the fact that the vast majority of issues in all areas of the country's life remained unresolved over the past decade. There are no political mechanisms and institutions to ensure the responsibility of the executive authorities for the results of their activities. They can affect any area of public administration; in particular, it impedes the development of strategic planning".</p>

End of Insert 3

<p>Sulakshin S.S., Bagdasarayan V.G. et al. Is Russia Waiting for a Revolution? Issues of Transition to the Post-Liberal Model of Russia (Algorithm and Scenarios). Moscow: Nauka i politika, 2016. P. 669–670.</p>	<p>“There have been no significant changes in the liberal model of the country for many years, and even in the crisis years of 2014–2015. The commitment to the liberal model is only confirmed. Accordingly, the degradation processes turning into crisis ones also become sustainable. Personnel policy is extremely conservative. The system of reflection in the management is almost suppressed, the control center is in its own trap of false information. The system of initial values and goals seems to have finally squeezed out of its lists the interests of the country as a whole, the interests of the majority of the population, sustainable development, positioning of the country in the world, and success in the classical set of development goals of the country... Thus, the recent historical process in which Russia is immersed has become more certain. Proceeding from its qualitative vision, the most likely conservative options, according to the study, are not surprising. This is a scenario of prolongation of the liberal model, a scenario of balancing on the threshold of sustainable development”.</p>
<p>Polterovich V.M. Reformers of science lack the necessary qualifications to cope with the task. Ekonomicheskies i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz, 2015, no. 3, pp. 28–31.</p>	<p>“Our officials do not know the basic technique for carrying out institutional reforms. And one of the main mistakes they make and repeat from reform to reform is the use of the so-called method of shock therapy. For instance, the draft law of June 28, 2013 (on the reform of state academies) is a typical example of shock therapy. The goals of this law had nothing to do with the goals of raising the level of science in Russia. Everyone knows what we have got. The compromise we now have is achieved in a desperate struggle rather than in the design process. This leads to enormous costs”.</p>
<p>Dobren'kov V.I., Ispravnikova N.R. The Russian version of the “capitalism for the few”: is there a way out of the impasse? Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 18: Sotsiologiya i politologiya, 2013, no. 3, p. 26–55.</p>	<p>“Taking into account the economic inefficiency and social illegitimacy of the structure of property rights established at the beginning of the 2000s, there arises the question of a possible revision of the results of privatization of the early 1990s and their adjustment. At the same time, it is obvious that attempts to revise the results of privatization will encounter many restrictions related to the dominant role of “capitalism for the few” in the Russian economy. The institution of illegitimate property in such conditions ensures the reproduction of corrupt power relations of a limited group of persons rather than sustainable long-term socio-economic development, economic growth and modernization of the economy. In the most general form, the opinion of specialists, experts and the opposition boils down to the fact that a comprehensive program is needed to overcome the merging of oligarchic structures and the ruling elite of the Russian economy... “Capitalism for the few” in modern Russia has developed a certain system of basic values. This system with a certain degree of accuracy can be called anti-national. It should be noted that as a subject of the Russian economy, the business elite of the new formation acts mainly as foreign investors. Illegitimate property on the territory of Russia belongs to foreign legal entities, mostly offshore companies. We can say that the key actors of the ruling layer consciously appeal to the resources of other states as guarantors of their interests in the political and economic space of Russia... Following the course of “capitalism for the few” leads the country to a dead end: deprives it of prospects for state-political and socio-economic development, leads it to backwardness, socio-political degradation and state disintegration. The national task is to deprive the key actors of the ruling stratum – modern oligarchs and the ruling elite – of unjustified influence on the development of the country, the corrupt receipt of super-profits, the possibility of shadow influence on public authorities and management at all levels, as well as political parties, the intellectual environment, the expert community. Solving the problem of changing the nature of the country's development requires a radical strengthening of the Russian state, which meets the interests of its fair, dynamic and effective development”.</p>
<p>Vladimir Putin's Big Government and the “Politburo 2.0”: a report by Minchenko Consulting Communication Group. 2012. P. 2.</p>	<p>“The ruling elite of Russia can be described in the model of the Soviet collective authority – the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The process of ruling is aimed primarily at maintaining the existing inter-clan balance... The Russian government is a conglomerate of clans and groups that compete with each other for resources. And the role of Vladimir Putin in this system remains unchanged – it is the role of referee and moderator”.</p>
<p>Abalkin L.I. The way toward success lies through consistency and cooperation. National Projects, 2007, no. 8 (15), pp. 12–13.</p>	<p>“The current governmental policy in the field of economy and management is internally contradictory and not effective enough. There are many examples. The Pension Fund, conceived as a source of “long” money, is subsidized by the budget. “Monetized” benefits require more funds for their implementation than before. Huge foreign exchange earnings are not used to stimulate domestic production. With the reduction of employment in the country, the number of administration employees has doubled. Officials have usurped state power and made it a source of illegal funds... We need a strategic worldview, a distinctive feature of which is the priority of system over an uncoordinated series of individual measures”.</p>

Experts pay attention to the facts of tampering with statistics and to the revisions of the target indicators; this leads to the failure of the Government to fulfill the orders and the “May decrees” of the President⁵⁰. They prove that there was no need to carry out the 2018 pension reform, that it was implemented incorrectly and, most importantly, that it will not bring the desired effect of raising the standard of living of pensioners⁵¹. They point to the non-working law on strategic planning⁵² and to the transformation of the once second world economy into a “service economy” that is fully focused on the interests of “leading companies of global markets rather than on the training of personnel for industry, science and education in Russia”⁵³. Experts also speak about the inadmissibility of subordination of Rosstat to the Ministry of Economic Development⁵⁴ and about the activities of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation that contradict Russia’s national interests⁵⁵; experts also consider social inequality, which significantly exceeds the critical level in Russia, such a situation carries “risks to the functioning of social relations”, “threat of transition to a state of increased instability”⁵⁶, and the protest

potential, which has for many years stably located at a dangerously high level of 20%⁵⁷.

However, the most important thing is that, analyzing the entire post-Soviet period, and often comparing its results with the achievements of the Soviet Union, different experts come to the same conclusion: the “long state” created by V. Putin has an inefficient system of public administration, since the elites that rule it have a comprador essence⁵⁸, and they have not gone far from the “phantom” essence of the elite of the 1990s⁵⁹. These elites are characterized by imitation of activity as “a process that reflects the substitution of activity in all its manifestations; deliberate forgery and plausibility in order to mislead or hide true intentions of the initiators of pseudo-activity”⁶⁰. They are absorbed by the construction of the “capitalism for the few”⁶¹ instead of bringing the situation in the country in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution, in which it is said that Russia is a social state⁶², the fact that experts also pay attention to⁶³.

Since the Government (according to Article 114 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation) participates in the development and execution of the federal budget and ensures a “unified state policy in the field of culture, science, education,

⁵⁰ A report of A. Zhulin, vice rector of the HSE, at the plenary session of the seventeenth April international conference. *NRU HSE news*, 2016, April 22. Available at: <https://www.hse.ru/news/science/181135658.html>

⁵¹ Shirov A.A., Potapenko V.V. About a fair pension system. *Ekspert*, 2018, no. 24, June 11-17.

⁵² Gaganov A.A. *Does Russia have strategic planning?* Sulakshin’s Center (Center for Scientific and Political Thought and Ideology). Available at: <http://rusrand.ru/analytic/est-iv-rossii-strategicheskoe-planirovanie>

⁵³ Betelin V.V. Russia needs to abandon the “economy of services” and shift to the economy of industrial production. *Ekonomist*, 2019, no. 2, pp. 3-12.

⁵⁴ Hansa V.A. Rosstat should be independent of the executive power (January 14, 2019). Available at: <https://kprf.ru/dep/gosduma/activities/181747.html>

⁵⁵ Glazyev S.Yu. Central Bank Policy is more harmful than the sanctions. *S.Yu. Glazyev’s website*. April 6, 2019. Available at: <https://glazyev.ru/articles/165-interv-ju/66501-politika-tsentrobanka-vrednee-sanktsiy>

⁵⁶ Glazyev S.Yu., Lokosov V.V. Assessment of critical threshold values of indicators of the state of Russian society and their use in the management of socio-economic development. *Vestnik RAN*, 2012, vol. 82, no. 7, pp. 587-614; Lokosov V.V. The method of critical threshold indicators and the evaluation of human potential. *Ekonomika. Nalogi. Pravo*, 2012, no. 5, pp. 71-75.

⁵⁷ Sheinin V.L. Historical transit: Russian drama. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2017 January 27. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2017-01-27/5_6914_drama.html

⁵⁸ See, for example: Gubanov S.S. Pension aggravation: what it means and what it will lead to. *Ekonomist*, 2018, no. 9, pp. 10-24.

⁵⁹ Toshchenko Zh.T. *Phantoms of Russian Society*. Moscow: Tsentr sotsial’nogo prognozirovaniya i marketinga, 2015. Part 1.

⁶⁰ Toshchenko Zh.T. New faces of activity: imitation. *Sotsis*, 2012, no. 12, p. 24.

⁶¹ Dobren’kov V.I., Ispravnikova N.R. The Russian version of the “capitalism for the few”: is there a way out of the impasse? *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 18: Sotsiologiya i politologiya*, 2013, no. 3, p. 30.

⁶² The Constitution of the Russian Federation. Article 7. *Consultant Plus database*. Available at: <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=LAW&n=2875&fld=134&dst=100040,0&rnd=0.2480454526720497#08426057577392236>

⁶³ Lapin N.I. The formation of the welfare state – a successful method of social evolution. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya*, 2018, no. 8, p. 7.

health, social security, environment”⁶⁴, it cannot be considered as a mild irritant, which uses its solutions that are incomprehensible to the people to provide a sacred connection and mutual understanding between society and the President. **Almost all the points of the May Decree and national projects, according to which Russia must make a decisive breakthrough and catch up with the leading countries of the world until 2024, are the field of activity and responsibility not only of the President, but also of the executive power, so the focus of the elites on national interests is a fundamental condition, without which the “long state” cannot exist.**

And an equally important condition when governing the country consists in the necessity to hear and largely focus on the opinion of competent people, which is based on historical facts, statistical information and mathematical calculations.

If the assessments of experts from the scientific community are the first element of the foundation capable of ensuring the existence of the “long state”, then ***the second element consists in the fact that Russia has accumulated considerable practical experience in effective public administration***, which must be extrapolated to the key areas that ensure the dynamic development of the standard of living and quality of life and to those areas where Russia’s lagging behind poses a direct threat to national security.

This example is set by the same person on whom, in fact, the “long state” rests upon – the President of the Russian Federation, who manages foreign policy (according to Article 86 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation) and is the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces (according to Article 87).

A retrospective look at V. Putin’s political career clearly shows that the President’s personal intervention in solving any problem almost always ends successfully and almost always takes place in

⁶⁴ The Constitution of the Russian Federation. Article 114. *Consultant Plus database*. Available at: <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=LAW&n=2875&fld=134&dst=100040,0&rnd=0.2480454526720497#08426057577392236>

the interests of the general public, in the national interests. This can be equally attributed to the accession of Crimea to Russia, and to the ban on the abolition of suburban electric trains.

As leader of the “power bloc”, V. Putin successfully dealt with the “Chechen crisis” before assuming office as President; later the oligarchs who were unruly in the 1990s were “brought to heel”; the geopolitical status of Russia as one of the main centers of the multipolar world was restored; an active and long-term fight against corruption was initiated, and it did not spare the officials of the highest level; the Russian army was completely redesigned externally and internally and, most importantly, at the present historical moment, the security of Russia’s external borders for the near future has been ensured, that is, everything has been done to solve the urgent problems “inside the country, in our own home”⁶⁵.

Many of those who criticize the independent course of foreign policy implemented by V. Putin look at the situation quite differently, making him responsible for the growth of anti-Russian sentiments, economic sanctions and many other symptoms, clearly indicating that the Western world (the U.S. and Europe) do not like a strong neighbor, especially a neighbor such as Russia. Much criticism concerns the fact that the expenditures on defense (especially when Russia enters into military conflicts outside its territory) could be directed to addressing social needs, and then we would have long been leaders in healthcare, education, science...

However, if we take into consideration the historical relationship between Russia and the United States, as well as the “instinct of state power”⁶⁶ that both countries have, we should note that Russia’s geopolitical vulnerability in the 1990s (both in terms of foreign policy and in terms of the outdated military-industrial complex)

⁶⁵ Transcript of the direct live TV phone-in with Vladimir Putin, April 16, 2015. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49261>

⁶⁶ Berdyaev N.A. *The Origin of Russian Communism*. Paris, 1955. P.15.

Insert 4

Dynamics of crime statistics in Russia

Indicators	For reference: 1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	Dynamics, in %		
								2000 to 1990	2017 to 1990	2017 to 2000
Number of offenders identified, thousand people	897.3	1741.4	1297.1	1111.1	1075.3	1015.9	967.1	194.1	107.8	55.5
Total number of registered crimes, thousand cases:	1839.5	2952.4	3554.7	2628.8	2388.5	2160.1	2058.5	160.5	111.9	69.7
Murder and attempted murder	15.6	31.8	30.8	15.6	11.5	10.4	9.7	203.8	62.2	30.5
Intentional infliction of grievous bodily harm	41	49.8	57.9	39.7	30.2	27.4	24.6	121.5	60.0	49.4
Rape and attempted rape	15	7.9	9.2	4.9	3.9	3.9	3.5	52.7	23.3	44.3
Robbery	83.3	132.4	344.4	164.5	72.7	61.5	56.9	158.9	68.3	43.0
Robbery with violence	16.5	39.4	63.7	24.5	13.6	11.4	9.1	238.8	55.2	23.1
Theft	913.1	1310.1	1573	1108.4	1018.5	871.1	788.5	143.5	86.4	60.2
Terrorist act, cases	No data	135	203	31	8	25	37	No data	No data	27.4
Crimes related to drug trafficking, thousand cases	16.3	243.6	175.2	222.6	236.9	201.2	208.7	1494.5	1280.4	85.7
Traffic accidents, thousand cases	96.2	52.7	26.6	26.3	26.7	22	21	54.8	21.8	39.8
among them the number of those that entailed death through negligence	15.9	15.4	15.7	10.3	9.5	7.9	7.5	96.9	47.2	48.7
Bribery, thousand cases	2.7	7	9.8	12	13.3	10	6.3	259.3	233.3	90.0
Economic crimes, cases	No data	80931*	276435	202454	108754	105087	109463	No data	No data	39.6**
Number of persons who committed economic crimes, people	No data	47247*	101728	64593	46952	47328	47134	No data	No data	46.3**
Number of victims, people	No data	2095500	2809200	1785200	1699000	1544200	1417400	No data	No data	67.6
Number of persons held in detention facilities, thousand people	No data	925.1	823.4	819.3	639.9	630.1	602.2	No data	No data	65.1
Number of crimes committed by minors or with their complicity, thousand people	162.7	195.4	154.7	78.5	61.8	53.7	45.3	120.1	27.8	23.2
Number of minors who have committed crimes, thousand people	153.2	177.9	150.0	72.7	56.0	48.6	42.5	116.1	27.7	23.9
Number of crimes committed by persons who have previously committed crimes, thousand people	257.9	651.5	517.4	530.7	688.8	674.9	650.6	252.6	252.3	99.9

* Before 2005 – number of economic crimes/persons who committed economic crimes.

** Dynamics by 2005

Source: Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: www.gks.ru.

Insert 5

Dynamics of people's subjective assessments of the level of security and the work of the police (data on the Vologda Oblast, % of respondents)

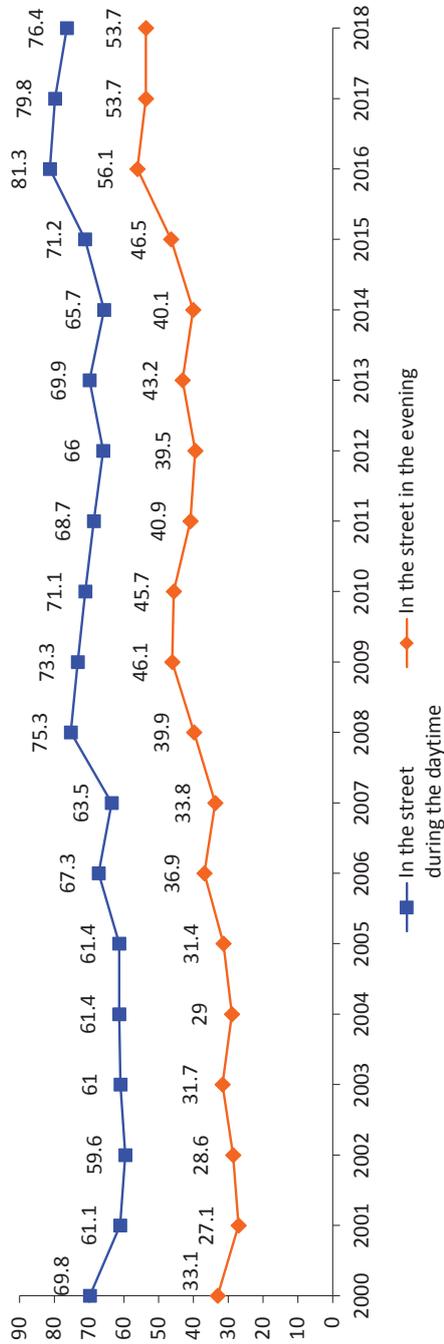


Figure 1. Do you feel secure at present? (answer option "yes and sooner yes than no"), % of respondents

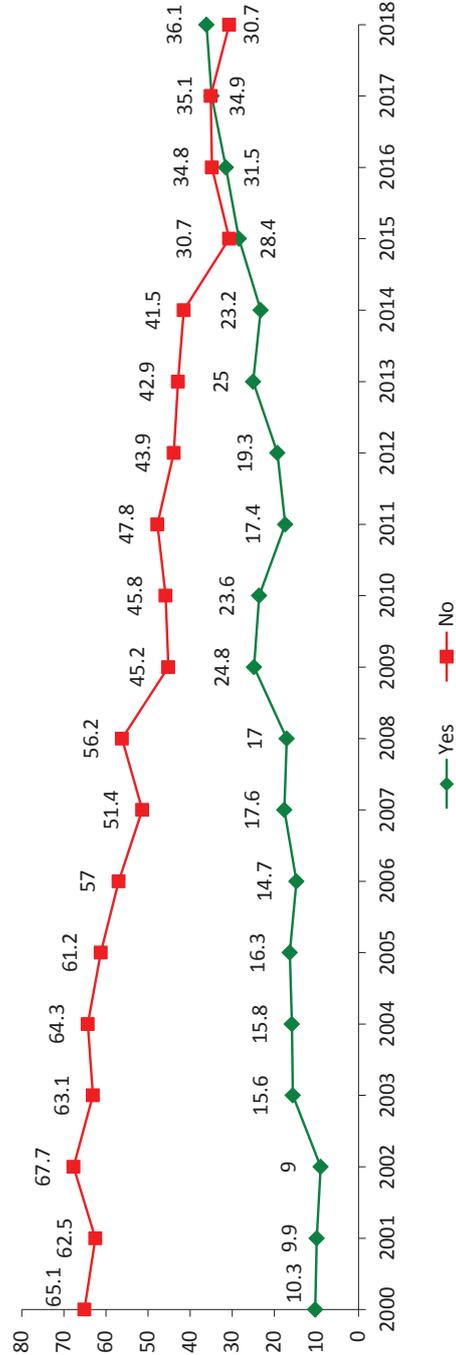


Figure 2. Do you think that at present the police can cope with crime? (% of respondents)

made absolutely any scenario of its future possible, including the most catastrophic one.

It is difficult to question the outstanding achievements and breakthrough efforts with which the Russian army was actually redesigned “from scratch”, including not only advanced weapons, but also, above all, the morale and prestige of military service. This is fully proved by Russia’s effective participation in military campaigns outside the country and by specific episodes of heroic deeds of ordinary people, which, of course, would not have been possible without sincere and high feelings towards their Motherland.

However, an equally impressive effect of the transformation of the power bloc can be seen in civilian life. Throughout the period from 2000 to 2017, there was a continuing decrease in the crime rate in Russia, including various types of serious offences (murder, robbery, etc.) and economic crimes (*Insert 4*).

People’s subjective assessments are revealing as well; for instance, in the period from 2000 to 2018, people began to feel safer on the street more often. In particular, it is due to the significant increase (from 10 to 36%) in the confidence that the police are able to cope with crime (*Insert 5*).

In the structure of the most pressing issues that people are concerned about, the issues such as “high crime rate, vulnerability to crime, hooliganism” moved from the third to the tenth place (37% of the inhabitants of the region in 2000 and 19% – in 2018 were concern about these problems; Tab. 1).

Thus, Russia has accumulated considerable experience of what could serve as the foundation for the future of the “long state”. The problem is that this experience does not extend beyond itself; this extension is hindered by the comprador interests of the ruling elites, and their actual influence on the present and future of Russia is manifested in this very fact (rather than in “some events” with the “detached” participation of the “deep” people⁶⁷).

⁶⁷ Surkov V.Yu. Vladimir Putin’s long state. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, February 11. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-02-11/5_7503_surkov.html

Formally, there is nothing that can prevent the President from eliminating the “intellectual feebleness”⁶⁸ of the ruling elite. Article 83 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation gives him the right to appoint the Prime Minister, nominate a candidate for the post of Chairman of the Central Bank, make decisions on the resignation of ministers, etc. However, to do this it is necessary to show political will: “turn the page”⁶⁹ and “make long overdue, difficult, but extremely necessary decisions”⁷⁰.

IV. Prospects for the future of the “long state”.

We can either agree or argue with the conceptual propositions put forward by V. Surkov in his article entitled *Vladimir Putin’s Long State*. In the same way it is possible to discuss the motives which have urged him to publish an article that is so resonant in its content.

In our opinion, it is important to emphasize something else: Surkov’s article revealed two extremely acute issues that, by and large, were relevant throughout the post-Soviet period, but today their severity has increased so much that they can no longer be ignored, and, apparently, the Kremlin is also aware of this.

The first question is related to the need for deep reflection and understanding of the cultural and historical movement of Russia: where does the “long state” of V. Putin come from? Where is it going? And to what it must go? These issues are closely related to the development of the concept of state ideology, which Russia cannot have, because Article 13 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states that “no ideology may be established as state or obligatory one”⁷¹. The need to address these issues

⁶⁸ Noskovich O.I. How to build a long state? *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, March 18. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-03-18/7_7533_ideas1.html

⁶⁹ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the congress of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs on February 9, 2012.

⁷⁰ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>

⁷¹ The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 13, Paragraph 2. Available at: <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-3.htm>

that are critical to the existence and development of the state and society has long been expressed by experts⁷²; however, if earlier it was only their warnings, **today the objective conditions have changed radically – the needs of society, its demands, values, and requirements to the Government.** This forces the state to respond to this problem in one way or another, including through the article by V. Surkov.

The second issue is even more specific and acute. Due to the fact that the system of the “long state” built in the post-Soviet period depends entirely on a specific person – the President of the Russian Federation, the question arises what will happen after V. Putin. The need to find an answer to it is outlined by a specific and extremely short-term time frame – the year 2024 (and according to some estimates, 2021 – the year of the parliamentary election⁷³).

Putin’s truth lies in the fact that his control does not extend to the future. He has not established the national idea, he has not institutionalized his political course; he has not established a new state elite; he has not formulated a strategic path for Russia. He said and did different things, some were successful and spectacularly positive and life-saving, others – completely disastrous and profoundly wrong. The balance of these pros and cons can be considered differently. In my opinion, in general there are more positive elements than negative ones. Putin saved Russia that had been hovering over the abyss, and returned it to its track. And it is excellent that he did this. But **none of his successes have reached the point of no return.** All of them will be questioned after his end⁷⁴.

⁷² See, for example: Sulakshin S.S. The quality and success of public policies and management. In: *Series “Political Axiology”*. Moscow: Nauchnyi ekspert, 2012. Pp. 6, 12; We have to change the Constitution!: an interview with N. Starikov, July 20, 2014. available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSe6kFB-OQ8>

⁷³ Gurova T., Skorobogatyi P. People are too independent to be bought for a grant (interview with V.V. Fadeev, Chairman of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation). *Ekspert*, 2019, no. 1-3, p. 59.

⁷⁴ Dugin A. Putin or Super-Putin. *Official website of the Izborsk Club*. 2019. February 12. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/16492>

According to some experts, “Putin owns the political present of Russia, but he won’t have any influence on the future that will come immediately after him”⁷⁵.

Thus, the real test of V. Putin’s “long state” consists not so much in the current “stress tests” (which are successfully handled by he President himself rather than by the system of public administration), as in how this “long state” can do without him.

The chronic incapacity of the post-Soviet state leadership in the field of national economy is fully manifested in the systemic crisis, deindustrialization and scientific and technological backwardness; this incapacity did not arise out of nowhere, but was generated by the comprador economic system, and its profoundly negative influence on Russia has long been clear and does not require evidence.

The pumping out and offshoring of comprador rents, the transformation of Russian property into non-Russian, the transformation of national wealth into transnational – all this is incompatible with the rise of the productive forces of our country and the quality of life of the working majority⁷⁶.

V. Surkov’s article provides an answer to this question, but it does not look convincing. The author basically describes the present and explains why the Russian people are so patient. However, in the context of internal and external challenges that V. Putin’s “long state” is currently facing, this explanation is clearly not enough.

The steady increase in the proportion of Russians who demand changes suggests that the “deep people” expect the head of state to take decisive action to fulfill his election promises, which will be manifested in actual changes in the standard of living and quality of life. The extent to which the general public feels these changes will determine the main thing upon which V. Putin’s “long state” rests – this main thing is the quality of the sacred relationship between the

⁷⁵ Dugin A. Putin or Super-Putin. *Official website of the Izborsk Club*. 2019. February 12. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/16492>

⁷⁶ Gubanov S.S. Pension aggravation: what it means and what it will lead to. *Ekonomist*, 2018, no. 9, p. 19.

people and the President: his successful actions will strengthen this relationship and his unsuccessful actions (as shown by sociological surveys in recent months) can lead to the fact that people can lose their trust in the President and place him among those who show not only the febleness of intellect but also the febleness of will.

Since the draft law on the pension reform was submitted to the State Duma, the level of approval of the President's work has decreased in the Vologda Oblast (according to the data of VolRC RAS) by 14 p.p. (from 70% in June 2018 to 56% in April 2019), in Russia as a whole (according to VTsIOM) – by 8 p.p. (from 73 to 65%)⁷⁷.

In addition, the numerous consequences of “oligarchic capitalism” and “intellectual febleness” of the ruling elites (in the economy, politics, social sphere, etc.) are objective, which does not allow them to be ignored, because they are the cause of “our main enemy – backwardness” and, if ignored further, this lag will only increase, becoming a more tangible threat to national security.

The “long state” created by V. Putin, is as durable as it is fragile, because it is not ready for significant transformations of the system of public administration, and without these transformations it is impossible to implement such ambitious plans that were announced by the President in 2018. Recent historical experience shows that even a “political machine” such as the Soviet Union literally collapses if it is unable to adapt to rapid changes in objective conditions and social needs. Today, V.Putin's “long state” is at risk of “walking into the same wall” if it continues to depend solely on his personal qualities and the infinite patience of the “deep people”.

⁷⁷ For more information, see the section *Public Opinion Monitoring* in our journal (pp. 238-245).

“The pace of technological change is increasing rapidly” and “the changes taking place in the world are of a civilizational nature”⁷⁸. **This process is going too fast to keep up with it if only “cosmetic changes” are implemented within the framework of the ossified system, which is actually a quarter of a century old.**

Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? These questions have never left the thinking part of our society alone. After all, we are the main country of the transit of mineral resources, goods, but more importantly, people and, still more importantly, ideas. In order to provide for the further transit of our national idea, the government should treat the main resources of our people – the mind and conscience – attentively and carefully. We all remember the slogan of the Soviet era: “the Party is the mind, honor and conscience of our era”. The government should have the honor, so that the mind and conscience of the people could have a future⁷⁹.

Nevertheless, the presence of two resources, which are not mentioned in V. Surkov's article (accumulated scientific potential and positive experience of state management of the military-industrial complex), allows us to look into the future with restrained optimism: **with hope, because the potential of these factors is huge, and with anxiety, because to realize this potential requires not only a deep intellectual understanding of the necessary strategic decisions, but also specific political actions of the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin; it is a necessary condition for the creation of a really strong “long Russian state” that continues its thousand-year history.**

⁷⁸ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018. *Official website of the RF President*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>

⁷⁹ Latypov N.A. Transit of power or the power of transit. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2019, April 1. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2019-04-01/8_7545_transit.html

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