

EDITORIAL

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From “Munich-2007” to “Valdai-2023”: Sixteen Years That Changed Russia and the World



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Abstract. October 5, 2023, at the 20th anniversary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech that many experts believe to be a continuation of what he had said at the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007. Over the past 16 years, the key theses that the President voiced in Munich (that “the unipolar world did not take place” and that “Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy. We are not going to change this tradition today”) have acquired real outlines and concrete forms. The future of Russia as a sovereign civilization-state, which is part of a multipolar world, has become obvious, natural and inevitable, as the President stated at the Valdai Forum in 2023. As an illustration of this thesis, the article examines in detail the results of the election campaigns that took place in Russia on September 10, 2023 and convincingly confirmed that the majority of voters support the current course of foreign and domestic policy implemented by the head

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of state. The article presents our calculations based on official data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation; we carry out an in-depth comparative analysis of the results of the regional elections of 2018 and 2022, and analyze voting results in the context of regional centers; we also consider factors that influenced voter turnout. This makes it possible to identify new and more in-depth features of public sentiment, according to which a significant part of voters demands that the current elites (political, economic, cultural) be brought in line with the national socio-political agenda related to the goals of the special military operation and the positioning of Russia as a civilization-state. In general, the analysis has shown that both inside Russia and in the international political arena, there are still a lot of forces desperately clinging to the “old” world order and hindering the natural course of the changes taking place. This suggests that the process of transformation of Russia and the whole world, which in fact began 16 years ago, has not yet been completed and, apparently, this task is postponed for 2024–2032 – the period that may become the next presidential term for Vladimir Putin. At the same time, the successful achievement of all the goals of the special military operation was and remains the main prerequisite for the implementation of Russia’s transformation.

Key words: Valdai Forum, “Munich speech”, special military operation, threats to national security, elites, Single Voting Day, election.

October 5, 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech at the 20th session of the Valdai International Discussion Club; the speech was characterized by many experts as a continuation of his Munich speech delivered February 10, 2007.

In his speech, Vladimir Putin noted: **“The world is too complicated and diverse to be subjected to one system, even if it is backed by the enormous power of the West accumulated over centuries of its colonial policy... Lasting peace will only be possible when**

Experts on Vladimir Putin’s speech at the Valdai Forum, October 5, 2023:

1. **“The scale and significance of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s speech at the 20th meeting of the Valdai Club can be compared only with those of the 2007 Munich speech ... In the 2000s, Russia was just returning to the arena of big politics, but 16 years later Moscow is setting global trends around the world.** In the mid-2000s our leader outlined the vector of Russia’s national interests and was the first among the leaders of the countries to speak out against the arbitrariness of the West; today Putin sets the guidelines for the future development of all humankind, the architecture of the global world order, which billions of people around the world want to see”¹.

2. **“The speech of Russia’s President at the plenary session of the 20th session of the Valdai International Discussion Club was announced as very informative and very important, which raised expectations comparable to the 2007 Munich speech and the 2014 Valdai speech. And such expectations were not unreasonable”².**

3. The concept of international relations presented by Vladimir Putin is **“seriously prepared, well-elaborated and deep-felt”³.**

¹ Opinion of P. Kolchin, political scientist and analyst at the Center for Expert Support of Political Processes. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2023/10/05/21438397.shtml>.

² Maslov A. Valdai-2023: A reboot, Putin-style. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/valdaj-2023_perezagruzka_po-putinski

³ Opinion of P. Danilin, director of the Center for Political Analysis and Social Research. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20231005/putin-1900826706.html>

4. **“The president remains true to himself; he always delivers very significant speeches.** This speech gives an idea of how Putin and the entire Russian leadership sees the world around them, how we will build our international relations in the near future, what is important for us, what positions are important in foreign policy... **a lot of attention was paid to the issue of civilizations: how they will interact with each other and coexist.** All this, of course, will be discussed over the next year by experts at the international level and in Russia”⁴.

everyone feels safe and secure, understands that their opinions are respected, and that there is a balance in the world where no one can unilaterally force or compel others to live or behave as a hegemon pleases”⁵.

In fact, the assessment of the world situation given by Vladimir Putin can be considered the quintessence of the geopolitical processes and events taking place before our eyes since the beginning of the special military operation (SMO).

The SMO has been going on for 18 months, and against this background, the contours of a multipolar world are becoming more dynamic and more clearly manifested:

✓ following the six countries that will become new BRICS members as of 2024, **more than 40 States** have expressed interest in joining the BRICS, of which 22 have already submitted official applications⁶;

✓ **130 countries and 30 international organizations** took part in the 3rd Belt and Road International Forum held in Beijing on October 17–18, 2023. Moreover, the Russian President was the guest of honor at this event, and of all the countries of the so-called Collective West only Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán participated in the forum.

At the same time, the situation on the battlefield in the course of achieving the goals of the SMO – the main “trigger” of global changes and the

“This process is based on objective reality. The multipolar world is creating by itself, as a matter of fact. We can speed up this process or someone can try to slow it down and maybe even achieve some kind of reduction in the pace of building a multipolar world. **Anyway, its creation is inevitable. It is happening on its own because of the growing potential of many countries,** including, not least, the growing potential of the People’s Republic of China. India is growing in Asia, Indonesia is also growing, many other nations in Latin America like Brazil, and Russia is getting back on its feet and gaining strength. Our countries do have their problems, and what countries don’t? There are always problems of some kind. But it’s not about that, **it’s about growing our potential,** and this growth is evident, including in the economic sphere”⁷.

“Major global events should be interpreted through the prism of the rise of multipolarity and the decline of unipolarity... Russia holds the front, and this is very important for a multipolar wave. Maybe more important than anything else. After all, it was Russia that was the first to enter into direct military conflict with the stubborn unipolar globalist system, which the Biden administration and the Neocons guiding it are desperately trying to save”⁸.

⁴ Opinion of political scientist N. Burlinova. Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2023/10/5/1233597.html>.

⁵ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 5, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72444>

⁶ *Rossiyskaya gazeta*. September 22, 2023. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2023/09/22/strategicheskij-prioritet.html>

⁷ Vladimir Putin’s interview to China Media Group on October 16, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72508>

⁸ Dugin A. Multipolar wave. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/24799>

formation of a multipolar world – continues to remain under the control of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

However, the real situation in the world indicates that the global hegemon and its satellites are still very

“The Ukrainian authorities had planned a spring offensive campaign, followed by a summer and now an autumn campaign, **but they have not achieved any notable success in any of them... Overall, the situation appears stable and secure.** The troops are acting professionally and displaying heroism on many fronts. **They are confident that they will not only hold their positions, but also continue to implement the plans we have outlined**”⁹.

far from recognizing the objectivity and inevitability of the onset of multipolarity. The outbreak of military conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁰ and the Gaza Strip¹¹, attempts to once again find a “Russian trace” in the explosion at the Finnish gas pipeline Balticconnector¹², transfer of long-range ATACMS missiles to the “Kiev regime” by the United States¹³ – all this indicates that the Collective West continues to desperately regain the power it is losing; this ultimately leads to numerous human casualties and increasing destabilization of world security, not only in the Middle East, but also within the countries of the Collective West itself (against the background of the conflict in the Gaza Strip, “Europe was swept by a wave of protests in defense of Palestine”¹⁴).

⁹ Meeting on current issues, chaired by the RF President, October 16, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72510>

¹⁰ September 19–20, 2023, hostilities took place in Nagorno-Karabakh between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR). They ended with the signing of a ceasefire agreement. September 28, 2023, head of the NKR S. Shahramanyan signed a decree on the termination of the existence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as of January 1, 2024.

Analyzing the reasons for the aggravation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, experts note: “On the one hand, we are talking about an old conflict that has not been resolved in any way, although Russia has made significant efforts to prevent a military scenario. On the other hand, **the West and the United States are interested in the escalation of the situation along the perimeter of the Union State. And since the West is suffering defeat in Ukraine, it would like Russia to disperse its forces in other directions. I think this is one of the reasons for the aggravation of the situation**” (opinion of N. Sergeev, political expert, chair of the Belarusian nongovernmental association “Rus”. Available at: <https://ru.sputnik.kg/20230921/ssha-zapad-nato-armeniya-karabah-sobytiya-konflikt-prichiny-1078794752.html>).

¹¹ October 7, 2023, Palestinian terrorist groups, the largest of which is Hamas, invaded Israel from the Gaza Strip, which resulted in mass killings of civilians, and a significant part of people were taken hostage. October 9, Israel imposed a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip; massive rocket attacks were launched, the victims of which were civilians in the Gaza Strip; a ground operation was being prepared.

October 10, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights officially condemned Israel’s decision to blockade the Gaza Strip as violating international law.

According to some experts, “**the US authorities are using the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that has flared up on a new scale to hide their failure in Ukraine... The attention of journalists is now focused on what is happening in Israel, and the United States benefits from this, since the Ukrainian conflict has become a major failure for the West**” (source: <https://ura.news/news/1052696678>). According to Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador R. Miroshnik: “**The United States is absolutely satisfied with what is happening in the Gaza Strip... What is happening there today and the lack of an adequate international response, I mean at the UN level, is the fault of the United States itself**” (source: TASS. October 22, 2023. Available at: <https://tass.ru/politika/19085745>).

¹² October 8, 2023, the Estonian-Finnish underwater gas pipeline Balticconnector was shut down due to suspected leakage. October 11, M. Simola, spokesperson for the Central Criminal Police of Finland, said that investigators had found “external traces” on the seabed. On the same day, L. Tsingisser, an economist from Estonia, said that in the country the damage to the gas pipeline is presented as “an act of unfriendly influence of Russian origin”. The investigation is currently underway (source: https://iz.ru/1592380/2023-10-19/politicia-finliandii-zavershila-osmotr-na-meste-povrezhdenogo-gazoprovoda?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop)

¹³ *Rossiyskaya gazeta*. October 18, 2023. Available at: https://rg.ru/2023/10/18/zhurnalist-repke-peredannye-vsu-atacms-ne-imejut-gps-iz-za-rossijskih-sredstv-reb.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

¹⁴ “Days of Anger”: Europe was covered by a wave of protests in defense of Palestine. Available at: <https://ren.tv/longread/1153504-dni-gneva-evropu-nakryla-volna-protestov-v-zashchitu-palestiny>

According to Russian experts, **the United States “has created at least five points of tension, each of which can escalate into a global conflict: the Russia–NATO conflict in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, the intervention of the American administration in relations between China and Taiwan, the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and finally, the situation around the Korean Peninsula”¹⁵.**

For Russia itself, the desperate attempts of the Collective West to prevent the objective process of the onset of multipolarity pose a special threat.

Partly because **Russia continues to remain “in the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence”.**

Partly based on the historically established **“philosophy”, the “paradigm” of the Collective West to “crush” any country that shows at least some signs of strengthening sovereignty.**

“In February 2022, with the launch of Russia’s special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine, a deglobalization of the global geopolitical space (GGPS) began. Since then, **Russia has been in the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence** and has become the main actor in the Non-West coalition”¹⁶.

Experts note that in the course of the war with Russia the Collective West “can blow up the situation in the South Caucasus at any moment if it decides to open a second front... especially in light of the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive”¹⁷.

Attempts to destabilize the global situation and the continuing threats to national security for our country indicate that the “lasting peace” that

“In the early 1990s Russia was willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to establish good relations with Western nations. What did we get in return? They provided direct political, information, financial, and even military support to separatism and terrorism in the Caucasus. I served as the Director of the FSB back then, and I watched with bewilderment as these events unfolded, wondering **why they were doing this at a time when we were on the same side.** However, they pursued these actions without hesitation. **Frankly, I have no clear understanding of it to this day.**

I believe it may stem from a lack of education, perhaps a misunderstanding of global trends and a lack of comprehension of Russia’s nature, as well as an unawareness of where such actions might lead. They may have sought to pressure us into submission using brutal force....

Furthermore, during times when I had candid conversations and good relations with some leaders, they would tell me “we need to pressure them into” doing a particular thing, I often responded by asking “Why?” but I never got an answer. **It is part of their philosophy or paradigm: issues should be resolved by applying force in order to get the desired outcome...”¹⁸.**

Vladimir Putin spoke about at the Valdai Forum will come very soon. And while Russia is still “in the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence” the situation inside the country continues to play a key role in its stability and external security; the willingness of the general population to support the course of foreign and domestic policy implemented by the RF President, despite economic sanctions from the Collective West or the ever-growing threats to military security.

¹⁵ Isaev A. (RF State Duma deputy). *The program “60 minut”*. Broadcast from October 16, 2023. Available at: <https://smotrim.ru/video/2698951>

¹⁶ Balatsky E.V. (2022). Russia in the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence: The hybrid war of civilizations. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(6), p. 53.

¹⁷ Dugin A. On the geopolitics of Transcaucasia. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/k_geopolitike_zakavkaz_ya

¹⁸ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 5, 2023 (answers to questions). Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72444>

From the point of view of global processes and Russia’s role in them, it is necessary to analyze the results of one of the most important internal political events – election, which is the most representative tool for measuring society’s attitude toward power and which has a direct impact on the situation regarding political forces in the country.

The results of the federal elections over the past 20 years (presidential, parliamentary, as well as the results of the all-Russian referendum on amendments to the Constitution, which were initiated by the head of state in January 2020¹⁹) show that the majority of the country’s population supports the course of domestic and foreign policy pursued by Vladimir Putin and United Russia, the current party of power which has a constitutional majority in the State Duma.

Thus, in the latest presidential election (March 18, 2018), the share of votes cast for Vladimir Putin was 77%; his initiative to amend the Constitution of the Russian Federation was supported by 79% of voters (*Tab. 1*). The United Russia party received 50–54% of votes in the last three parliamentary elections (in 2011, 2016 and 2021) (*Tab. 2*).

Between the key (federal) elections, Russia annually holds regional and municipal level elections, the importance of which is determined, on the one hand, by the fact that they represent an intermediate “slice” of society’s assessment of the activities of authorities (formed taking into account the current political and economic situation in the country and in a particular region); on the other hand, by the fact that they affect the local level of public authority closest to people’s specific problems, expectations and needs.

Table 1. Dynamics of Russian voters’ support for the current course of domestic and foreign policy in federal elections (presidential elections)

	Presidential elections										All-Russian vote on amendments to the Constitution June 25 – July 1, 2020	
	March 26, 2000		March 14, 2004		March 2, 2008		March 4, 2012		March 18, 2018			
	people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%
Number and share of votes cast for Vladimir Putin *	39 740 434	52.94	49 565 238	71.31	52 530 712	70.28	45 602 075	63.60	56 430 712	76.69	57 747 288	78.45

* Including the number and share of votes cast for Dmitry Medvedev in the presidential election on March 2, 2008, as well as for amendments to the Constitution initiated by Vladimir Putin in 2020.
Source: Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

Table 2. Dynamics of Russian voters’ support for the current course of domestic and foreign policy in federal elections (parliamentary elections)

	Elections to the RF State Duma									
	December 7, 2003		December 2, 2007		December 4, 2011		September 18, 2016		September 17–19, 2021	
	people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%
Number and share of votes cast for United Russia*	22 776 294	37.56	44 714 241	64.30	32 371 737	49.31	28 527 828	54.20	28 064 200	49.82

* In 2003, party head was B. Gryzlov; in 2007, 2011 – V. Putin, in 2016, 2021 – D. Medvedev.
Source: Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

¹⁹ Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly on January 15, 2020. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62582>

It is precisely because of these two features that the results of regional and municipal elections are of particular interest in terms of assessing the current state of society itself, in particular its psychological stability and readiness to continue to endure certain hardships against the background of external challenges and related internal restrictions that Russia has faced since the beginning of the SMO.

Every year elections are held under certain external and internal political, economic, social and psychological conditions that influence the opinion of voters and are ultimately reflected in the voting results. For example, on September 14, 2014, regional and municipal elections were held against the backdrop of the “Crimean spring” and the currency crisis caused, among other things, by Western economic sanctions against Russia. The regional and municipal elections of September 9, 2018²⁰ were held against the background of negative perception of the pension reform by the majority of Russian voters; the draft law on the reform was submitted to the State Duma by order of RF Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on June 16, 2018.

September 10, 2023, the Single Voting Day was held in Russia. According to experts, it became “the major one in several years and the last before the presidential campaign of 2024”²¹.

Election campaigns and local referendums of various levels were held “in 85 out of 89 constituent entities of the Russian Federation”²² in very specific conditions associated with an unprecedentedly higher level of threats to Russia’s national security, including ongoing hostilities in the course of achieving the goals of the SMO, terrorist attacks and sabotage on the territory of Russian regions, sanctions, an attempted armed coup carried out by Evgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner Group, on June 24, 2023, etc.

This predetermined the general leitmotif of the vote: “One of the key features of this election campaign can be considered that it took place in the conditions of **unprecedented consolidation of society, unification around the president and the flag**”²³. In addition, awareness of the scale of threats to national security influenced the final election results: “Turnout has become a record for ten years – since 2013 at this level of elections, without taking into account federal votes... All the current governors, as well as the acting ones, retained their posts. Of these, only two heads of regions were elected from the Communist Party, all the others were from United Russia”²⁴.

However, without downplaying the significance of the main results of the last vote it is necessary to pay attention to its individual nuances, which also reflect the attitude of society toward the authorities and which represent a kind of “signals” that must be taken into account in order to have an adequate and complete picture of the situation in the country.

First, the last elections demonstrated an increase in support not only for United Russia, but also for other (opposition) parties. Experts noted: “United Russia reported on gaining top positions”, but, as it turned out, not only the party in power was successful. The Communist Party, the LDPR, “Just Russia – For the Truth” (SRZP) **and even “Yabloko” reported their relative achievements**²⁵.

Second, a significant increase in turnout, compared with the previous elections, took place only in a small number of territories. Thus, in the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities the share of people who took part in the vote significantly increased only in four out of 21 RF constituent entities (*Tab. 3; Inserts 1A–2A*).

²⁰ We consider 2014 and 2018 because in these years regional and municipal elections were held in those regions that took part in the Single Voting Day in 2023.

²¹ The regional 2023 campaign will be large-scale, but predictable. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5758775>

²² The history of the Single Voting Day in Russia. Available at: <https://tass.ru/info/18683417>

²³ Analysts at the Expert Institute for Social Research called the 2023 elections consolidating Russian society. Available at: <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/09/12/analitiks/>

²⁴ Pamfilova said that the turnout of 46% was record-breaking. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/13/09/2023/6501c3fe9a7947ea85beaf37>

²⁵ Garmonenko D., Rodin I. All systemic parties were able to win the election. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. September 11, 2023. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2023-09-11/1_8823_elections.html

A similar situation is typical for regions’ centers: in the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities, the turnout significantly increased in five municipalities and decreased in nine (*Insert 1B*). At the legislative elections, a significant increase in turnout is noted only in three regional centers, a decrease is noted in ten (*Insert 2B*). At the elections of deputies of representative bodies of municipalities, the turnout increased in four municipalities, decreased in seven (*Insert 3*).

We should note that one of the important factors influencing the dynamics of people’s participation in elections is the standard of living and quality of life. This is evidenced by official statistics. For example, in the regions that showed the largest increase in turnout for the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities in 2023, the share of the population living below the poverty line is

“This season, special attention is paid to turnout indicators. Apparently, because in six months they will need to be given special importance in view of the March 2024 presidential election”²⁶.

on average 8–9%; in regions where turnout has significantly decreased – 10–12% (*Tab. 4*). The indicators of retail trade turnover in the territories that demonstrated an increase and decrease in turnout are, respectively, 173 and 142 thousand rubles per capita. The volume of provision of paid services to the population in regions with an increased turnout grew from 59 to 64 thousand rubles per capita; in regions that showed a decrease in voter turnout – decreased from 63 to 55 thousand rubles.

Table 3. Dynamics of turnout for the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities in regions with an increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more, % of voters

Territory	Single Voting Day September 9, 2018	Single Voting Day September 10, 2023	Dynamics (+/-)
Moscow Oblast	38.59	60.53	+22
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	40.51	56.01	+16
Kemerovo Oblast – Kuzbass	66.47	81.01	+15
Moscow	30.94	43.18	+12
TOTAL	44.13	60.18	+16

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

Table 4. Dynamics of indicators of standard of living and quality of life in the regions that demonstrated the maximum increase and decrease in turnout in the 2023 elections

Group of regions	Share of the population with per capita money income below the poverty line, % of the total population			Retail trade turnover per capita, thousand rubles			Volume of paid services provided to the population per capita, thousand rubles		
	2018	2022	(+/-)	2018	2022	(+/-)	2018	2022	(+/-)
Regions with the maximum increase in turnout in 2023 compared to 2018*	9.33	7.48	-1.85	183	173	-9	59	64	+5
Regions with the maximum decrease in turnout in 2023 compared to 2018**	12.33	10.38	-1.95	128	142	+14	63	55	-9

* Moscow Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast – Kuzbass, Moscow.

** Magadan Oblast, Altai Krai, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Omsk Oblast (for more details see Insert 1).

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

²⁶ About 60 million votes for the president in March 2024. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. February 13, 2023.

Insert 1

Dynamics of turnout for the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities on September 10, 2023 compared to September 9, 2018 (ranked by the decrease in turnout in % of the number of voters in 2023 compared to 2018)

RF constituent entity		SVD 2018			SVD 2023			Dynamics (+/-)			
		people	% of voters	people	% of voters	people	% of voters	people	% of voters		
1A. In the context of RF constituent entities		Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Dynamics (+/-)	
Moscow Oblast	2144961	38.59	3682447	60.53	+1537486	+22					
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	1046586	40.51	1401663	56.01	+355077	+16					
Kemerovo Oblast – Kuzbass	1337419	66.47	1549241	81.01	+211822	+15					
Moscow	2259080	30.94	3325120	43.18	+1066040	+12					
TOTAL	6788046	44.13	9958471	60.18	+3170425	+16					
1B. In the context of administrative centers of RF constituent entities		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes		Dynamics (+/-)	
Krasnoyarsk Krai	593491	28.94	730876	35.55	+137385	+7					
Amur Oblast	194752	31.25	233415	38.74	+38663	+7					
Voronezh Oblast	831091	44.83	928805	51.08	+97714	+6					
Samara Oblast	1143198	48	1296989	53.79	+153791	+6					
Smolensk Oblast **	225607	29.67	250378	33.71	+24771	+4					
Novosibirsk Oblast	628945	29.52	695492	31.86	+66547	+2					
Tyumen Oblast	1241452	49.09	1359024	50.76	+117572	+2					
Ivanovo Oblast	265768	32.9	261605	33.92	-4163	+1					
Pskov Oblast	195407	36.91	194082	37.8	-1325	+1					
TOTAL	5319711	36.79	5950666	40.80	+630955	+4					
Decrease in turnout		Decrease in turnout		Decrease in turnout		Decrease in turnout		Decrease in turnout		Dynamics (+/-)	
Primorsky Krai*	680098	46.35	655226	45.58	-24872	-1					
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	321536	50.69	314926	48.41	-6610	-2					
Republic of Khakassia	160090	41.88	155823	39.54	-4267	-2					
Oryol Oblast	364850	57.77	337273	55.98	-27577	-2					
Magadan Oblast	38737	39.58	33954	35.09	-4783	-4					
Altai Krai	683339	37.28	547926	31.04	-135413	-6					
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	17987	60.19	15972	53.48	-2015	-7					
Omsk Oblast	666627	43.6	510514	34.51	-156113	-9					
TOTAL	2933264	47.17	2571614	42.95	-361650	-4					

* Previous election was held on December 16, 2018.
 ** Previous election was held on September 13, 2020.

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

A significant (more than 10 percentage points) increase in turnout for the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities is observed only in four regions (Moscow Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast – Kuzbass, Moscow) and five regional centers (Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Kemerovo, Moscow, Blagoveshchensk). For comparison, a decrease in turnout for these elections was noted in eight regions and nine regional centers.

Insert 2

Dynamics of turnout for the elections of deputies of legislative bodies of RF constituent entities on September 10, 2023 compared to September 9, 2018
(ranked by the decrease in turnout in % of the number of voters in 2023 compared to 2018)

RF constituent entity		SVD 2018			SVD 2023			Dynamics (+/-)		
		people	% of voters	% of voters	people	% of voters	% of voters	people	% of voters	% of voters
Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more										
Kemerovo Oblast – Kuzbass	1335562	66.39	1549102	81.01	+213540	+15				
Smolensk Oblast	182057	23.67	250318	33.70	+68261	+10				
TOTAL	1517619	45.03	1799420	57.36	+281801	+13				
Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes										
Zabaikalsky Krai	176009	22.04	205177	26.62	+29168	+5				
Republic of Bashkortostan	1498019	49.08	1545913	51.72	+47894	+3				
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	12165	35.96	12865	37.69	+700	+2				
Ivanovo Oblast	265797	32.91	261562	33.92	-4235	+1				
TOTAL	1951990	35.00	2025517	37.49	+73527	+2				
Decrease in turnout										
Arkhangelsk Oblast	276877	29.34	250524	28.08	-26353	-1				
Republic of Khakassia	159969	41.85	155852	39.57	-4117	-2				
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	321454	50.69	314582	48.36	-6872	-2				
Irkutsk Oblast	491580	26.33	443843	24.22	-47737	-2				
Yaroslavl Oblast	296694	29.27	271964	27.41	-24730	-2				
Republic of Buryatia	270193	39.55	254757	36.3	-15436	-3				
Rostov Oblast	1447331	45.43	1357364	42.83	-89967	-3				
Ulyanovsk Oblast	404478	40.31	330841	34.68	-73637	-6				
Vladimir Oblast	372645	32.92	268448	24.77	-104197	-8				
Republic of Kalmykia	111802	54.03	84291	42.04	-27511	-12				
TOTAL	4153023	38.97	3732466	34.83	-420557	-4				

Administrative center		SVD 2018		SVD 2023		Dynamics (+/-)	
		people	% of voters	people	% of voters	people	% of voters
Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more							
Ufa	12685	19.81	33574	32.11	+20889	+12	
Kemerovo	247267	62.08	298346	73.96	+51079	+12	
Smolensk	47078	18.02	76750	29.63	+29672	+12	
TOTAL	307030	33.30	408670	45.23	+101640	+12	
Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes							
Chita	243782	16.9	241139	18.69	-2643	+2	
Naryan-Mar	5708	33.19	4562	34.81	-1146	+2	
Yaroslavl	118389	23.4	106455	22.91	-11934	0	
TOTAL	367879	24.49667	352156	25.47	-15723	+1	
Decrease in turnout							
Yakutsk	92562	46.12	100918	45.28	+8356	-1	
Abakan	52555	37.54	49252	36.64	-3303	-1	
Ivanovo	78905	25.54	74235	24.75	-4670	-1	
Ulan-Ude	87683	29.9	81784	27.43	-5899	-2	
Irkutsk	101957	22.14	84638	18.58	-17319	-4	
Arkhangelsk	14230	23.72	10026	18.57	-4204	-5	
Elista	32302	37.74	24830	29.36	-7472	-8	
Rostov-on-Don	377859	48.08	327949	39.97	-49910	-8	
Vladimir	84866	30.93	58266	21.5	-26600	-9	
Ulyanovsk	165525	32.57	92343	22.97	-73182	-10	
TOTAL	1088444	33.43	904241	28.51	-184203	-5	

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybery.izbirkom.ru>).

At the elections of deputies of legislative bodies of RF constituent entities, the turnout significantly increased in two regions (Smolensk and Kemerovo oblasts) and three regional centers (Ufa, Kemerovo and Smolensk). In ten RF constituent entities and ten regional centers, voter turnout for these elections decreased.

Insert 3

Dynamics of turnout for the elections of deputies of representative bodies of municipalities of regional centers of RF constituent entities on September 10, 2023 in comparison with September 9, 2018
(ranked by the decrease in turnout in % of the number of voters in 2023 compared to 2018)

Municipal entity	SVD 2018		SVD 2023		Dynamics (+/-)	
	people	% of voters	people	% of voters	people	% of voters
Increase in turnout by 1-9 percentage points / no changes						
Maykop	28259	21.83	40377	31	+12118	+9
Krasnoyarsk	168451	23.35	223513	29.71	+55062	+6
Belgorod	59983	21.25	70993	25.63	+11010	+4
Volgograd	173861	24.1	186642	26.16	+12781	+2
Abakan	45636	35.56	47711	35.84	+2075	0
TOTAL	476190	25.22	569236	29.67	+93046	+4
Decrease in turnout						
Magas	2162	81.96	3917	81.18	+1755	-1
Ryazan	91350	21.87	84595	20.53	-6755	-1
Yakutsk	80528	43.11	84688	41.36	+4160	-2
Arkhangelsk	71858	26.91	63655	25.23	-8203	-2
Veliky Novgorod	42581	24.09	36121	20.9	-6460	-3
Tyumen	225671	43.02	234275	39.47	+8604	-4
Yekaterinburg	286644	26.66	230991	20.71	-55653	-6
TOTAL	800794	38.23	738242	35.63	-62552	-3

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybery.izbirkom.ru>).

At the elections of deputies of representative bodies of municipalities, the maximum increase in turnout was noted in Maykop (by 9 percentage points, from 22 to 31%). In general, the turnout increased in four cities (Maykop, Krasnoyarsk, Belgorod, Volgograd); it decreased in seven cities.

Third, the 2023 elections were accompanied by a number of changes in the voting procedure itself, and these features also contributed to the final increase in turnout and support for United Russia in 2023 compared to 2018.

✓ For example, a multi-day voting format was introduced: in most RF constituent entities elections were held from September 8 to 10²⁷.

✓ In 25 RF constituent entities the format of remote electronic voting (REV) was used, and in 18 regions – for the first time²⁸. According to RF Central Election Commission Chair E. Pamfilova, “more than 3 million voters took part in remote electronic voting”²⁹.

In the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities, the average turnout for

elections in electronic form (96 percentage points in % of the number of voters registered to participate in REV) significantly exceeded the average turnout in the region (45 percentage points in % of the number of voters; *Tab. 5*). However, the support for candidates from the United Russia party was slightly lower (77 p.p. according to the results of REV against 80 p.p. on average in the region).

✓ Finally, in 2023, new Russian regions took part in the elections for the first time – the DPR, the LPR, the Kherson and Zaporozhye oblasts, which showed a higher level of turnout and support for United Russia than the average for other constituent entities and municipalities of the Russian Federation (*Tab. 6*).

Table 5. Results of the elections of senior officials of RF constituent entities on September 10, 2023 in the territories that used remote electronic voting

Territory	Turnout		Share of votes cast for the United Russia party	
	REV, % of the number of registered persons	For the region on the whole, % of voters	According to the REV results, % of turnout	For the region on the whole, % of turnout
Altai Krai	88.56	31.04	79.25	76.12
Voronezh Oblast	86.00	51.08	59.81	76.78
Moscow Oblast	88.22	60.53	79.23	83.60
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	86.91	56.01	81.80	82.69
Novosibirsk Oblast	85.48	31.86	71.66	75.67
Pskov Oblast	90.55	37.8	87.76	86.17
Moscow	98.22	43.18	77.05	75.16
TOTAL	95.62	44.5	76.65	79.46

Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (<http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>).

²⁷ Most of the regions chose a three-day vote from September 8 to 10, except for the Tyumen and Omsk oblasts (one and two days, respectively) in the gubernatorial elections; the republics of Bashkortostan and Buryatia (one day each) – in the elections to local parliaments; Ingushetia and the Tyumen Oblast (one day), as well as Khabarovsk Krai and the Sverdlovsk Oblast (two days) – at the elections in administrative centers.

²⁸ The Central Election Commission has published a list of 24 regions where remote electronic voting (REV) will work in the 2023 elections (September 10). Eighteen of them will be connected to the REV system for the first time. On the territory of the entire subject, REV will work in the gubernatorial elections in Chuvashia, Altai Krai, the Arkhangelsk, Vladimir, Voronezh, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Pskov, Tomsk and Yaroslavl oblasts, as well as Nenets Autonomous Okrug. In separate elections to local parliaments, remote voting will be allowed in Karelia, Kamchatka and Perm krais, the Belgorod, Kaliningrad, Kursk, Orenburg, Sverdlovsk, Tula and Chelyabinsk oblasts. In the by-elections of State Duma deputies – in Crimea and the Lipetsk Oblast.

For the first time, REV was used in the State Duma election in September 2021. At that time, residents of the cities of Moscow and Sevastopol, and the Kursk, Murmansk, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov and Yaroslavl oblasts had such an opportunity (source: <https://daily.afisha.ru/news/76836-cik-utverdil-spisok-regionov-gde-na-vyborah-mozhno-budet-progolosovat-distancionno/>)

²⁹ Vzglyad. September 10, 2023. Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2023/9/10/1229705.html>

Table 6. Comparison of election results on September 10, 2023 in the context of new regions and other constituent entities of the Russian Federation

Election results	In the context of new RF constituent entities	In the context of other RF constituent entities	Dynamics (+/-) In the context of new RF constituent entities compared to other regions
Legislative elections			
Turnout, % of voters	71.14	38.31	+33
Share of votes cast for United Russia, % of turnout	77.52	56.52	+21
Elections to representative bodies of municipalities of regional centers of RF constituent entities			
Turnout, % of voters	63.54	33.14	+30
Share of votes cast for United Russia, % of turnout	77.46	50.68	+27
Source: calculated according to official data of the CEC of the Russian Federation (http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru).			

Thus, the local successes of the opposition parties, which experts note, and the calculations that we conducted using official data of the RF Central Election Commission, and the innovations in the voting procedure that characterized the 2023 elections and that affected the increase in voter turnout, allow us to agree with the assessment of experts who argue that **the results of the last elections are “a much more complicated phenomenon”³⁰ than just a “consolidation effect” or “unity around the flag”**.

In fact, the results of the Single Voting Day on September 10, 2023 prove that against the

“Of course, in the electoral sentiment was greatly influenced by anxiety caused by the SMO; the demand for stability and predictability became more pronounced, even concerning the things that are closest and most understandable, the life “behind the fence” ...

In a country where mobilization took place in just one year, major failures occurred at the front, a military mutiny failed, and in the rear the prices for essential goods and food were going up dramatically. Yet, there were a lot of positive things, **but it is these phenomena that most often put pressure on the voter and provoke a reassessment of the situation regarding the command and political link**³¹.

background of the general consolidation of the majority of the population (quite naturally caused by the urgency of external and internal threats that Russia faced after the start of the SMO), **a request to the authorities to bring the behavior and specific actions of the elites in line with the publicly declared rhetoric of the state continues to accumulate in society**.

Russians support the general course pursued by the RF President and the party in power and aimed at protecting Russia’s sovereignty and national interests; however, the people do not find an answer to the question of how some facts that characterize Russia’s current public administration system relate to the image of the future that is actively declared by the authorities, namely, the image of a social state based on traditional cultural values and possessing full national sovereignty.

Insert 4 provides examples of the facts under consideration. We should note that science, culture, economics, and the system of public administration contain many such cases, for example the article by V. Garbuzov, director of the Institute for US and Canadian Studies, “On the lost illusions of the passing era”, or a book by the writer D. Bykov* (recognized as foreign agent), the information about which is presented in the governmental newspaper Rossiyskaya gazeta.

³⁰ Skorobogaty P. Elections-2023: The effect of cohesion. Available at: <http://vybor-naroda.org/stovyborah/248163-vybory-2023-jeffekt-splochenija.html>

³¹ Ibidem.

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

Some facts contradicting the publicly declared policy of the state in the conditions of the SMO

1. Excerpt from an open letter from the head of the “Just Russia – For the Truth” faction to the editorial office of *Rossiyskaya gazeta* newspaper “On reconciliation with Russophobia and Russophobes”:

“*Rossiyskaya gazeta* published two materials in a row, united by one theme, one meaning: society should not reject creative people who, let’s put it this way, do not accept the fateful changes in the life of the country. **One publication, or rather an interview with the philologist Galina Marchenko, is addressed to the past – to the life and work of the writer Ivan Shmelev, who lived in France during the occupation and collaborated with the Nazi press. In the second one, an RG contributor informs about Bykov’s* new book *VZ* and invites us to read it.**

Suffice it to say that a few years ago Bykov*, talking about ‘a free Russia liberated by the Nazis’, expressed absolute confidence that if it were not for the extermination of Jews, Hitler would have achieved popularity in Russia. At another time, another emigrant, Ivan Shmelev, called Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union ‘the great feat of a Knight who raised his sword against the Devil’. And today, on the pages of a government publication, in relation to Shmelev’s life path, a conversation about reconciliation comes up...

In general, lawyers for creative personalities demand a lot from society. ‘We should appreciate our Russian talents, even if we do not see eye to eye with them ideologically’... The same Bykov* spoke about 85% of the Russian population: ‘Guys, I want to say this to your face: you are idiots’. Thank you for your frankness. Only why should we accept those who reject us and appreciate those who openly despise and hate us...

If we imagine that we will be defeated in today’s fateful confrontation, I have no doubt: all these fine creative individuals, whom we are to appreciate and accept, will come to Russia after their Heroes and Knights. And not in order to appeal to mercy and tolerance, to reconciliation and understanding; rather, they will demand executions, burnings and hangings... Now is really the time of choice. And this choice is incompatible with attempts – including with the help of government mass media – to erase the lines between good and evil, to pass off unscrupulousness as humanism, betrayal as ‘ideological differences’ and to talk about the fate of a creative personality, protecting outspoken Russophobes and Russophobia”³².

2. August 29, 2023, *Nezavisimaya nezeta* published an article by V. Garbuzov, Director of the Institute for US and Canadian Studies “On the lost illusions of the passing era”. As experts noted, “Garbuzov published the main theses of this article in the scientific journal of his institute back in May 2022, but in a veiled form... The author tries to ‘sit on two chairs’, describing the special military operation as an inevitability in the context of anti-Russian Ukrainian and Western politics and at the same time repeatedly expressing a negative attitude toward the SMO ... V. Garbuzov draws defiantly direct analogies between the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and modern Russia; describes ‘a geopolitical impasse’ with phrases like ‘the formation of a part of the Russian elite longing for lost greatness, which eventually resulted in an exaggerated post-imperial syndrome’³³, talks about the ‘atmosphere of pseudo-patriotic madness’, the ‘creeping restoration of Stalinism’, the impossibility of Russia’s ‘competing with the USA and China’, etc.

September 2, 2023, V. Garbuzov was removed from his post; however, some experts commented on this situation as follows: ‘In response to Garbuzov’s demarche the entire Institute for US and Canadian Studies can be dismissed. Maybe this was the intention of this demarche in order to permanently eradicate possible attempts at sober professional study of the United States, potentially deep and realistic American studies?’³⁴

³² * Included in the register of foreign agents.

On reconciliation with Russophobia and Russophobes. An open letter from the head of the “Just Russia – For the Truth” faction to the editorial office of *Rossiyskaya gazeta* newspaper. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2023/10/09/otkrytoe-pismo-rukovoditelja-frakcii-spravedlivaia-rossia-za-pravdu-v-redakciiu-rossijskoj-gazety.html>

³³ Goncharov A. What the director of the Institute for US and Canadian Studies was actually dismissed for. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/za_chto_na_samom_dele_snyali_direktora_instituta_ssha_i_kanadi

³⁴ Ibidem.

3. Tax maneuver of 2023. “Contrary to a number of insinuations, the sharp rise in price and the subsequent shortage of fuel was caused not by the intensification of hostilities, but entirely by the administration system itself. **The current events were programmed in 2018**, when the liberals of the Medvedev government implemented a ‘tax maneuver’ – the refusal to impose an export duty on crude oil with the transfer of the fiscal burden on oil production and refining in Russia, stimulating the export of crude oil and suppressing its processing (and use in general) in the country. **This was a natural step in the liberal policy of consolidating Russia’s position as an economic colony – a country exporting raw materials and importing (if allowed) products of its processing...**”

In August 2023, in the conditions of a surplus of the federal budget, the Ministry of Finance, as far as can be judged, suddenly, ‘without declaring war’, in the classic Gaidar style ... almost halved the subsidizing of refineries ... **The imitation state, as usual, turned a blind eye to all these processes it itself had launched...** The abolition of the tax maneuver (spread by liberals to the ferrous metallurgy on the eve of the SMO – and with the same effect) is literally a condition for Russia’s survival. That is why the liberals who still manage a key part of the economy in the interests of the Collective West, despite all the efforts of Prime Minister Mishustin, consider it as the **cornerstone of their policy and a tombstone on the grave they have already prepared for the country they hate**³⁵.

4. October 11. Ivan Urgant appeared as a lecturer at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, which is a subordinate educational institution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. V. Kalashnikova, spokesperson for the University, in a conversation with the media denied the fact of the appearance of the showman in the walls of the educational institution... However, on October 14, it turned out that Urgant, who had left Russia with his family immediately after the start of the SMO and distributed Ukronazi videos, was invited to give a lecture by **Yuri Kobaladze, MGIMO Professor, deputy dean of the Faculty of International Journalism and retired Major General of the Foreign Intelligence Service.**

Experts commented on this event as follows: ‘It is curious that MGIMO students, knowing the socio-political position of Urgant, did not leave the hall, but listened with curiosity to the ‘lecture’ of the showman to the end. This speaks volumes. Perhaps someone came out, but judging by the video clip that got into the social media, the lecture hall was full. And these are the future diplomats of Russia?’³⁶

5. In response to the request of Nikita Mikhalkov’s TV program “Besogon” to the Presidential Administration regarding the continuation of the creative career of singer Ani Lorak in Russia, despite her statements against the SMO, as well as the transfer of funds to support the AFU, the following response was received: “After the start of the SMO, A. Lorak, being under the emotional informational influence of the beginning of active hostilities, posted several posts in support of Ukraine on her social media... Currently, A. Lorak takes an active part in charity fundraising for children who suffered during the SMO, and also provides financial assistance to Shakhtersky Boarding House for the Disabled in the DPR... **Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation – Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov vouched for A. Lorak’s loyalty**”³⁷ ...

In the next episode of “Besogon”³⁸, N. Mikhalkov provided data (a telephone interview with the director of Shakhtersky Boarding House for the Disabled), which **refute the information provided by the Presidential Administration** and indicate that A. Lorak does not participate in the life of the boarding house in any way. Hence, it is quite logical that doubts arise about the surety of the Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation – presidential press secretary D. Peskov, whose citations N. Mikhalkov provides in his program **for the sixth time**³⁹ (since the start of the SMO).

³⁵ Delyagin M. How to bankrupt the drug mafia. Tax maneuver – the cause of the fuel crisis. Available at: <https://delyagin.ru/articles/191-materialy-mgd/110273-kak-obankrotit-narkomatiju-nalogoveryi-manevr-prichina-toplivnogo-krizisa>

³⁶ Ivanov A. The media found out who invited the “frightened patriot” Urgant to MGIMO. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/smi_uznali_kto_priglasil_ispugannogo_patriota_urganta_v_mgimo

³⁷ Besogon TV. Episode 225 of September 30, 2023 “Mille pardons under the blanket”. Available at: <https://besogontv.ru/videos/mille-pardons-pod-odeyalom/>

³⁸ Besogon TV. Episode 226 of October 21, 2023 “If there is no God, then everything is allowed”. Available at: <https://besogontv.ru/videos/esli-boga-net-vse-dozvoleno/>

³⁹ Episodes: 1. “The Titanic effect” (April 15, 2022). 2. “Is there a noble rage?” (April 29, 2022). 3. “Davos is still there” (June 4, 2022). 4. “Howling among strangers” (November 11, 2022). 5. “Wives of the Marquis of Carabas” (February 10, 2023). 6. “Mille pardons under the blanket” (September 30, 2023).

These examples proceed directly from the fact that the Russian elites (not only political, but also cultural and economic) still preserve the “liberal

“Three decades ago, the Congress of People’s Deputies and the Supreme Soviet of Russia, the highest body of state power, were shot. The consequences of this event are still being felt – **it actually predetermined the trajectory of Russia’s evolution for these thirty years. And it will continue to do so if we do not condemn this crime and do not draw the appropriate conclusions...**

The main disadvantage of the authoritarian system of power is **the irresponsibility of officials who, in exchange for loyalty to their superior, allow themselves to abuse their official powers in favor of personal interests.** Such systems are characterized by **corruption and incompetence**, which are the natural result of recruiting personnel according to **the criterion of personal loyalty.** As a result, the so-called **“thug capitalism”**, well-known from the experience of the third world countries, is formed; it is an authoritarian-oligarchic government regime devoid of incentives for development and headed by persons close to the supreme ruler... **Without correcting the malfunctions in the activities of various branches of government it is hardly possible to win over an enemy that is many times superior in its financial and economic power”⁴⁰.**

fog” that enveloped Russia after the October 1993 coup d’etat and that has lingered for 30 years before the SMO. The fog has taken the form of “thug” capitalism, which today represents an actual threat to the achievement of SMO goals and a threat to the very existence of Russia as a country. Moreover, this is not only because the officials disregard the President’s instructions, but also because such behavior contradicts the image of the future of Russia officially declared by the authorities and the RF President; consequently, society becomes unstable and vulnerable to external informational and ideological influences.

The feeling of helplessness, misunderstanding, or treacherous sentiments is noted in the assessments of representatives of elite circles (business, government, science) regarding the current course implemented by the head of state. This is indicated by the results of VCIOM opinion polls conducted among the participants of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, which was held on June 14–17, 2023⁴¹:

✓ **49% of Russian entrepreneurs and officials find it difficult to answer the question “Do you think the current economic policy of the Russian Government corresponds to the concept of sovereign development of Russia?” (Fig. 1);**

✓ **30% believe that “the country’s authorities should strive for the lifting of sanctions, even if this means making some concessions in foreign policy” (Fig. 2).**

⁴⁰ Glazyev S.Yu. Crime without the statute of limitations. Available at: <https://glazyev.ru/articles/10-vlast-i-obshhestvo/110325-prestuplenie-bez-sroka-davnosti>

⁴¹ Sovereignty as a path to prosperity. VCIOM analytical report. 2023. Pp. 11, 15. The report was prepared on the basis of a quantitative online survey of users of the Roscongress Foundation’s Unified Personal Account who took part in the 2023 Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, as well as expert interviews with representatives of the business environment, business associations, the scientific community, executive and legislative authorities of the Russian Federation.

Figure 1. Do you think the current economic policy of the Russian Government corresponds to the concept of sovereign development of Russia?
(closed-ended question, one answer, % of respondents)

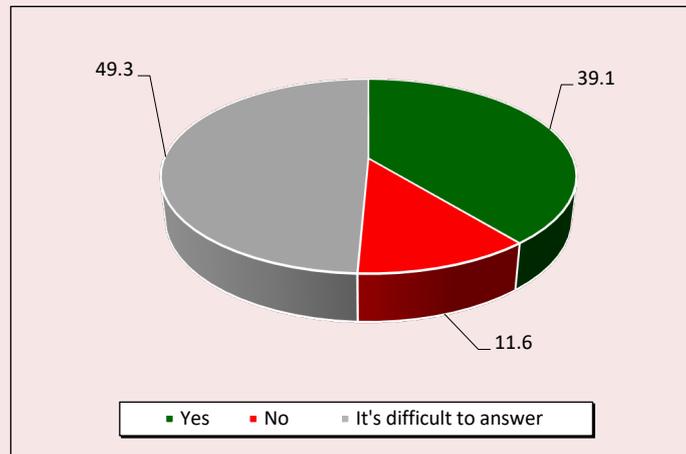
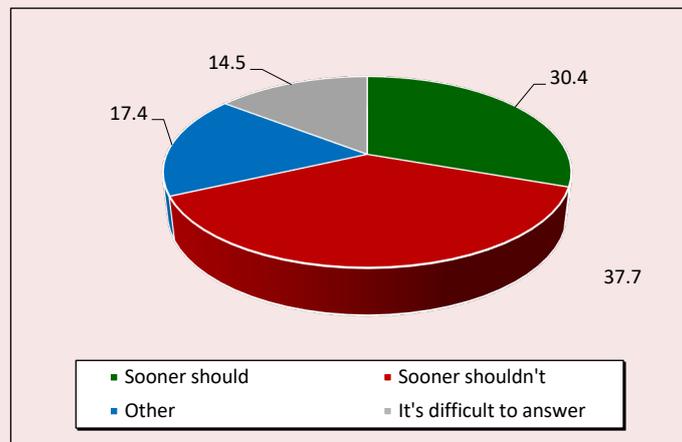


Figure 2. Should the Russian authorities seek the lifting of sanctions, even if it means making some concessions in foreign policy?*
(closed-ended question, one answer, % of respondents)



* The exact wording of the question: "There is an opinion that Russia's authorities do not need to pay attention to Western sanctions, but should stick to the current course in foreign policy. Another opinion is that Russia's authorities should strive to lift sanctions, even if this means making some concessions in foreign policy. Which of the opinions do you most agree with: should Russia's authorities rather seek the lifting of sanctions or should they rather not?"

Source: Sovereignty as a path to prosperity. VCIOM analytical report. 2023. Pp. 11, 15.

These facts indicate that there is still a split among the Russian elites in understanding the essence of the current situation and in the attitude toward it. Despite the fact that the head of state continues to make decisions aimed at supporting the participants of the SMO and strengthening the information and ideological agenda in the current and future generations of Russian society that corresponds to the spirit of the SMO

(*Insert 5*), many experts point out that **Russia has not yet formulated a holistic ideological project that could be translated to the key participants of today’s geopolitical processes and that would be a unifying idea for all strata of Russian society.**

It seems that without such an ideological project aimed primarily at the domestic Russian audience (and especially its elites), it will be extremely difficult to implement more specific management decisions needed today to strengthen the Russian economy and increase its ability to develop effectively in the face of internal and external challenges (*Insert 6*).

“We are conducting a frontal and massive counter-propaganda, but it is aimed almost exclusively at the domestic audience... **We have virtually no tools to translate any meanings and vectors to Ukraine.** What we are doing on this earth, we cannot clearly convey to the Ukrainians and, it seems, we are not going to, thus leaving a huge territory of psychological warfare to the enemy.

For some reason, we still justify ourselves to the West and complain about double standards... We continue – apparently by inertia – to squabble with those who do not see us, do not hear and do not want to know us...

We also encourage the collective Non-West to guess for themselves what we are doing, why and to what end. We have not sent any clear message to China, the Islamic world, India, Africa, or Latin America. The only exception is the fundamental idea of multipolarity, where, indeed, there are meanings, and they are extremely deep. **But having designated this most important vector, we do not cultivate it in any way, do not develop it, do not saturate it with contents, do not deploy relevant structures”⁴².**

“The President of Russia has taken initial steps to correct the most obvious flaws of the political system that developed after the coup of 1993. The Constitution abolished the presumption of international obligations over national legislation, noted the importance of traditional family values, mentioned God. **This implies the need to restore an ideology based on traditional values.**

It is necessary to take the next step – to establish the principles of personal responsibility of officials and political responsibility of the executive power for the objective results of their activities...

In order to gain the Victory in the global hybrid war, we need to quickly get out of the destructive quagmire of irresponsibility, incompetence, corruption and immorality, in which we were stuck for a long time as a result of the coup d’etat in the fall of 1993”⁴³.

⁴² Dugin A. The creation of the empire and the pace of war. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/24651>

⁴³ Glazyev S.Yu. Crime without the statute of limitations. Available at: <https://glazev.ru/articles/10-vlast-i-obshhestvo/110325-prestuplenie-bez-sroka-davnosti>

Insert 5

Monitoring of regulatory legal acts (laws, decrees) signed by the President of the Russian Federation in the period from August 21 to October 22, 2023⁴⁴

<p>MEASURES TO SUPPORT SMO PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, TO DEVELOP THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZATION OF MARTIAL LAW, INCREASE OF ANTI-TERRORIST PROTECTION OF FACILITIES</p>
<p>September 4 – Decree “On amendments to the Regulation on the procedure for considering issues of citizenship of the Russian Federation, approved by Presidential Decree 1325, dated November 14, 2002, and Presidential Decree 83, dated March 2, 2022 “On measures to ensure the accelerated development of the information technology industry in the Russian Federation”. The age limit for granting deferral from conscription for IT specialists has been raised to 30 years.</p>
<p>September 11 – Decree “On monthly compensation payments to certain categories of military personnel”.</p>
<p>September 28 – Federal Law “On ratifying the Agreement on joint logistical and medical support of troops (Collective Forces) of the Collective Security Treaty Organization”.</p>
<p>MEASURES TO PROTECT INFORMATION SECURITY, REGULATE THE ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN AGENTS, PROMOTE EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING OF THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS</p>
<p>September 28 – Federal Law “On amendments to Article 11 of the Federal Law “On Days of Military Glory and memorable dates of Russia”. A new memorable date for Russia is being set – September 30 – the Day of the Reunification of the Donetsk People’s Republic, the Lugansk People’s Republic, the Zaporozhye Oblast and the Kherson Oblast with the Russian Federation (2022).</p>
<p>October 19 – Federal Law “On Denunciation by the Russian Federation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed on behalf of the Russian Federation in Strasbourg on February 28, 1996 and ratified by the Russian Federation on June 18, 1998, is denounced. The resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of September 27, 2022 significantly limited the powers of the Russian expert in the Advisory Committee established to monitor the implementation by the States parties to the Framework Convention of their obligations in the field of protection of national minorities. In addition, the Russian Federation has lost, within the framework of this monitoring mechanism, the opportunity to participate in the development of decisions on issues of interest and to monitor at the international level cases of violations of the rights of national minorities, primarily the Russian-speaking population abroad.</p>
<p>October 20 – Decree “On signing the agreement on the establishment of an International Organization for the Russian Language”. The agreement is based on the concept for creating an international organization for the support and promotion of the Russian language under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Independent States, approved by the Decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States of October 14, 2022. The purpose of the organization is to create conditions for strengthening comprehensive mutually beneficial cooperation on the maintenance and promotion of the Russian language as a language of interstate communication and a means of communication.</p> <p>According to experts, “such an initiative at the intergovernmental level looks like a crucially important action on our part in the global hybrid war that the Collective West is waging against our country. Perhaps it should have been done much earlier, but, as they say, better late than never”⁴⁵.</p>

⁴⁴ The insert is a continuation of the monitoring of the most important regulatory legal acts signed by the RF President; we have been conducting the monitoring since June 2022 (the first issue of the monitoring is presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(3), 9–41).

⁴⁵ Vinnikov V. To the open seas. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/v_otkritie_morya

Expert suggestions on improving the efficiency of the Russian economy⁴⁶

“It is well known what measures should be taken in the management of economic development in order to put the Russian economy on a trajectory of advanced development in accordance with objective opportunities (up to 8% of GDP growth and 20% of investment growth per year). But in order to implement them, it is necessary to overcome these malfunctions. And for this, it is necessary to introduce a cross-cutting mechanism of institutional and personal responsibility at all levels of economic development management, including the following priority measures:

- ✓ **To achieve practical implementation of the law “On strategic planning in the Russian Federation”.** To create a special interdepartmental state committee for strategic planning under the President.*
- ✓ **To reorient the activities of the state banking system to solve the problems of increasing investment activity in accordance with the established priorities of economic development.** To bring the activities of the state banking system in compliance with the law “On strategic planning”. To evaluate the activities of the heads of commercial banks based on the growth rate of the volume of returned investment loans by manufacturing enterprises.*
- ✓ **To bring the powers and policies of the Central Bank in accordance with its constitutional duties and economic development goals.** To strengthen state control over its activities by expanding the powers of the National Financial Council, turning it from a formal body overseeing the economic activities of the Bank of Russia into a monetary policy-making body, taking into account the goals and guidelines of presidential decrees. To bring monetary policy in line with the goals of economic development and the generally accepted practice in developed countries to ensure expanded reproduction of the economy.*
- ✓ **To legislatively introduce procedures for the responsibility of the Government for achieving the goals of socio-economic development set by the President and improving the standard of living of the people.***
- ✓ **To restore state control over bankruptcy procedures by centralizing it in one department while preserving the possibility of self-regulation in this area.** To decriminalize the institution of bankruptcy by introducing transparent automated auction procedures and a mechanism for the responsibility of arbitration managers for the effective management of property, excluding manipulation of the auction result. To allow corporate governance and labor collectives to enter the bankruptcy procedure. To protect bona fide entrepreneurs from “collateral raiding”, extend the jurisdiction of the jury to “economic” articles implying proof of the intent of the accused. To exclude commercial cases related to conflicts of economic entities from the jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies”.*

⁴⁶ Glazev S. Yu. Crime without the statute of limitations. Available at: <https://glazev.ru/articles/10-vlast-i-obshchestvo/110325-prestuplenie-bez-sroka-davnosti>

**Excerpt from the speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the meeting
of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 5, 2023⁴⁷**

6 points of the image of the future multipolar world:

*“... We need to realize what we are striving for, what we want to achieve. **In Russia, there is such an understanding:***

First. We want to live in an open, interconnected world, where no one will ever try to put artificial barriers in the way of people’s communication, their creative fulfilment and prosperity...

Second. We want the world’s diversity to be preserved and serve as the foundation for universal development. It should be prohibited to impose on any country or people how they should live and how they should feel...

Third, Russia stands for maximum representation. No one has the right or ability to rule the world for others and on behalf of others...

Fourth, Russia stands for universal security and lasting peace built on respect for the interests of everyone: from large countries to small ones. The main thing is to free international relations from the bloc approach and the legacy of the colonial era and the Cold War...

Fifth, we stand for justice for all. The era of exploitation, as I said twice, is in the past. Everyone should be given access to the benefits of today’s world, and attempts to limit it for any country or people should be considered an act of aggression.

Sixth, we stand for equality, for the diverse potential of all countries. This is a completely objective factor. But no less objective is the fact that no one is ready to take orders anymore or make their interests and needs dependent on anyone, above all on the rich and more powerful. This is not just the natural state of the international community, but the quintessence of all of humankind’s historical experience”.

Russia as a civilization-state:

*“In Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept, our country is characterized as an original civilization-state. **This wording clearly and concisely reflects how we understand not only our own development, but also the main principles of international order, which we hope will prevail... there are many civilizations, and none is superior or inferior to another. They are equal since each civilization represents a unique expression of its own culture, traditions, and the aspirations of its people... The essential characteristics of a civilization-state encompass diversity and self-sufficiency, which, I believe, are two key components... Relying on your civilization is a necessary condition for success in the modern world, unfortunately a disorderly and dangerous world that has lost its bearings.***

A truly effective and strong state system cannot be imposed from the outside. It grows naturally from the civilizational roots of countries and peoples, and in this regard, Russia is an example of how it really happens in life, in practice”.

⁴⁷ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 5, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72444>

Perhaps the six points of the image of the future multipolar world, as well as a clear understanding of Russia as a state-civilization, which Vladimir Putin formulated in his speech at the Valdai Forum in 2023, can become exactly such an idea that unites all layers of Russian society. Some experts called this combination “the concept of civilizational synergy, clearly and completely contradicting the concept of Great Reset advocated by modern globalism”⁴⁸. However, one cannot but agree that the **viability of this concept will largely be decided “on the ground”, “on the battlefield”**.

“The ‘main dish’ was the concept of civilizational synergy, which clearly and completely contradicts the concept of Great Reset advocated by modern Western globalism. Which of them is more in line with the ‘logic of the circumstances’ of the modern world, will be decided ‘on the ground’, ‘on the battlefield’; but now, very likely, an alternative has been announced to all humankind, backed up not only by the power of Russian weapons, but also by the power of the Russian idea”⁴⁹.

That is why it seems important not only to keep record of the consolidation processes taking place in Russian society against the background of the SMO, but also to pay attention to internal threats that can hinder their development, including those that became evident according to the results of the 2023 election campaign: the more conscious and “civilly mature”⁵⁰ our society (namely, this trend was shown by the increase in voter turnout), **the stronger will be its request to the authorities to replace the managerial elites** who are unwilling or unable to meet the country’s national interests in the new conditions that have come with the beginning of the special military operation.

Today it is obvious that in the 16 years that have passed since Vladimir Putin’s Munich speech, Russia’s course to strengthen national sovereignty is not just inevitable, but is **the only possible one**, as well as the vector of transformation of the entire world architecture from the unipolar hegemony of the Collective West to the formation of multipolar relations of sovereign civilization states. **This can be called the result of the past period and the main result of the RF President’s work.**

⁴⁸ Political scientist N. Burlinova. Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2023/10/5/1233597.html>

⁴⁹ Maslov A. Valdai-2023: A reboot, Putin-style. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/valdaj-2023_perezagruzka_po-putinski

⁵⁰ Vladimir Putin’s meeting with the elected heads of regions on September 28, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72378>

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