

## AP Comparative Government: Russia Unit V: Chapter 7



- Monday 12/5 Discuss Semester Book Reviews, Discuss AP Exam, and **Video: Putin's Way Part I**
- Tuesday 12/6 **Video: Putin's Way Part II** Class Discussion.
- Wednesday 12/7 Begin Lecture on Russia: its geography, culture and government. Finish Putin's way and discussion.
- Thursday 12/8 In Class Reading/Discussion on "**Rule of Law, Russian Style**. Begin questions in class, finish for homework. **Movie: Child 44?**
- Friday 12/09 Collect "**Rule of Law, Russian Style questions**. Finish Lecture and introduce first group activity: Comparing Russia's constitution to Britain's. *Movie: Child 44*
- ”
- Monday 12/12 Group Activity: Powers of the Institutions of Government: Russia's Constitution versus Britain's. Collect at end of period.
- Tuesday 12/13 Video: Commanding Heights: Age of Reform (Russia)
- Wednesday 12/14 Video: Commanding Heights continued/Discuss Shock therapy: attached questions.
- Wednesday** 12/15 Commanding Heights continued: collect video questions.
- Friday 12/16 Commanding Heights continued: collect video questions. **Assign**

**Review groups for Jeopardy vocab. 4 groups total.**

**Monday 12/19  
period.**

**Present semester book reviews and collect during exam  
1<sup>st</sup> period 7:30-9:17**

**Wednesday 1/4**

**Movie: Child 44**

**Thursday 1/05  
discussion of article.**

**Critical Review Due: *The Making of the Neo KGB State*: Class**

**Friday 1/06  
teams and begin research**

**Group Activity two: Preparing for Reforms of Putin. Assign**

**Monday 1/09**

**Continue Research for group activity on Putin's reforms.**

**Tuesday 1/10**

**Begin Debate on Putin's reforms.**

**Wednesday 1/11**

**Continue debate/Debriefing session when finished.**

**Thursday 1/12**

**Review: Jeopardy Questions due from each group.**

**Friday 1/13**

**points.**

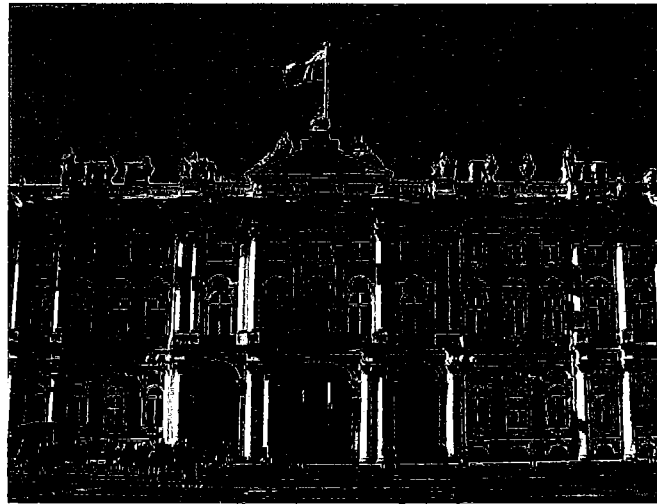
**AP Comparative Multiple Choice Test: 55 Questions:  
45 minutes. You may hand in your Study guide for Bonus**

**Monday 1/16**

**No School: Martin Luther King JR Day!**

**Tuesday 1/17**

**AP Free Response Test; 2 questions: 45 minutes**





## Russia – Unit Summary

Russia is an important case study for students of AP Comparative Government & Politics because it represents a country transitioning from communist rule to democracy. Russia was once the center of the Soviet Union, a world power. Because of its former status many look to Russia's transition to a democratic form of government as a case study of the challenges and successes that other countries may face as they engage in a similar transition. Because the AP Comparative Government & Politics curriculum has an increased emphasis on concepts, so it is important for teachers at the beginning of each case study to consider the concepts that will be emphasized through the case study at hand. Studying Russia will provide students the opportunity to apply several key concepts in the course including: revolution, democratization, political/economic change, and relationship between the citizen and the state. Additionally students will find that democratic countries are not always simply parliamentary or presidential, as Russia is a "mixed presidential parliamentary" system with a dual executive. Russia is often taught in AP Comparative Government & Politics classrooms right after the United Kingdom. Students should be able to compare Russia's system of government to the United Kingdom's system of government and see many differences as well as some similarities.

When studying Russia, it is important that students understand the role of communism in its development. Many adults in Russia today were a part of the Soviet Union's system of government and citizens in Russia have little experience with democracy. Many of the former communist officials still hold powerful positions in government (including the current President, Vladimir Putin, who was a member of the KGB in the Soviet Union) while others who were once managers of major industry were able to purchase formerly state owned industry for private consumption. Many citizens in Russia consider themselves better off during communist rule, as communism guaranteed employment and health care. This is a reason why the communist party has relatively strong support in Russia today. Students should also be aware that Russia arrived at a communist system through a grass roots revolution (the Russian Revolution of 1917). At this time the Tsarist system was replaced with first a provisional government and then a system with Marxist goals that operated under the principle of democratic centralism.

Because of the prominent role of communism, students should study the system of government in the Soviet Union almost as closely as they should study the current system. Students should study the ideas of Karl Marx (activity 1) and should be familiar with how Lenin and Stalin attempted to implement Marxist goals. They should study how the institutions of government functioned in the communist system, including the role of the Communist party, the politburo, the secretariat, as well as the "rubber stamp" function of the Supreme Soviet. Students should also learn about the "command economy" and be able to describe Stalin's five year plan and its impact for those living under its repression. Finally, students should have a sense that the command economy did not yield the benefits of market economies abroad. They should be able to describe the scarcity of goods available for purchase under a command economy compared to most countries that had market economies. The fact that the Soviet Union's economy lagged behind the West had an impact on Gorbachev, who was leader of the Soviet Union in the late eighties and was educated in the west. Gorbachev decided to make major political and economic public policy changes to the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev is known for implementing policies of glasnost (political openness) and perestroika (privatization) and ultimately allowing the Soviet Union to disintegrate. This left Yeltsin, who was first the Soviet Union's appointed head of Russia (he later became the first elected President of Russia under a new Constitution). Yeltsin was first to take control of Russia's individual transition to democracy. He chose a path now known as "shock therapy" in which Russia was rapidly privatized in a transaction that lacked transparency. This resulted in a handful of individuals gaining economic and political power (activity 3) making Russia referred to as an "oligarchy". Under Yeltsin, voters in Russia participated in a referendum on the new "democratic" Constitution and accepted it, albeit by a small margin. The details of this Constitution should be examined by students (activity 4). Students will find that one of the outstanding features of this Constitution is a very powerful President who is directly elected by the people. In addition, citizens elect representatives to the Duma (legislature) and are guaranteed a federal system of government.

President Vladimir Putin, who succeeded President Yeltsin, initiated and passed some important public policies for Russia. Many of these policies centralized Russia's political system. While Russia is a federal system, many of the powers of the subnational government were limited. For example, governors were once directly elected, but President Putin was successful in passing legislation through the Duma to change their selection to Presidential appointment. This has caused the federation council (the upper house) to be loyal to the President. Putin also established seven new superegions for policy implementation, creating a bureaucracy that he can control. Media outlets, once independently owned, was purchased by the central government under Putin. This effectively allows the central government to muzzle speech it opposes. Vladimir Putin also introduced a political party, Unity that eventually dominated the Duma and edged out the Communist party, who initially held the most seats. He also led a new coalition party, Fair Russia, to serve as an "opposition" party. Vladimir Putin introduced a referendum on Chechen independence to quell secessionist demands (the referendum failed to grant Chechen independence). Finally, cracking down on corruption has been a major goal, and Vladimir Putin has done so conveniently, arresting oligarchs who opposed him. One example of this is Khordokovsky, and oil billionaire who had declared his candidacy for the presidency. While these policies may sound undemocratic, Vladimir Putin has enjoyed an extremely high approval rating throughout his Presidency. Students will have the opportunity to discuss and debate the merits of Putin's policies (activity 4).

Students should be able to make some useful comparisons of Russia to the United Kingdom. Britain has experienced democratic transition gradually, while the Russia has attempted democratization rapidly. Many students may assume that a written constitution is a key ingredient of democracy and provides legitimacy for the government. However, when studying the United Kingdom students will learn that the Constitution is unwritten yet the United Kingdom has a democratic system of government with a high level of legitimacy. The United Kingdom's unwritten constitution dates back hundreds of years, and Russia's constitution is very new. In Russia, just like the days of the Soviet Union, the government today lacks legitimacy. Both countries have a dual executive. In the United Kingdom, the head of government (prime minister) while in Russia the head of state (President) is the powerful figure. The prime minister in the United Kingdom has no term limit, however he can be dismissed at any time he fails a vote of confidence. The

Russian president has a two term limit, but has an election that is regularly scheduled. Britain has a two party system, Russia has a multiparty system. Both countries use national referenda, but in the UK referenda are only advisory, as the parliament has sovereignty. In Russia citizens have voted and passed very important measures, including their new constitution through the use of referenda. Britain is a unitary system becoming more like a federal system. Under the Presidency of Vladimir Putin Russia's federal system has become more centralized.

Russia and the United Kingdom today have similar goals – greater democracy. Yet the histories of these two countries have caused them to take quite divergent paths.





Name \_\_\_\_\_

**AP Comparative Government, Mr. Brady**

**Guided Reading - Russia (Chapter 7)**

**Part II**

1. What are some key features of the Russian constitution of 1993? (See page 174, and full document is available at <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/constit.html>).
2. What are some of the powers of the President?
3. What are some powers of the Prime Minister?
4. Describe executive-legislative relations in Russia.
5. Describe federal-state relations in Russia.
6. Describe bureaucracy (civil service) in Russia.
7. How does the Soviet past present a challenge to the current government? In your answer define the term below.

Politburo -

**Nomenklatura** –

Supreme Soviet –

**Path to dependence-**

8. Semi-Presidential system (aka mixed Presidential-parliamentary system)-

What is the role of the president?

How is the Prime Minister selected and what is his/her role?

How have President's Putin and Medvedev handled these responsibilities?

How is the president elected and how long is his term? (now 6 yrs)

9. What power did Yeltsin use frequently (provide examples) and name some additional powers of the president.
10. Describe how the President selects the Prime Minister and what occurred in this regard during Yeltsin's term?
11. Describe **the national bureaucracy**. Include a definition of **clientelistic networks**.
12. Identify and describe both **public and semipublic institutions**.

Where do Gazprom/ORT fit?

13. Describe the Russian Military and Security organizations.

14. Describe the Judiciary and challenges facing the new judiciary.

Constitutional Court –

Supreme Court

15. Russia is federal. How many subunits are there? \_\_\_\_ What organization represents the subunits? (see box on p. 289)

16. Chechnya is a region that wants independence. What is the basis for this demand? How have the demands been articulated and what was the government's response?

17. What is **asymmetrical federalism?/Power Vertical**

18. Describe how Russia's federal system has become more centralized (page 289-290).

19. Describe **the policy making process.**

Duma –

20. Define **civil society** and describe civil society in Russia.

21. (page 293) How many members in the Federation Council ? \_\_\_\_ How are members chosen? \_\_\_\_ How long are their terms? \_\_\_\_

22. (page 294) Approximately what percentage of the population were members of the Communist party at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union? \_\_\_\_

23. (page 294-95) What is required as of 2001 for a political party to form in Russia?

24. What were the reasons for these rules?

25. In the 1990's many parties formed around what? \_\_\_\_ The dominant parties winning elections in the new Russian Federation was the \_\_\_\_\_ party. Describe the ideologies of the new parties.

26. Current political parties in Russia (briefly describe each- see p. 296-298)

- United Russia (aka Unity)

-Our Home is Russia

-Communist Party of Russian Federation

-Liberal Democratic (led by Zhirnovsky)-

-Yabloko

27. (page 298) What is the voter turnout in Russian elections? \_\_\_\_\_ Describe elections in Russia.
28. What was the first system for electing members of the Duma? \_\_\_\_\_
29. In 2007 what electoral system was implemented? \_\_\_\_\_ The minimum winning threshold was raised from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
30. In order to participate in the election, a party must have what?
31. Why have opposition parties fared poorly?
32. (page 300) How does Russian political culture differ from political cultures in countries with long histories of democracy?
33. Russia is a multiethnic state. How does this impact political culture?
34. What role does religion (Russian Orthodox church) play in Russian identity?
35. Describe the role of women in Russian society.
36. (page 301) What obstacles exist to forming private organizations?



## Russia Jeopardy - Terms

1. Asymmetrical federalism
2. Checka (or KGB)
3. Civil society
4. Chernobyl
5. Clientelistic networks
6. collectivization
7. comintern
8. Communist Party
9. Coup against Gorbachev
10. democratic centralism
11. Duma
12. five year plan
13. glasnost
14. gosplan
15. Gorbachev
16. Governors (apply to Russia)
17. illiberal democracy
18. insider privatization
19. Khordokovsky
20. Lenin
21. legitimacy
22. Liberal Democrats
23. mafia
24. Marxism
25. Mensheviks
26. Nomenklatura
27. Oligarchs
28. Power vertical
29. our home is Russia
30. perestroika
31. president
32. provisional government
33. proportional representation
34. privatization
35. privatization voucher
36. purges
37. Putin
38. rule of law
39. shock therapy
40. Stalin
41. tsar
42. United Russia Party (Unity)
43. Yabloko
44. Yeltsin
45. Zhirinovsky



**Russia Notes Part 1:**

Overview of the Russian Federation & Challenges to Democratic Transition

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**Russian History Overview  
= History of Strong Leaders**

Czarist Russia

Russian Revolution (1917)

Soviet Union (Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev)

Russian Federation (1991) (Putin)

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**Challenges of Russian Federation's Democratic Transition**

**Lack of civil society, legitimacy, and rule of law makes Russian democratic transition shaky.**

**civil society = existence of voluntary associations.**

**political legitimacy = citizen's belief in government's right to rule.**

**Rule of law = rules/laws being enforced & applied equally to all citizens, regardless of stature.**

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### Mixed Presidential Parliamentary System of Government

Dual executive (President =Head of State; PM=Head of Govt).

President Two ballot system. Presidential elections are regularly scheduled.

Prime Minister selected by President from dominant party in the Duma and the President can dissolve the Duma & call for elections. If Prime Minister loses confidence Duma elections can be called (irregular elections).

Cabinet is selected from Parliament ; Cabinet ministers must resign from parliament to separate powers.

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### Russia Notes Part 3:

#### Russia's Legislature and The Political Party System

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#### Russia's Legislature & Multi-party System

*Too many parties to get policies accomplished. Most parties initially formed solely around the approach to economic reform, advocating shock therapy, a slow approach to market reform, or no economic reform. Eventually parties became more durable.*

Major Political Parties

1. Unity -
2. Communist -
3. Yabloko -
4. National Front-

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**Russia: Current Politics**

*What do you know about President Putin's policies?*



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**Obama meets with Russian counterpart...**



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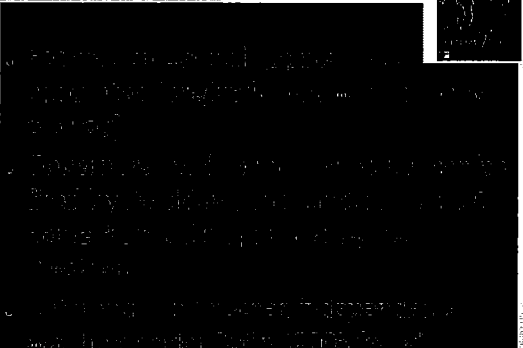
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**Federalism & Putin**



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### Prime Minister Putin



Changes to the Russian Constitution  
• From a limit of two four year terms to a term of six years (and the ability of a leader to return).  
• A fifth presidential term is also possible which was restricted.

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### Gender Politics

• Number of women in the Duma increasing & women dominated NGOs.

• The number of female entrepreneurs is increasing.

• Public policies favorable to women include generous maternity leave, subsidies for having children (maternity capital) and "accessible surroundings"

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### Responsible Male Campaign

- Day of Family, Love and Fidelity (2008)



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# Rule of Law, Russian-Style

KATHRYN HENDLEY

Almost without exception, Russia languishes near the bottom of indexes that purport to measure elements of the "rule of law" in countries around the world. Assessing the extent to which this contempt is deserved depends on how rule of law is defined. As the term has become part of the global political lexicon, its precise meaning has become increasingly opaque. Even so, the principle that law should apply in equal measure to everyone, irrespective of wealth or political clout, is generally accepted as the foundational principle of the rule of law. By this standard, Russia falls short today. What is worse, the continuing behavior of Russia's public officials, as well as deeply set attitudes among ordinary Russians, offers little promise of improvement any time soon.

Certainly Russia's history provides little evidence of commitment to a universalistic view of law. Both the czars and the Communist Party leadership routinely used law as a blunt instrument to advance their interests, enforcing it strictly against the powerless, but stretching it beyond recognition to accommodate themselves and their favorites. Laws were often written in the broadest terms possible so as to give officials maximum flexibility.

Beginning with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's endorsement of a "rule-of-law-based state" (*pravovoe gosudarstvo*) at the outset of perestroika, the Kremlin's rhetoric shifted. The leaders who have followed Gorbachev have likewise committed themselves to the goal of universalistic law. Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev, who like Gorbachev are legally trained, have both spoken repeatedly of the importance of institutionalizing a "supremacy of law" (*gospodstvo zakona*). Sadly, their policies have often failed to match their rhetoric.

Much like their predecessors, these post-Soviet leaders have proved willing to countenance the manipulation of law when it has been inconvenient to live up to the law. The Kremlin's seemingly endless campaign against oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his company, Yukos, is only the most notorious example. Not only does such behavior demonstrate the shallowness of Russia's commitment to the civil liberties embodied in the country's constitution and criminal procedure code, but it also reveals the Kremlin's lack of respect for the independence of the judicial branch.

The Kremlin's brazen disregard of legal niceties whenever the law threatens to cramp its style contributes to an "anything goes" legal culture in Russia. Human rights activists and

journalists have been murdered with seeming impunity. Business is riddled with corruption. To some extent, of course, this is nothing new. Finding creative ways to get around (*oboiiti*) the law has long been the norm in Russia. Indeed, it was a critical coping mechanism in response to the perennial shortages of the Soviet era.

In a perfect world, skirting the law would have become unnecessary with the end of state socialism and, more importantly, unacceptable. But the chaotic nature of the transition only emboldened those who sought to circumvent legal constraints. The well-known adage in Russia, "It is forbidden, but if you really want to do it, then go ahead" (*eto nel'zya, no esli ochen' khochetsya, to mozhno*), captures this sentiment perfectly. So long as those who engage in extralegal behavior stay out of the way of those more powerful, the state has turned a blind eye.

## Dual Justice

Most outside observers have assumed that all of these shortcomings add up to a legal system that is dysfunctional and virtually unusable. As usual, Russia confounds expectations. Over the past two decades, with surprisingly little fanfare, the legislative base and institutional infrastructure of the Russian legal system have undergone a remarkable transformation. Citizens' access to the legal system has been enhanced through the introduction of justice-of-the-peace courts (*mirovye sudy*), which have absorbed the bulk of simple cases, freeing up other courts to devote attention to more complicated cases. Thanks to the internet, information about the substance of law and the activities of courts at all levels is increasingly transparent.

Not coincidentally, Russians' use of the courts has grown dramatically. The number of civil (non-criminal) cases has doubled over the past decade. But people's use of the courts is savvy. Russians seek help from the courts when they encounter disputes with those who are similarly situated; they shy away from the courts when they tangle with anyone more powerful.

The dual legal system that has evolved in Russia—in which the courts can be relied on to handle mundane cases, but are likely to bow to the will of the powerful in touchier cases—is a far cry from the rule-of-law-based state that was the initial goal. At the same time, it does provide a small measure of the sort of predictability that lies at the heart of the rule of law. In Russia's

legal system an uneasy equilibrium is at play, one that has eluded the media and even many legal analysts. Russians have an innate sense of when to use the courts and when to avoid them.

## How the Fish Rots

Even so, a more robust rule of law in Russia will require fundamental changes in attitudes and behavior on the part of both state and society. In my own research, when I have asked ordinary Russians how to fix their legal system, they often remind me of the proverb that “the fish rots from the head” (*ryba gni-yot golovy*). To date, the political leadership has talked the talk, but has not walked the walk. The citizenry has grown weary of endless promises. The prescription for the Kremlin can be stated simply—the state and its bureaucrats need to obey the laws they impose on others. Ending the “anything goes” legal culture will not be easy. Solving problems by cutting corners and making side payments is deeply entrenched.

To outsiders, the anticorruption campaign announced by Medvedev when he became president may seem like a good first step toward reining in the state. But Russians have heard it all before. Those with long memories will recall that Putin likewise came to office with a pledge to break the stranglehold of corruption. To be fair, Medvedev has done more than pay lip service. He has acted to limit the discretion of local officials to demand repeated inspections of businesses (thereby giving them multiple opportunities to demand payoffs). He has ordered more oversight of the state procurement process. And he has pushed for fuller disclosure of state officials’ incomes and assets.

However, the depth of the Kremlin’s commitment to rooting out corruption remains to be seen. Public opinion polling suggests that Russians are unconvinced of that commitment. In a February 2009 survey conducted by the Levada Center, most (53 percent) felt that Medvedev’s initiative had made no difference. Indeed, 21 percent believed corruption had worsened since his election.

Enhancing the rule of law in Russia is not entirely a matter of state action. Medvedev has famously railed against the “legal nihilism” of Russian society, but he has been slow to recognize

that society is taking its cues from its leaders in its disregard of the law. For anything to change, Russians have to shake off their traditional passivity vis-à-vis the state. Human rights groups have taken an important step in this regard through their use of the European Court of Human Rights. The Strasbourg court has been swamped by Russian claims, most of which allege a failure on the part of the state to live up to its obligations under the law.

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### For anything to change, Russians have to shake off their traditional passivity vis-à-vis the state.

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But this is an elite strategy; ordinary Russians know little of the European court. In my research, I have been struck by the unwillingness of the ordinary Russians with whom I have spoken to take on any responsibility for the condition of the legal system. It does not seem to occur to them that they could demand more from their political leaders. The weakness of civil society in Russia does not augur well for the development of a more robust rule of law.

## Critical Thinking

1. What is “rule of law”? How is “rule of law” achieved?
2. What are the consequences of not achieving “rule of law”?
3. What does “the fish rots from the head” refer to? Should society wait for the state to change? Why or why not?
4. What are “justice-of-the-peace” courts? How do they help or hurt institutional-building?
5. How does the European Court of Human Rights help or hurt the situation in Russia? How does this relate to the previous article?

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## Russia Unit

### Unit Overview

Russia is an important case study for students of AP Comparative Government & Politics. Russia was once a part of the powerful Soviet Union and used a Communist system of government. Today Russia provides a key example of the struggle faced by former communist countries that attempt to effectively transition to a democratic form of government. The Soviet Union and communism has shaped much of Russia's past and has impacted the present system of government and its people greatly. Because of this, students studying Russia will examine the system of government of Russia as part of the Soviet Union and the system of government of Russia today, as a country attempting to transition to democracy.

### Objectives

In this unit, students will learn about the following:

- Key vocabulary related to the Soviet Union and Russia
- How current political and economic data related to current Russia can be interpreted
- Marxist political theory and its impact
- Constitutional powers of the major institutions of government in Russia
- The process and impact of privatization in Russia
- Public policy changes made in Russia under President Vladimir Putin and their impact for democracy
- Similarities and differences between Russia and the United Kingdom

### Vocabulary Review Activity (45 minutes)

**Directions:** This activity will ask students to review vocabulary that is commonly used in Comparative Government & Politics courses when studying Russia. This list should both review as well as supplement most core textbooks. Some of these terms, such as "illiberal democracy" may require teachers to look at the AP Central Web Site for reference. This lesson will be most useful if it is used towards the end of your unit.

To complete this activity, you will be dividing your class into 4-5 groups. Make 4-5 copies of the list on page 10 (to correspond with your groups) and cut out the words and cut out the definitions. Paste each word on an index card and each definition on an index card. Keep one complete copy for you to use as a key. At the beginning of class, tell students their group will be competing against another group to match the correct definition with the appropriate word. Give each group a set of words and a set of definitions (make sure these are scrambled) and ask the students to place the correct word on top of a definition. When a group is finished, come around and check to be sure the pairings are correct. If time permits, have students come up with a concrete example of the term as it pertains to Russia.

## **Interpreting Data Activity (45 minutes)**

Directions: In this activity, students will review some key political and economic data about Russia. This activity should be completed towards the end of the unit, when students have become familiar with political and economic change that has occurred. Students should know the definition and significance of economic terms such as “GDP” (gross domestic product, measures level of economic production within a country. Countries with high GDP generally have higher standards of living), inflation, privatization/shock therapy, market economy.

Pass out the data and the questions. Allow students to work in pairs and use their textbooks to find support for their answers where appropriate. Go over the answers with the class when they are finished. At the conclusion of the activity, ask students what conclusions they can draw from the data they have examined.

### **Activity 1: Communism + Soviet Union (45 Minutes)**

1. Review the definitions of the following terms with students (see vocabulary review for definitions). Ask students to compare/contrast each term to check for understanding of similarities and differences.
  - a. Marxism
  - b. Marxism-Leninism
  - c. Communism
  - d. nomenklatura
  - e. Socialism
  - f. totalitarianism
2. Ask students to read excerpts from the “Communist Manifesto” by Karl Marx.
3. As they read they should define terms and answer questions (handouts to complete the activity on page 16).

### **Activity 2: Powers of the Institutions of Government (45 minutes)**

Directions: Print and copy the Russian Constitution (available at <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/constit.html>) or have students access the Constitution on line. Have students read the Constitution and complete the chart (handout for activity 2 on page 18). Go over students findings and ask the following discussion questions:

- Why do you think the Russians decided to create such a strong Presidency? What are the benefits for Russia in having a strong Presidency? What is the downside?
- Is the Prime Minister as powerful as the Constitution states? Why or why not?
- Is this Constitution stronger or weaker than the unwritten Constitution in the United Kingdom? Provide examples to support your answer.

**Activity 2: The Russian Constitution**  
<http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/constit.html>

As you read the Constitution, paraphrase the powers listed below.

<p><b>Fundamentals of the Constitutional System, Chapter 1</b></p>	<p>What type of system does the Constitution set up? What similarities do you see between this system and the United States?</p> <p>Referendum --</p> <p>Local government -</p>
<p><b>Rights and Liberties of Man and Citizen Chapter 2</b></p>	<p>What rights does the Constitution give to Russian citizens? (list 3-5)</p>
<p><b>The Russian Federation Chapter 3</b></p>	<p>Summarize the objectives of this part of the Constitution</p>
<p><b>The President of the Russian Federation Chapter 4</b></p>	<p>Outline the powers of the Russian President.</p>
<p><b>The Federal Assembly Chapter 5</b></p>	<p>What is the Federal Assembly?</p> <p>What are the two houses of the Federal Assembly?</p>

	<p>How many members are in the Duma?</p> <p>How long is their term of office?</p> <p>How are members of the Federation Council selected?</p> <p>What are the powers of the Duma?</p> <p>What are the powers of the Federation Council?</p> <p>What Presidential power is mentioned?</p>
<p><b>The Government of the Russian Federation</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b></p>	<p>How does the “Chairman of the Russian Federation” (Prime Minister) get appointed?</p> <p>Who is head of state?</p> <p>Who is head of government?</p> <p>What are the responsibilities of the government of the Russian federation?</p>



	What is the relationship between the President and the Chairman (discussed in Article 117?)
<b>The Judiciary</b> Chapter 7	How long do judges serve?  How are judges appointed?  What is their role/responsibility?  What is the role of the Supreme Court?
<b>Local Self Government</b> Chapter 8	What are the responsibilities of local government?
<b>Constitutional Amendments and Revisions Chapter 9</b>	How can the Constitution be amended?
<b>Concluding and transitional provisions</b>	By what method was the Constitution accepted?

### Activity 3 Handout

#### **Commanding Heights: Battle for the World Economy: Russia PBS**

1. Why did Gorbachev go to Beijing in 1989?
2. What types of economic reforms had China made?
3. What are the differences in the economies of Russia and China?
4. What approach to the economy did Gorbachev want to take?
5. What impact did the 1991 coup have on Gorbachev?
6. Gaidar-
7. What was the impact of Gorbachev's reforms on the economy?
8. Chubaias-
9. The parliament was dominated by whom?
10. What was the goal of the reformers?
11. What law did Gaidar abolish?
12. Reform meant what for the economy?
13. What was Chubais in charge of?
14. Each citizen got a voucher worth what?
15. Young reformers had to move fast to prevent what?
16. How was the Bolshevik biscuit factory privatized?
17. What happened the next day in Parliament?
18. Chernomyrdin-
19. Who were the "red directors"?
20. The government and the oligarchs feared what?
21. Describe the "loan for shares" deal.

**Unit Activity – How does Russia compare to the United Kingdom?**

	<b>Russia</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>Constitution</b>		
<b>Head of State and Head of Government</b>		
<b>Political Party System</b>		
<b>Executive Legislative Relations</b>		
<b>Referenda</b>		
<b>Federal/Unitary structure</b>		
<b>Civil Liberties and Rights</b>		
<b>Civil Society</b>		

<b>Legitimacy</b>		
<b>Political and Economic Change</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/index.html>

### **Commanding Heights: Battle for the World Economy: Russia PBS**

**Directions** click link above, click “countries,” click “Russia,” click “video.” Then watch the segments below.

#### **“Gorbachev Tries China 1991” through “Loans for Shares”**

1. Why did Gorbachev go to Beijing in 1989?
2. What types of economic reforms had China made?
3. What are the differences in the economies of Russia and China?
4. What approach to the economy did Gorbachev want to take?
5. What impact did the 1991 coup have on Gorbachev?
6. Gaidar-
7. What was the impact of Gorbachev’s reforms on the economy?
8. Chubaias-
9. The parliament was dominated by whom?
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17. What happened the next day in Parliament?
18. Chernomyrdin-

19. Who were the “red directors”?
20. The government and the oligarchs feared what?
21. Describe the “loan for shares” deal.
22. Potinin

### **Discussion Questions**

- (1) This video traces the history of privatization in Russia. What is your reaction to this process?
- (2) Define shock therapy.
- (3) In your opinion, was shock therapy a good policy for Russia? Defend your answer.

# The Making of a Neo-KGB State

Political power in Russia now lies with the FSB, the KGB's successor.

On the evening of August 22nd 1991—16 years ago this week—Alexei Kondaurov, a KGB general, stood by the darkened window of his Moscow office and watched a jubilant crowd moving towards the KGB headquarters in Lubyanka Square. A coup against Mikhail Gorbachev had just been defeated. The head of the KGB who had helped to orchestrate it had been arrested, and Mr Kondaurov was now one of the most senior officers left in the fast-emptying building. For a moment the thronged masses seemed to be heading straight towards him.

Then their anger was diverted to the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the KGB's founding father. A couple of men climbed up and slipped a rope round his neck. Then he was yanked up by a crane. Watching "Iron Felix" sway in mid-air, Mr Kondaurov, who had served in the KGB since 1972, felt betrayed "by Gorbachev, by Yeltsin, by the impotent coup leaders". He remembers thinking, "I will prove to you that your victory will be short-lived."

Those feelings of betrayal and humiliation were shared by 500,000 KGB operatives across Russia and beyond, including Vladimir Putin, whose resignation as a lieutenant-colonel in the service had been accepted only the day before. Eight years later, though, the KGB men seemed poised for revenge. Just before he became president, Mr Putin told his ex-colleagues at the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB's successor, "A group of FSB operatives, dispatched under cover to work in the government of the Russian federation, is successfully fulfilling its task." He was only half joking.

Over the two terms of Mr Putin's presidency, that "group of FSB operatives" has consolidated its political power and built a new sort of corporate state in the process. Men from the FSB and its sister organisations control the Kremlin, the government, the media and large parts of the economy—as well as the military and security forces. According to research by Olga Kryshtanovskaya, a sociologist at the Russian Academy of Sciences, a quarter of the country's senior bureaucrats are *siloviki*—a Russian word meaning, roughly, "power guys", which includes members of the armed forces and other security services, not just the FSB. The proportion rises to three-quarters if people simply affiliated to the security services are included. These people represent a psychologically homogeneous group, loyal to roots that go back to the Bolsheviks' first political police, the Cheka. As Mr Putin says repeatedly, "There is no such thing as a former Chekist."

By many indicators, today's security bosses enjoy a combination of power and money without precedent in Russia's history. The Soviet KGB and its pre-revolutionary ancestors did not care much about money; power was what mattered. Influential though it was, the KGB was a "combat division" of the Communist Party, and subordinate to it. As an outfit that was part intelligence organisation, part security agency and part secret political police, it was often better informed, but it could not act on its own authority; it could only make "recommendations". In the 1970s and 1980s it was not even allowed to spy on the party bosses and had to act within Soviet laws, however inhuman.

The KGB provided a crucial service of surveillance and suppression; it was a state within a state. Now, however, it has become the state itself. Apart from Mr Putin, "There is nobody today who can say no to the FSB," says Mr Kondaurov.

All important decisions in Russia, says Ms Kryshtanovskaya, are now taken by a tiny group of men who served alongside Mr Putin in the KGB and who come from his home town of St Petersburg. In the next few months this coterie may well decide the outcome of next year's presidential election. But whoever succeeds Mr Putin, real power is likely to remain in the organisation. Of all the Soviet institutions, the KGB withstood Russia's transformation to capitalism best and emerged strongest. "Communist ideology has gone, but the methods and psychology of its secret police have remained," says Mr Kondaurov, who is now a member of parliament.

## Scotched, Not Killed

Mr Putin's ascent to the presidency of Russia was the result of a chain of events that started at least a quarter of a century earlier, when Yuri Andropov, a former head of the KGB, succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as general secretary of the Communist Party. Andropov's attempts to reform the stagnating Soviet economy in order to preserve the Soviet Union and its political system have served as a model for Mr Putin. Early in his presidency Mr Putin unveiled a plaque at the Lubyanka headquarters that paid tribute to Andropov as an "outstanding political figure".

Staffed by highly educated, pragmatic men recruited in the 1960s and 1970s, the KGB was well aware of the dire state of the Soviet economy and the antique state of the party bosses. It was therefore one of the main forces behind *perestroika*, the loose policy of restructuring started by Mr Gorbachev in the

1980s. *Perestroika*'s reforms were meant to give the Soviet Union a new lease of life. When they threatened its existence, the KGB mounted a coup against Mr Gorbachev. Ironically, this precipitated the Soviet collapse.

The defeat of the coup gave Russia an historic chance to liquidate the organisation. "If either Gorbachev or Yeltsin had been bold enough to dismantle the KGB during the autumn of 1991, he would have met little resistance," wrote Yevgenia Albats, a journalist who has courageously covered the grimmest chapters in the KGB's history. Instead, both Mr Gorbachev and Yeltsin tried to reform it.

The "blue blood" of the KGB—the First Chief Directorate, in charge of espionage—was spun off into a separate intelligence service. The rest of the agency was broken into several parts. Then, after a few short months of talk about openness, the doors of the agency slammed shut again and the man charged with trying to reform it, Vadim Bakatin, was ejected. His glum conclusion, delivered at a conference in 1993, was that although the myth about the KGB's invincibility had collapsed, the agency itself was very much alive.

Indeed it was. The newly named Ministry of Security continued to "delegate" the officers of the "active reserve" into state institutions and commercial firms. Soon KGB officers were staffing the tax police and customs services. As Boris Yeltsin himself admitted by the end of 1993, all attempts to reorganise the KGB were "superficial and cosmetic"; in fact, it could not be reformed. "The system of political police has been preserved," he said, "and could be resurrected."

Yet Mr Yeltsin, though he let the agency survive, did not use it as his power base. In fact, the KGB was cut off from the post-Soviet redistribution of assets. Worse still, it was upstaged and outwitted by a tiny group of opportunists, many of them Jews (not a people beloved by the KGB), who became known as the oligarchs. Between them, they grabbed most of the country's natural resources and other privatised assets. KGB officers watched the oligarchs get super-rich while they stayed cash-strapped and sometimes even unpaid.

Some officers did well enough, but only by offering their services to the oligarchs. To protect themselves from rampant crime and racketeering, the oligarchs tried to privatise parts of the KGB. Their large and costly security departments were staffed and run by ex-KGB officers. They also hired senior agency men as "consultants". Phillip Bobkov, the head of the Fifth Directorate (which dealt with dissidents), worked for a media magnate, Vladimir Gusinsky. Mr Kondaurov, a former spokesman for the KGB, worked for Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who ran and largely owned Yukos. "People who stayed in the FSB were B-list," says Mark Galeotti, a British analyst of the Russian special services.

Lower-ranking staff worked as bodyguards to Russia's rich. (Andrei Lugovoi, the chief suspect in the murder in London last year of Alexander Litvinenko, once guarded Boris Berезovsky, an oligarch who, facing arrest in Russia, now lives in Britain.) Hundreds of private security firms staffed by KGB veterans sprang up around the country and most of them, though not all, kept their ties to their *alma mater*. According to Igor

Goloshchapov, a former KGB special-forces commando who is now a spokesman for almost 800,000 private security men,

In the 1990s we had one objective: to survive and preserve our skills. We did not consider ourselves to be separate from those who stayed in the FSB. We shared everything with them and we saw our work as just another form of serving the interests of the state. We knew that there would come a moment when we would be called upon.

That moment came on New Year's Eve 1999, when Mr Yeltsin resigned and, despite his views about the KGB, handed over the reins of power to Mr Putin, the man he had put in charge of the FSB in 1998 and made prime minister a year later.

## The Inner Circle

As the new president saw things, his first task was to restore the management of the country, consolidate political power and neutralise alternative sources of influence: oligarchs, regional governors, the media, parliament, opposition parties and non-governmental organisations. His KGB buddies helped him with the task.

The most politically active oligarchs, Mr Berezovsky, who had helped Mr Putin come to power, and Mr Gusinsky, were pushed out of the country, and their television channels were taken back into state hands. Mr Khodorkovsky, Russia's richest man, was more stubborn. Despite several warnings, he continued to support opposition parties and NGOs and refused to leave Russia. In 2003 the FSB arrested him and, after a show trial, helped put him in jail.

To deal with unruly regional governors, Mr Putin appointed special envoys with powers of supervision and control. Most of them were KGB veterans. The governors lost their budgets and their seats in the upper house of the Russian parliament. Later the voters lost their right to elect them.

All the strategic decisions, according to Ms Kryshantovskaya, were and still are made by the small group of people who have formed Mr Putin's informal politburo. They include two deputy heads of the presidential administration: Igor Sechin, who officially controls the flow of documents but also oversees economic matters, and Viktor Ivanov, responsible for personnel in the Kremlin and beyond. Then come Nikolai Patrushev, the head of the FSB, and Sergei Ivanov, a former defence minister and now the first deputy prime minister. All are from St Petersburg, and all served in intelligence or counter-intelligence. Mr Sechin is the only one who does not advertise his background.

That two of the most influential men, Mr Sechin and Viktor Ivanov, hold only fairly modest posts (each is a deputy head) and seldom appear in public is misleading. It was, after all, common Soviet practice to have a deputy, often linked to the KGB, who carried more weight than his notional boss. "These people feel more comfortable when they are in the shadows," explains Ms Kryshantovskaya.

In any event, each of these KGB veterans has a plethora of followers in other state institutions. One of Mr Patrushev's former deputies, also from the KGB, is the minister of the interior, in charge of the police. Sergei Ivanov still commands authority



## ANNUAL EDITIONS

within the army's headquarters. Mr Sechin has close family ties to the minister of justice. The prosecution service, which in Soviet times at least nominally controlled the KGB's work, has now become its instrument, along with the tax police.

The political clout of these *siloviki* is backed by (or has resulted in) state companies with enormous financial resources. Mr Sechin, for example, is the chairman of Rosneft, Russia's largest state-run oil company. Viktor Ivanov heads the board of directors of Almaz-Antei, the country's main producer of air-defence rockets, and of Aeroflot, the national airline. Sergei Ivanov oversees the military-industrial complex and is in charge of the newly created aircraft-industry monopoly.

But the *siloviki* reach farther, into all areas of Russian life. They can be found not just in the law-enforcement agencies but in the ministries of economy, transport, natural resources, telecoms and culture. Several KGB veterans occupy senior management posts in Gazprom, Russia's biggest company, and its pocket bank, Gazprombank (whose vice-president is the 26-year-old son of Sergei Ivanov).

Alexei Gromov, Mr Putin's trusted press secretary, sits on the board of Channel One, Russia's main television channel. The railway monopoly is headed by Vladimir Yakunin, a former diplomat who served his country at the United Nations in New York and is believed to have held a high rank in the KGB. Sergei Chemezov, Mr Putin's old KGB friend from his days in Dresden (where the president worked from 1985 to 1990), is in charge of Rosoboronexport, a state arms agency that has grown on his watch into a vast conglomerate. The list goes on.

Many officers of the active reserve have been seconded to Russia's big companies, both private and state-controlled, where they draw a salary while also remaining on the FSB payroll. "We must make sure that companies don't make decisions that are not in the interest of the state," one current FSB colonel explains. Being an active-reserve officer in a firm is, says another KGB veteran, a dream job: "You get a huge salary and you get to keep your FSB card." One such active-reserve officer is the 26-year-old son of Mr Patrushev who was last year seconded from the FSB to Rosneft, where he is now advising Mr Sechin. (After seven months at Rosneft, Mr Putin awarded Andrei Patrushev the Order of Honour, citing his professional successes and "many years of conscientious work".) Rosneft was the main recipient of Yukos's assets after the firm was destroyed.

The attack on Yukos, which entered its decisive stage just as Mr Sechin was appointed to Rosneft, was the first and most blatant example of property redistribution towards the *siloviki*, but not the only one. Mikhail Gutseriev, the owner of Russneft, a fast-growing oil company, was this month forced to give up his business after being accused of illegal activities. For a time, he had refused; but, as he explained, "they tightened the screws" and one state agency after another—the general prosecutor's office, the tax police, the interior ministry—began conducting checks on him.

## From Oligarchy to Spookocracy

The transfer of financial wealth from the oligarchs to the *siloviki* was perhaps inevitable. It certainly met with no objection from most Russians, who have little sympathy for "robber barons".

It even earned the *siloviki* a certain popularity. But whether they will make a success of managing their newly acquired assets is doubtful. "They know how to break up a company or to confiscate something. But they don't know how to manage a business. They use force simply because they don't know any other method," says an ex-KGB spook who now works in business.

Curiously, the concentration of such power and economic resources in the hands of a small group of *siloviki*, who identify themselves with the state, has not alienated people in the lower ranks of the security services. There is trickle-down of a sort: the salary of an average FSB operative has gone up several times over the past decade, and a bit of freelancing is tolerated. Besides, many Russians inside and outside the ranks believe that the transfer of assets from private hands to the *siloviki* is in the interests of the state. "They are getting their own back and they have the right to do so," says Mr Goloshchapov.

The rights of the *siloviki*, however, have nothing to do with the formal kind that are spelled out in laws or in the constitution. What they are claiming is a special mission to restore the power of the state, save Russia from disintegration and frustrate the enemies that might weaken it. Such idealistic sentiments, says Mr Kondarov, coexist with an opportunistic and cynical eagerness to seize the situation for personal or institutional gain.

The security servicemen present themselves as a tight brotherhood entitled to break any laws for the sake of their mission. Their high language is laced with profanity, and their nationalism is often combined with contempt for ordinary people. They are, however, loyal to each other.

Competition to enter the service is intense. The KGB picked its recruits carefully. Drawn from various institutes and universities, they then went to special KGB schools. Today the FSB Academy in Moscow attracts the children of senior *siloviki*; a vast new building will double its size. The point, says Mr Galeotti, the British analyst, "is not just what you learn, but who you meet there".

Graduates of the FSB Academy may well agree. "A Chekist is a breed," says a former FSB general. A good KGB heritage—a father or grandfather, say, who worked for the service—is highly valued by today's *siloviki*. Marriages between *siloviki* clans are also encouraged.

Viktor Cherkesov, the head of Russia's drug-control agency, who was still hunting dissidents in the late 1980s, has summed up the FSB psychology in an article that has become the manifesto of the *siloviki* and a call for consolidation.

We [*siloviki*] must understand that we are one whole. History ruled that the weight of supporting the Russian state should fall on our shoulders. I believe in our ability, when we feel danger, to put aside everything petty and to remain faithful to our oath.

As well as invoking secular patriotism, Russia's security bosses can readily find allies among the priesthood. Next to the FSB building in Lubyanka Square stands the 17th-century church of the Holy Wisdom, "restored in August 2001 with zealous help from the FSB," says a plaque. Inside, freshly painted icons gleam with gold. "Thank God there is the FSB. All power is from God and so is theirs," says Father Alexander, who leads the service. A former KGB general agrees: "They really believe

that they were chosen and are guided by God and that even the high oil prices they have benefited from are God's will."

Sergei Grigoryants, who has often been interrogated and twice imprisoned (for anti-Soviet propaganda) by the KGB, says the security chiefs believe "that they are the only ones who have the real picture and understanding of the world." At the centre of this picture is an exaggerated sense of the enemy, which justifies their very existence: without enemies, what are they for? "They believe they can see enemies where ordinary people can't," says Ms Kryshstanovskaya.

"A few years ago, we succumbed to the illusion that we don't have enemies and we have paid dearly for that," Mr Putin told the FSB in 1999. It is a view shared by most KGB veterans and their successors. The greatest danger comes from the West, whose aim is supposedly to weaken Russia and create disorder. "They want to make Russia dependent on their technologies," says a current FSB staffer. "They have flooded our market with their goods. Thank God we still have nuclear arms." The siege mentality of the *siloviki* and their anti-Westernism have played well with the Russian public. Mr Goloshchapov, the private agents' spokesman, expresses the mood this way: "In Gorbachev's time Russia was liked by the West and what did we get for it? We have surrendered everything: eastern Europe, Ukraine, Georgia. NATO has moved to our borders."

From this perspective, anyone who plays into the West's hands at home is the internal enemy. In this category are the last free-thinking journalists, the last NGOs sponsored by the West and the few liberal politicians who still share Western values.

To sense the depth of these feelings, consider the response of one FSB officer to the killing of Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist whose books criticising Mr Putin and his brutal war in Chechnya are better known outside than inside Russia. "I don't know who killed her, but her articles were beneficial to the Western press. She deserved what she got." And so, by this token, did Litvinenko, the ex-KGB officer poisoned by polonium in London last year.

In such a climate, the idea that Russia's security services are entitled to deal ruthlessly with enemies of the state, wherever they may be, has gained wide acceptance and is supported by a new set of laws. One, aimed at "extremism", gives the FSB and other agencies ample scope to pursue anyone who acts or speaks against the Kremlin. It has already been invoked against independent analysts and journalists. A lawyer who complained to the Constitutional Court about the FSB's illegal tapping of his client's telephone has been accused of disclosing state secrets. Several scientists who collaborated with foreign firms are in jail for treason.

Despite their loyalty to old Soviet roots, today's security bosses differ from their predecessors. They do not want a return to communist ideology or an end to capitalism, whose fruits

they enjoy. They have none of the asceticism of their forebears. Nor do they relish mass repression: in a country where fear runs deep, attacking selected individuals does the job. But the concentration of such power and money in the hands of the security services does not bode well for Russia.

## And Not Very Good at Their Job

The creation of enemies may smooth over clan disagreements and fuel nationalism, but it does not make the country more secure or prosperous. While the FSB reports on the ever-rising numbers of foreign spies, accuses scientists of treason and hails its "brotherhood", Russia remains one of the most criminalised, corrupt and bureaucratic countries in the world.

During the crisis at a school in Beslan in 2004, the FSB was good at harassing journalists trying to find out the truth. But it could not even cordon off the school in which the hostages were held. Under the governorship of an ex-FSB colleague of Mr Putin, Ingushetia, the republic that borders Chechnya, has descended into a new theatre of war. The army is plagued by crime and bullying. Private businessmen are regularly hassled by law-enforcement agencies. Russia's foreign policy has turned out to be self-fulfilling: by perpetually denouncing enemies on every front, it has helped to turn many countries from potential friends into nervous adversaries.

The rise to power of the KGB veterans should not have been surprising. In many ways, argues Inna Solovyova, a Russian cultural historian, it had to do with the qualities that Russians find appealing in their rulers: firmness, reserve, authority and a degree of mystery. "The KGB fitted this description, or at least knew how to seem to fit it."

But are they doing the country any good? "People who come from the KGB are tacticians. We have never been taught to solve strategic tasks," says Mr Kondurov. The biggest problem of all, he and a few others say, is the agency's loss of professionalism. He blushes when he talks about the polonium capers in London. "We never sank to this level," he sighs. "What a blow to the country's reputation!"

## Critical Thinking

1. What is the Federal Security Service? What are its powers? Its limitations?
2. What evidence suggests that the Federal Security Service has exceeded its bounds?
3. What is the basis for the Federal Security Service's invocation of authority?
4. Discuss how the Federal Security Service is "not very good" at its job.

**The  
Economist**

## Russia's opposition

# Lonely but not lost

**A Russia after Putin is hard to imagine right now but one man is trying**

Sep 12th 2015 | MOSCOW | From the print edition

ALEXEI NAVALNY, Russia's most conspicuous opposition politician, would not look out of place on the presidential campaign trail in America, with his strident speeches and polished manner. But



Navalny has a dream

in a country where politics is mostly bland bureaucracy, Mr Navalny, a 39-year-old with broad shoulders and bright blue eyes, cuts a striking figure—when he is allowed to speak. At a rare public appearance in the Kostroma region, 300 kilometres (188 miles) north of Moscow, he banters with old ladies, takes selfies with teenagers and spars with hecklers. In his stump speech he attacks local officials (“the mafia”) and Vladimir Putin’s ruling party (“crooks and thieves”). He implores voters in local elections on September 13th “not to be silent” and to cast their ballots for a largely unknown party, RPR-Parnas.

The Kremlin has tried to bar Mr Navalny from politics. He is not allowed to hold office because the Kremlin gave him a criminal conviction on trumped-up charges. His own party, called Progress, was disqualified. Yet in the real world of Russian politics, rather than the Kremlin simulacrum, Mr Navalny is a professional politician who has had a greater impact on the country’s future than any member of parliament or leader of a “licensed” political party outside government in recent times.

He first gained recognition as the main leader of a series of street protests in 2011 when he rallied parts of the urban middle class against the Kremlin. His stated aim of building a modern state with European characteristics appealed to many who had once voted for Mr Putin. In 2013 he received 27% of the vote in the Moscow mayoral election despite being in and out of jail, and having almost no access to state television. This rattled the Kremlin. Yet it realised that

putting Mr Navalny in jail would only have boosted his popularity.

Instead, Mr Navalny was discredited as a crook and agent of foreign influence. “In the popular imagination I am that guy who wants America to enslave Russia,” he says. The Kremlin contrasted his alleged pro-Westernism with its own narrative of imperial nationalism that culminated in the annexation of Crimea.

Paradoxically, says Mr Navalny, Russia’s drift towards war and isolation has made his position less hopeless. A few years ago talk of a genuine opposition taking part in elections was fanciful. Putin supporters as well as liberals were able to argue that any possible replacement would probably empower darker forces, unleash a war or lead to attempts to resurrect the Soviet Union. “Now Putin has done it all himself,” says Mr Navalny.

And just as Mr Putin has shifted, so has he. Once a blogger and street protester, Mr Navalny has become the leader of a democratic movement. He helped to consolidate parts of a fractious opposition and form a coalition with Mikhail Kasyanov, who served as prime minister during Mr Putin’s first term as president.

#### Middle-class warrior

His perseverance seems almost irrational given Mr Putin’s approval rating of over 80%. But Mr Navalny argues that the constituency that came on the streets in 2011 and voted for him in Moscow in 2013 has not disappeared, even if it is demoralised. “Russia is a country of large cities where at least 30% of the population supports our views,” he says. It is the same constituency that formed Mr Putin’s original support base when he entered politics: the urban middle class. “I actually represent the interests of a large number of the Russian population,” he says.

The Kremlin seems to think that contention is at least plausible. It barred Mr Navalny and his allies from running in local elections in two cities with large proportions of educated voters, Novosibirsk and Kaluga. Some activists went on hunger strike, putting public pressure on the Kremlin, which in the end agreed as a sop to let RPR-Parnas run in the Kostroma region, encompassing some of the country’s most rural and depressed areas. Mr Navalny seized the opportunity. Dozens of volunteers have manned street stands handing out flyers, while candidates travel to small towns to meet voters.

They have made corruption a central issue in the campaign. Many see it as the organising principle of Mr Putin’s government, as well as its biggest vulnerability. “There may be convinced Stalinists in Russia, but there is nobody in Russia who supports the idea of a state official owning a palace,” Mr Navalny insists. Mostly excluded from the airwaves, in just three weeks the RPR-Parnas team has nonetheless lifted its voter recognition from 25% to 50% in the

city of Kostroma, and from 15% to 40% in the surrounding region.

For Mr Navalny the main goal of participating in regional elections is to show that an opposition party can clear the 5% legal threshold necessary to win representation. He hopes such a feat will revive popular interest in politics and revitalise the democratic electorate, not least ahead of the parliamentary elections in 2016. To this end he is conjuring up somewhat far-fetched next steps. "First we get into parliament, then we form an important faction and afterwards form a government through a coalition agreement," he says.

Next for Mr Navalny is a further evolution of his public image. He aims to assume the mantle of the eastern European protest leaders who won power in Soviet satellite states in 1989, eventually leading their people into the European Union. He recently spent three days conversing with Adam Michnik, a Polish historian and former dissident, comparing the experiences of Poland and Russia for a book to be published in Russian in October, followed by an English translation.

The tone of the conversation is very different from the self-deprecating ease of 1990s liberalism and centres around a people's craving for status. "My task is to create a new type of patriotism without Russian tanks going into Czechoslovakia, Poland or Ukraine. If Russia needs an expansion, it has to be a cultural and scientific one," he tells Mr Michnik. "My main motivation is to prove that Russians are no less suited to democracy than any other people."

Where Mr Navalny differs most obviously from post-Soviet liberals is in his hard-man attitude to politics. He doubts that economic reform ideals will ever be sufficient to turn Russia into a modern European country. The entire political system needs overhauling. "I am a politician, not a philosopher, and I am fighting for power," he says.

From the print edition: Europe



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**AP Comparative Government  
Putin's Reforms in Russia – Debate**

**Side A**

President Putin's reforms are a good for Russia.

**Side B**

President Putin's reforms were bad for Russia.

**Preparation Assignment (Homework)**

1. Read "Russian Democracy Under Putin" by Michael McFaul
2. Summarize this article section by section.
3. **Find at least one current event to update this article. Your current event must provide new information and be about changes made by Vladimir Putin.**
4. List three arguments that will support side (A) and three arguments that will support side (B) in a chart similar to the one below.

**Preparation Assignment (In-Class) Debate will take place on \_\_\_\_\_**

You will draw from a hat to determine which side of the debate you will be on. Then, each side will be given approximately time to prepare. Each side is to make a list on news print of their arguments, beginning with the best argument down to their weakest argument. Then identify the arguments you believe your opposition will say and discuss how you will refute their arguments.

**Debate Procedure:** Side A and B will be seated facing one another. Side A will begin, raise your hand when you have a comment. I will call on students from sides a/b. This debate will last approximately 15 minutes. At the conclusion of the debate we will debrief – I will ask you if you agreed with your side and why.

**Arguments in Favor of Side A**

**Arguments in Favor of Side B**





independence.

Nonetheless, the Russian state and Russian society displayed features of democratic development.<sup>3</sup> Elections took place under a set of rules recognized by all. The results of these elections were not entirely certain beforehand, and no authority intervened after Election Day to reverse the outcome of the voting. The playing field for competitors in elections was never equal and has steadily become less so.

Nonetheless, the rulers of Russia were selected in competitive elections. The regime that emerged in the 1990s was qualitatively different from the communist and tsarist dictatorships.

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Since Vladimir Putin became president at the beginning of 2000, democratic institutions have eroded. When Yeltsin appointed Putin prime minister in the fall of 1999, the regime's uncertain and unconsolidated nature lowered the barriers for institutional change. Putin soon put his imprint not only on policy but on institutions. He has not amended or radically violated the 1993 constitution, and he has not upended the institutional configuration of Yeltsin's regime. Nor does he seem to have any coherent plan for doing so. He has, however, initiated or tolerated a series of discrete changes that have diminished the democratic legacy of the reform years. Yeltsin, in recruiting Putin from the closed world of the security agencies and announcing him as the "steel core" of a revitalized government, undoubtedly expected a course correction toward discipline and order. He now thinks that Putin has gone too far in certain respects. However, Yeltsin's feelings are irrelevant. What is important and worrisome is the cumulative impact of the changes.

Putin's innovations coincide with a spate of revisionist thinking about democratization in the contemporary world. Some say that autocracies are being replaced, as often as not, by hybrid regimes entwining democratic with authoritarian principles. Others go further, asserting that Russia and a series of other countries are best thought of as "competitive-authoritarian" systems, in which the authoritarian element has the upper hand.<sup>4</sup> Much ink has been spilled in recent years on the failure of the promising "third wave" of global democratization, which extended from the 1970s into the 1990s, and was capped by the fall of the Soviet dictatorship and its satellites in Eastern Europe. Although there have been democratic success stories in the former Soviet Union, there have been terrible failures and disappointments as well.<sup>5</sup>

It is premature to pigeonhole Russia into any of these autocratic categories. The phrase "managed democracy" will do as a marker for the current condition of its polity. If it is too early to sign the death certificate for democracy, it is too late to ignore tokens of a backing away from the liberal and democratic ideals in which name the Soviet regime was overthrown. Having begun on Yeltsin's watch, the retreat has gathered momentum under Putin. Russia's present rulers are modernizers in the economic and socioeconomic sphere and pro-Western realists in foreign policy.

In the political domain, they take the electoral mechanism and the trappings of democracy for granted. They accept that they must periodically renew their popular mandate and that when they do, society must be afforded alternatives to the status quo. They are also reconciled to a limited diversity of opinions and interests within the state machinery. Without setting out to extinguish it, they aim to contain this

diversity within boundaries they alone fix. For those at the rudder, democracy is neither good nor evil. It is an existential product of larger forces that, like gravity, cannot be stopped, yet, with the appropriate engineering, can be harnessed to one's own purpose. Institutional change under Putin has reflected this odd blend of preserving formal democratic practices and at the same time weakening the actual democratic content of these political rules and norms.

### **The New Balance of Power in the Duma**

Putin took office bent on resuming the economic reforms that had been stymied by governmental disorganization and legislative resistance in Yeltsin's second term. Although he selected a face from the Yeltsin era, Mikhail Kasianov, to head his first cabinet, Putin inserted a team of market liberals into the next tier, most of them known to him from his St. Petersburg days. Key players were the new first deputy prime minister and minister of finance, Aleksei Kudrin (a fellow vice mayor with Putin under Anatolii Sobchak), the minister for economic development and trade, German Gref, and the president's personal adviser on economic affairs, the iconoclastic Andrei Illarionov. The team came in with an ambitious program encompassing tax reform, land privatization, deregulation, changes in labor and welfare policy, and incentives for foreign investors.

The 1999-2000 electoral cycle put in place a Duma and a president with the same basic political orientation, enabling rapid progress on this reform agenda. The Unity bloc, partnering with the People's Deputy faction (consisting of pro-Kremlin deputies from the districts) and Regions of Russia (which parted from Fatherland-All Russia [OVR] after the Duma election), materialized as the pivotal force in the Duma.<sup>6</sup> These political partners made a deal with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) to divide the chairs of major committees, cutting out OVR, the Union of Right Forces (SPS), Yabloko, and the Liberal Democrats (LDPR).<sup>7</sup> The pact gave the KPRF's Gennadii Seleznev a second term as speaker. Seleznev's subsequent departure from the communist hierarchy made it apparent that he now had a binding commitment to Putin and the Kremlin. Unity's alliance with the KPRF was purely tactical and unwound in the course of 2000 and 2001. Unity increasingly counted on rightist deputies to help it pursue its legislative agenda, leaving the jilted KPRF leader, Gennadii Ziuganov, to huff at Putin as a "liberal dictator."<sup>8</sup>

For the first time since 1993, the balance of power in the Russian parliament is decisively anti-communist. The Duma has not indulged in squabbling with the president by debating impeachment and censure resolutions. Pushed to act on the economy by Putin and his government, the Duma has enacted new sections of the Russian tax code, which had been in legislative limbo for years, putting in place a flat income tax of 13 percent and a lower profits tax.<sup>9</sup> It has gone along with a new labor code, considered very friendly to business interests, and a land code that allows for the ownership and sale of farms and urban land. Putin and the executive branch have also managed to work with the Duma to pass balanced and feasible budgets, a feat rarely accomplished in the Yeltsin years, when parliament and president were so bitterly estranged.<sup>10</sup> Putin has not yet sent the Duma draft legislation on some of the most painful structural changes, such as those touching on pensions and social assistance. Nevertheless, much has been accomplished since the polarization of executive and legislature was eased as a consequence of the 1999-2000 elections.<sup>11</sup>

The new relationship between the Duma and the president is not "anti-democratic." Every president around the world wants to work with a pliant parliament. Executives in liberal democracies most certainly spend considerable political and material resources to achieve a pro-presidential majority in their legislatures. The anti-democratic flavor of current executive-legislative relations in Russia comes from the way in which the new pro-presidential majority was achieved, that is, through an election in which the playing field was not level for all participants. Unlike any previous parliamentary election in Russia, the Kremlin intervened actively in the 1999 contest to assist Unity and destroy Fatherland-All Russia. The Kremlin relied on its allies in the country's two largest television networks, ORT and RTR, to unleash a negative assault against Fatherland-All Russia. Although other factors contributed to Unity's strong finish and Fatherland-All Russia's disappointing showing in the 1999 parliamentary vote, the playing field for the two parties was not equal.<sup>12</sup>

### **Weakening the Federation Council**

Putin has assembled super-majorities in the Duma-majorities capable of overriding vetoes of bills handed down by the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament. As a result, he has been able to transform the organization of the upper house and therefore the federal system. To everyone's surprise, Putin made reform of the Federation Council one of his top political goals in his first months in office.

The Russian constitution states that after an interim period during which members would be directly elected (1993-1995), each region of the federation was to send two deputies to the Federation Council: one representing the province's legislative assembly, and one representing its chief executive. The constitution did not specify how these representatives were to be selected. By the end of the two years, the regional governments had won agreement on a law mandating that all provincial leaders were to be popularly elected-until then, Yeltsin had appointed many governors-and that governors and legislative heads would henceforth sit *ex officio* in the Federation Council. This formulation gave the governors and their legislative colleagues increased local legitimacy and greater autonomy from Yeltsin and Moscow. By granting the governors and republic presidents a direct voice in the national parliament, it also created a constitutional anomaly in that these figures would be concurrently executives and legislators. The Federation Council functioned mostly as a lobby for regional interests.

Two weeks after he was sworn into office, Putin proposed a new recipe for the upper house that replaced the regional leaders with persons designated by them under an intricate formula.<sup>13</sup> The members of the Federation Council resisted tenaciously, knowing they would lose their apartments and offices in Moscow, their parliamentary immunity, and much of their clout with the federal government. After a heated battle, in which the Duma said it would override a Federation Council veto and the Kremlin allegedly threatened governors with criminal investigations if they did not support Putin's plan, the law was adopted in July 2000. As a sop, many governors and retired governors were appointed to a new presidential advisory body, the State Council.

The reform has emaciated a significant institutional counterweight to the president. Council members, being unelected, do not have the same authority as their predecessors. Many, in fact, are Muscovites with patronage ties to Putin-they

obtained their seats with his administration's backing and have put the Kremlin's interests ahead of their constituents.<sup>14</sup> The new setup also makes it more difficult for regional leaders to take collective action vis-à-vis the central government. As the Duma deputy Vladimir Lysenko stated in 2001, "The president had managed to get rid of one of the strongest and most authoritative state bodies in the country. Under the old structure, the Federation Council provided somewhat of a check and balance on the other branches of power, especially the executive, which is fast evolving into an authoritarian regime."<sup>15</sup> Putin's reforms of the Federation Council did not formally transgress the democratic rules of the game outlined in Russia's constitution. Moreover, the prior method of constituting the upper house was far from perfect, since it blurred the lines between executive and legislative authority. Putin's correction to this odd formation, however, was not the democratizing measure that many had proposed for years—that is, direct election of senators. Instead, his reform decreased the role of the citizenry in selecting its governmental representatives and thus weakened another check on the Kremlin's power.

### **Moscow Versus the Regions**

Putin's clipping of the governors' wings was extended to their home turf by a decree enacted on May 13, 2000. The decree established seven super-regions ("federal districts"), accountable to Moscow, and super-imposed them on the eighty-nine units of the federation. Each super-region was to be headed by a plenipotentiary appointed by the president and sitting on his Security Council. Five of the seven envoys named in 2000 were from the Federal Security Service (FSB), the army, or the police.<sup>16</sup> Their writ extends to every federal agency in the regions other than the military forces, and thus they have access to officials in the politically most sensitive and influential agencies, such as the treasury, the tax inspectorate, the procuracy, the FSB, and the regular police. Their mission is to oversee the activities of the bureaucracy and report to the president's office on any regional noncompliance with the constitution or the law.

Three other changes accompanied the super-regions. First, a law passed in July 2000 authorizes the president to suspend elected governors accused of wrongdoing by the procurator-general's office. Inasmuch as criminal proceedings can drag on indefinitely (especially if it suits the president), the law is tantamount to a presidential right to fire governors. Putin has used the power only once, and indirectly at that (when he orchestrated the ouster of Governor Evgenii Nazdratenko of Primorskii Krai in 2001),<sup>17</sup> but the mere threat of it has had a chilling effect on gubernatorial initiative. Putin can also dismiss any regional legislature that passes laws contravening federal laws or the constitution. Second, Putin's government has stopped signing the bilateral agreements with the provinces that were one of Yeltsin's favorite instruments for winning their acquiescence. As of 2003, the division of labor among the national and subnational governments is to be governed by an omnibus law that in principle is to be applied uniformly across Russia. Third, Moscow has pushed through a more centralized allotment of tax receipts. As of 1999, roughly 45 percent of the revenues collected in the regions were supposed to be transferred to the central government, but the amount that reached it was often smaller. Under a law signed by Putin in 2000, about 55 percent is to go to Moscow and 45 percent to the regions, and the balance is to be reviewed regularly. Regions like Bashkortostan, which for years paid almost no federal taxes by a virtue of bilateral agreement, are once again contributing to the federal budget.

## **Party Fractures, Election Machinations**

Russia's party system does not perform the role that party systems play in working democracies. Most of the country's parties lack a distinct identity or a stable following. They have little effect on the elections that count, the ones in which the president and the regional administrative heads are chosen. Russian electoral law assigns political parties a pivotal role in parliamentary elections, but nonpartisans and weak party organizations continue to play a critical role. Finally, there is little internal cohesion within the parties that remain.

**Fatherland-All Russia.** The Fatherland-All Russia bloc (OVR), the founding of which initiated the electoral struggle, spoke for current and recent officeholders who sought control of the national government on the assumption that Yeltsin and his entourage were a spent force. Unity, the response to OVR's challenge, was initially created by some pro-Kremlin governors and businessmen like Boris Berezovskii who were concerned about the problems they would face if OVR and former prime minister Evgenii Primakov came to power.

Both founding groups miscalculated. OVR made the biggest blunder when it fumbled the Duma election and then concluded that it could not field a credible candidate for president. All Russia and the Regions of Russia caucus defected in January 2000 and mended fences with the Kremlin. In due course, the entire coalition followed abjectly into Putin's camp.

**Unity.** The original masterminds of Unity miscalculated in a different way. Unity achieved electoral success and incorporation into the power structure, but its architect, Berezovskii, did not survive as a political insider. Anticipating Putin's gratitude, Berezovskii got the back of his hand, because Putin feared that the "Family" group around Berezovskii and his business ventures had too much influence. He first ostracized Berezovskii and then pushed him into exile in London in 2001. Unity thrived without Berezovskii, upgrading its legal status from electoral bloc to civic movement and then, in 2002, into a political party named Unified Russia. OVR agreed to a phased-in merger with Unified Russia that will be complete in time for the 2003 parliamentary election. Whereas Yeltsin discarded two consecutive parties of power, Russia's Choice and Our Home Is Russia, Putin favors strengthening Unity/Unified Russia as an organization and seems ready to endorse and assist it in the 2003 parliamentary elections.

**Communists.** A smoldering disagreement in the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), the main opposition party, between the leader, Ziuganov, and the parliamentary speaker, Seleznev, burst into flame in 2002. Seleznev resigned from the party but, with Kremlin support, kept the speaker's job. He has formed his own political organization, Russia (Rossiia), and vows to battle the KPRF for leftist votes in the next elections. Many members are disgruntled with Ziuganov's inflexibility, and thus the KPRF may very well nominate a younger, less hidebound individual, such as Sergei Glazev, as its presidential standard bearer in 2004. Despite these internal battles, the KPRF is poised to benefit from its loyal and stable electorate. Compared to all of Russia's other parties, the KPRF has the most promising short-term future.

**Union of Right Forces.** On the right, the SPS has made the transition from a coalition

of parties and movements to a political party. The head of its 1999 slate, Sergei Kirienko, withdrew from partisan activity when he became Putin's plenipotentiary in the Volga super-region. This left Boris Nemtsov as parliamentary chair, with Anatolii Chubais, Yeltsin's privatization tsar, lurking in the wings. Having cooperated with the government and seen it institute a liberal economic policy, SPS worries that it will not have a attractive platform to sell to the electorate in 2003. Several veterans of the Russian democratic movement, most prominently human rights advocate Sergei Kovalev, have quit the party in disgust at its pro-war stance on Chechnya.<sup>18</sup> With Unity creeping to the right and the Kremlin ever more hostile to its leaders, SPS will have to fight hard to maintain its slightly right-of-center electoral base in the 2003 parliamentary elections.

**Yabloko.** SPS's liberal rival, Yabloko, suffered a number of defections after March 2000, including the manager of its 1999 campaign, Viacheslav Igrunov, who left to form his own boutique political movement.<sup>19</sup> Grigorii Yavlinskii remains at the helm and has firmed his relationship with Mikhail Khodorkovskii, the CEO of Yukos and the richest man in Russia. Sporadic negotiations with SPS about a common slate in 2003 or other forms of collaboration have been in vain.<sup>20</sup> After years of standoffishness toward the government, Yavlinskii has edged closer to Putin, perhaps aware of how much the president's blessings could help him in the next election. Putin's attitude toward the liberals was apparently influenced by their conduct during the crisis sparked by the seizure of hundreds of hostages in a Moscow theater by Chechen fighters in October 2002. He accused Nemtsov of exploiting the disaster for political gain and praised Yavlinskii for not doing so. His reaction fueled suspicion that Putin may back Yabloko as his liberal ally instead of SPS.<sup>21</sup>

**Long-Term Effects.** Whatever comes of these partisan intrigues and squabbles, there are two other changes underway that must be watched for their long-term effects. The first stems from the interest of the Russian leadership in revamping the rules for party formation and State Duma elections. Addressing Unity's convention in February 2000, Putin spoke in favor of a "workable" party system made up of "two, three, or four parties."<sup>22</sup> Streamlining was the main aim of a new law on parties passed in 2001, which stiffened the requirements for registration and stipulated that electoral blocs would now have to include one political party. In 1999, Unity called for an end to proportional representation and for all deputies to be elected in districts. Its motivations were not altruistic. Unity's poor showing in the districts in 1999 notwithstanding, its founders calculated that a party of power would do better in a district-based system, especially if it could polarize the district races and then prevail in the runoff. Unity and its Duma allies have so far failed to institute such a change, but in 2002, they raised the threshold for the party list from 5 to 7 percent, effective in 2007 (they originally proposed 12.5 percent), which will decrease the number of parties that get into parliament. Putin's brain trust hopes eventually to push all parties other than Unified Russia and the KPRF to the sidelines.<sup>23</sup> If the communists and Unified Russia were to cooperate in getting rid of proportional representation altogether, Russia's proto-multiparty system might easily become a hegemonic party system dominated by Unified Russia.<sup>24</sup>

The second and more alarming trend is toward arbitrary interference by the central authorities in regional elections, usually with the connivance of local politicians, electoral commissions, and courts. The tone was set in November 2000, when Kremlin officials pressured a judge to remove the incumbent, Aleksandr Rutskoi,

from the gubernatorial ballot in Kursk on the eve of the election. Rutskoï, a supporter of Unity in 1999 and Russia's vice president from 1991 to 1993, had, among other things, offended Putin during the controversy about the sinking of the submarine Kursk several months before.<sup>25</sup> In April 2002, the scenario was repeated with the front-runner for president of Ingushetiia, a republic bordering Chechnya.<sup>26</sup> The same year, Moscow intervened on behalf of clients in gubernatorial elections in Krasnoiarsk and Nizhnii Novgorod, and there were charges of fraud in the vote counting.<sup>27</sup> Such practices, whether or not they spread to the national level, compromise Russia's functioning even as an electoral democracy. As Andreas Shedler has observed, the process of assessing electoral democracies is like multiplying by zero, as opposed to adding: "Partial compliance to democratic norms does not add up to partial democracy. Gross violation of any one condition invalidates the fulfillment of all the others. If the chain of democratic choice is broken anywhere, elections become not less democratic but undemocratic."<sup>28</sup>

The lack of strong opposition parties and the central state's ability to intervene in local elections underscore the weakness of the checks on the Kremlin's power. Rather than consolidating, these potential balancers of presidential power have weakened with time.

### **Chechnya and Civil Liberties**

Putin's rise to power dovetailed with a cruel war in Chechnya, the second Russia had fought there since 1994. In the 1999-2000 electoral cycle, voters saw Unity and then Putin as the political players who could best handle this tormenting issue. The initial use of force against the Chechen fighters making raids on nearby Dagestan in 1999 was justified. Russia also had a sovereign right to deal with the lawlessness that enveloped Chechnya after the Khasavyurt accord ended the first war in 1996, a plague whose barbarous manifestations included a wave of kidnappings and the execution of hostages. The Russian government's response—full-scale reoccupation, bombardment by heavy weaponry, oppressive patrols and "filtration camps" for segregating and interrogating suspects—has not brought about the promised result. Putin has pledged military reform, as did Yeltsin before him, and appointed a civilian, Sergei Ivanov of the FSB, as defense minister in 2000, but this objective has taken a back seat to prosecuting the war with archaic military forces consisting of sullen conscripts led by a Soviet-era officer corps.<sup>29</sup>

Wars are always brutal, and Chechnya is no exception, but the violence of the guerrillas and the terrorists linked to them does not exonerate Russia's routinely inhumane actions. Human Rights Watch has documented atrocities that include summary shootings, the torching of villages, the rape of Chechen women, and the mistreatment of prisoners of war.<sup>30</sup> Experts reckon that the fighting has displaced 400,000 refugees.<sup>31</sup> Moscow has no strategy for either withdrawal or a negotiated settlement. The March 2003 referendum on Chechnya's status, in which more than 90 percent of its citizens supposedly endorsed all three of Moscow's questions, was a farce, emphasizing yet again the lack of a serious plan to end the bloodshed. To stanch the flow of information about human rights violations, Russia has expelled the observer mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe from the republic.

President Putin has loosened the leash on the FSB, which he headed in 1998-1999

and which is now directed by his associate Nikolai Patrushev. The agency has stepped up its harassment of targeted human rights activists and environmentalists, Western non-governmental organizations, and religious groups affiliated with outside organizations.<sup>32</sup> New guidelines on foreign contacts for academics have been issued, and contacts with scientists in so-called closed nuclear cities are restricted. Several academics and environmentalists have been prosecuted for espionage, although the most conspicuous cases ended with acquittals or pardons.<sup>33</sup> At the end of 2002, the FSB became more aggressive about limiting contacts between Russian citizens and foreigners. The Ministry of the Interior must now review most visa invitations to non-Russians. In addition to evicting the OSCE from Chechnya, the Russian government canceled its agreement with the U.S. Peace Corps and refused reentry to Irene Stevenson, the long-time director of the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center in Moscow.

### **Muzzling the Independent Media**

Putin has also tightened the state's grip on the mass media, assigning priority to national television.<sup>34</sup> The commercial network NTV supported OVR in the Duma campaign and, though less warmly, Yavlinskii in the presidential campaign, and provided the most candid coverage of the two Chechen wars. Putin moved to settle scores in the spring of 2000. His Kremlin administration leaned on prosecutors to investigate alleged past misdeeds of Vladimir Gusinskii, president of the Media-Most company, which owned NTV. Gazprom, the natural gas conglomerate with strong ties to the Kremlin, then called in a large loan to NTV. In the space of several months, Gazprom's media holding company took control of the network, Gusinskii fled abroad, the staff of the weekly newsmagazine *Itogi* was fired, and most Media-Most ancillaries were shut down. Gazprom purged NTV a second time in January 2003, removing Boris Jordan, the Russian-American director it had appointed in 2000, due to NTV's critical coverage of the government's handling of the hostage crisis in a theater in downtown Moscow in the fall of 2002. Evgenii Kiselev and many of NTV's best journalists and producers migrated to TV-6, a much smaller station owned by Berezovskii, only to have the government close it. The former NTV employees got back on the air on a channel called TVS in 2002, but it has only a small fraction of the national audience. One of the original TVS board members, Evgenii Primakov, "called on editorial staff to exercise 'internal censorship' in order to keep the network 'responsible.'" <sup>35</sup> By the time Berezovskii relinquished TV-6, he had already ceded his large minority stake and editorial control in ORT, and Sergei Dorenko, the sarcastic newscaster who was his and the Kremlin's battering ram against OVR in 1999, had been sent packing. Governmental agencies have severely restricted access to Chechnya by Russian and foreign correspondents, and have arrested and intimidated several print journalists whose war stories they found inconvenient.<sup>36</sup>

The struggle about the media involves business and personality issues as well as questions of free speech. The losers to date are not blameless. Gusinskii's financial practices were questionable, and NTV did not offer equal access to all comers during the 1999-2000 elections. Nevertheless, the pluralism that comes from multiple owners and multiple biases is preferable to the monotone that would result from a total state monopoly of the news. In nationwide television broadcasting, Russia is closer to such a monopoly today than at any time since the establishment of NTV in 1993. In its Global Survey of Media Independence for 2003, Freedom House listed



Russia as "not free" for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the 2003-2004 round of elections approaches, even moderate opponents of Putin have many fewer outlets for delivering their message than in 1999-2000.<sup>37</sup>

### **Putin's Agenda and the Future of Russian Democracy**

Putin and his statecraft cannot be appraised on one level or by one criterion. Enough is not yet known to make it possible to sort through the ellipses and contradictions in the thinking of the public man. The private man is hidden behind many veils.

Some of what is here called managed democracy is a pragmatic response to the trying circumstances Russia found itself in at the end of the 1990s. Boris Yeltsin, capable of flashes of imagination and boldness, was bored with the minutiae of government and preferred changing officials to rethinking policies. To buy support and stability in tumultuous times, he repeatedly made concessions to groups like the provincial governors and the new business elite, barely considering the costs. Putin inherited these arrangements, found many of them lacking, and set out to enforce or negotiate better terms. The particulars often reflect common sense more than ideology, and might very well have been implemented no matter who succeeded Yeltsin. Although the means have sometimes been suspect, there is nothing objectionable in Putin's ending the polarization of executive and legislature, removing the anomaly of governors sitting in the upper house of parliament, squeezing more tax revenues from the provinces, tinkering with the electoral system, putting one or two of the most arrogant oligarchs in their place, and retaliating against the Chechen incursion into Dagestan. In economic policy, Putin has listened to liberal advice and converted it into legislation more consistently and effectively than Yeltsin did. His reforms, along with the 1998 devaluation and the rise in world oil prices, have helped sustain an economic recovery now in its fifth year, a welcome respite after so long in the doldrums.

Prolonged economic growth should be conducive to democracy, for it will grow a middle class that will demand freedoms and accountable governance.<sup>38</sup> This could end up being Putin's most benign legacy to Russia. Nor should one ignore the institutional and political projects he supports that may ultimately strengthen democratic governance. To his credit, for example, Putin favors legal reforms that will pare the power of prosecutors, introduce jury trials nationwide, and lessen the incarceration rate. In 2002, he vetoed restrictive amendments to the law on the mass media passed by parliament after the Moscow hostage crisis. On occasion at least, Putin says the right things about democracy and human rights. In November 2001, he attended a Civic Forum sponsored by his administration with the purpose of bridging the chasm between state officials and grassroots activists. The sight of a former KGB agent, Putin, sitting at the same table as a former Soviet dissident and Helsinki Watch leader, Ludmila Alekseeva, was a stirring one, although some fretted that it was all a ploy to co-opt activists.<sup>39</sup> A year later, Putin met with a similar group on International Human Rights Day and proclaimed that his heart was with them: Protecting civil rights and freedoms is a highly relevant issue for Russia. You know that next year will see the tenth anniversary of our constitution. It declares the basic human rights and freedoms to be the highest value and it enshrines them as self-implementing standards. I must say that this is of course a great achievement.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, Putin's actions are all too frequently at variance with his words. He

has worked assiduously to weaken the ramshackle checks and balances built up during Yeltsin's tenure and to impose the tidy logic of the rationalizer and controller but not, as a rule, the logic of the democrat. Yeltsin loved adding pawns to the political chessboard. Putin is happier subtracting them, as he has with Fatherland-All Russia, the oligarchs who got too close to the throne (Berezovskii and Gusinskii), the governors who rashly meddled in Moscow politics, the parties he wants to limit to "two, three, or four," and the elected government of Chechnya. When the chips are down, Putin has shown himself to be, if not actively antagonistic to democratic values, indifferent to their application. In his pursuit of a strong state that can solve Russia's problems, he tends to forget what he said in his open letter to the electorate in February 2000—that a strong state, capable of promoting popular freedom and welfare, must itself be "bound by the laws." A presidential administration that schemes to have candidates whisked off the ballot hours before a gubernatorial election is not one bound by the law. Neither is a government that invokes phony legal excuses to seize control of an NTV or a TV-6 or that lets ill-trained troops run amok in the North Caucasus.

It is not the trees that one should dwell on here but the forest. Democracy as practiced by Putin is partly about practical problem-solving, but it is also about eliminating external checks on the power of the state and the leader without scrapping the constitutional framework bequeathed by Yeltsin. Russia's political institutions were never more than partly democratic and were not properly consolidated during the Yeltsin period. This makes it all the more deplorable that Putin has diverted the country further away from democratic development. After the critical set of elections in 1999-2000 and the first several years in office of the talented leader who triumphed in them, the future of Russian democracy is, in fact, more uncertain than before. Theorists and policymakers must come to grips with the regime trajectory in Russia today. The country is not following the democratic-transition script. Contrary to what some in the Bush administration believe, Russia is very unlikely to graduate to liberal democratic status by 2008.

The impact on the regime of Putin's rise to power suggests that the current political system has not consolidated. Russia's nascent democracy is on a negative trajectory, but the unconsolidated state of the regime gives some cause for hope. The regime has not become a total dictatorship.<sup>41</sup> Whether Putin even wants to create such a regime is an open question. Whether he could is also uncertain. Although weak throughout the 1990s and weaker today than just two years ago, democratic rules and procedures are still embedded in the regime, and democratic norms permeate society.<sup>42</sup> Above all else, every major political actor in Russia today believes that elections are the only legitimate way to choose national leaders. No serious leader or political force in Russia today has articulated an alternative model to democracy. For the near future, Putin and his advisers seem likely to manage a version of democracy that limits real political competition and blocks the strengthening of alternative sources of political power. During new crises or after unforeseen events, "managed democracy" can become unmanageable, and pseudo-democratic institutions may suddenly gain real democratic content. The experience of Slobodan Milosević in the former Yugoslavia and Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine demonstrates how formal democratic rules can suddenly and surprisingly undermine the best plans for "managing" democracy.

In Russia, though, the most likely outcome for the near future is neither more democracy nor more autocracy—neither liberal democracy nor dictatorship—but a

stable regime somewhere in between. Putin has eroded democratic institutions and practices but has not destroyed them, nor has he articulated a plan for their further erosion. Russian society seems content with the current quasi-democratic, quasi-autocratic order. Russians value democracy but are too exhausted, from decades of turmoil, to fight for better democracy. Stability is the greater priority. Managed democracy could be around in Russia for a long time.

END

### Notes

1. For more skeptical assessments, see Vladimir Brovkin, "The Emperor's New Clothes: Continuities of Soviet Political Culture in Contemporary Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43, no. 2 (March/April 1996): 21-28; Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, *Market Bolshevism: The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1999); Stephen Cohen, "Russian Studies Without Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1999): 37-55; Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Realities* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).
2. On the differences between electoral and liberal democracies, see Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
3. For elaboration of the authors' views on this subject, see Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
4. See Larry Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 21-35; Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 51-65; Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Democracy after Communism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
5. Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 54, no. 2 (January 2002): 212-44.
6. See Thomas F. Remington, "Putin, the Duma, and Political Parties," in *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Dale R. Herspring (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 39-62.
7. The pact scrapped a rule of thumb that assigned committee chairs in proportion to the size of the respective fractions. OVR and the two liberal groups, SPS and Yabloko, boycotted Duma sessions for several weeks, to no end.
8. Quoted by Susan Glasser in the *Washington Post* (June 8, 2002): A14.
9. For details on the package, see Erika Weinthal and Pauline Jones Luong, "Resource Wealth and Institutional Change: The Political Economy of Tax Reform in



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## Moscow does not believe in reporting

All latest updates

# Russia muzzles its best independent news corporation

**RBC was reliable, even-handed, aggressive and popular. Too popular**

May 20th 2016 | MOSCOW | Europe

ON FRIDAY May 13th, Vladimir Putin celebrated the 25th birthday of the Russian television conglomerate VGTRK, the nerve center of the Kremlin's state media machine. "Monopolies are always harmful, and in the information sphere especially so," he told the executives gathered in Sochi. The (unintended) irony was only underscored by a piece of news from back in

Moscow that day: the top editors at RBC, a media group whose hard-hitting investigations touched Mr Putin's family, had been forced out. The final straw seemed to be a story examining the construction of an oyster farm near an opulent Black Sea property known widely as "Putin's Palace".

RBC's fate came as no surprise. Over the past two years, under the ambitious leadership of Elizaveta Osetinskaya, the once-floundering conglomerate established itself as both influential and independent—a fatal combination in today's Russia. RBC's news site became the most cited in the country, its news wire a trusted source for business, and its TV station a rare bastion of objectivity. Meanwhile, RBC's investigative journalists dug into taboo topics others did not dare touch: Russian soldiers fighting in eastern Ukraine; the finances of the Russian Orthodox Church; and the business arrangements of a woman alleged to be Mr Putin's daughter and her husband.

The government's displeasure with RBC's editorial policy was no secret to the paper's owner, the oligarch Mikhail Prokhorov. The pressure escalated this April, after RBC published a front-page report, illustrated with a large picture of Mr Putin, on revelations from the Panama papers that Sergey Roldugin, a cellist and close friend of the president, had stashed some \$2 billion in



offshore accounts. Dmitry Kiselev, the Kremlin's chief propagandist, brandished a copy of the paper on his flagship Sunday night broadcast and denounced RBC as "assistants" of America. Questions began to arise about "whose side we were on," says Ms Osetinskaya. "But I believe that information isn't on anyone's side, information doesn't belong to anyone."

The state thought otherwise. Agents of the Federal Security Service (FSB) soon showed up at the offices of the Prokhorov-controlled Onexim Group, ostensibly in connection with tax fraud. An investigation was opened into one of RBC's sister companies. Ms Osetinskaya, who is bound for a fellowship at Stanford University this fall, took early leave. "It is war. What do you want?" one government official told *Vedomosti*, another influential business daily. (*Vedomosti*, once a joint venture with the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*, recently underwent an ownership change following the passage of a law limiting foreign ownership of Russian media.)

Last week, the confrontation came to a head. Maxim Solyus, editor of the RBC newspaper, was asked to leave; Ms Osetinskaya and Roman Badanin, editor of the news agency, quit in solidarity. RBC's managing director said the decision stemmed from disagreements on "a number of crucial issues". The Kremlin denied it had pressured RBC; a deputy minister of information said the move was economically, not politically motivated. But their spin fell on deaf ears. "It's a clear signal that there truly are topics that are dangerous to touch," says Ms Osetinskaya.

Since taking office in 2000, Mr Putin has prioritised control over the media. One of his first steps as president was consolidating control over television. In recent years, popular news sites such as Lenta.ru and Gazeta.ru have been systemically neutered. The Kremlin still tolerates the existence of some independent outlets—chief among them the TV channel Dozhd and the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. Yet both have relatively small audiences and an unabashedly opposition-minded editorial line.

The cruel paradox of Ms Osetinskaya's tenure at RBC is that success carried a death sentence. With a focus on business and a consciously even-handed style, RBC's coverage reached an audience beyond Moscow's marginalised liberals. Its journalism ultimately proved too visible and too autonomous for its own good. Yet as the Panama papers demonstrated, the desire to control information ever more often runs up against the reality of life in the internet age. The Kremlin won the battle, but free information may yet win the war.

## Duma election in Russia

All latest updates

# Vladimir Putin's party wins again

**A reshuffle of Russia's security services may follow the parliamentary elections**

Sep 19th 2016 | MOSCOW | Europe

MARINA, a middle-aged Muscovite with dark hair and piercing eyes, is unhappy—about rising prices, rampant corruption and even Russia's confrontation with the West. But she is not ready for a change of course.

"People are unsatisfied, but we're afraid of change," she declares. "Gorbachev had some nice ideas, but see how that turned out? I don't want Russia to be destroyed." So

it comes as no surprise that Marina, and most of her compatriots, voted for more of the same when they took to the polls on September 18th for elections to the Duma, the national parliament.



The results were never in question. The ruling United Russia party of President Vladimir Putin secured more than three-quarters of the Duma's 450 seats. These are apportioned under a hybrid system: half are chosen proportionally, according to the votes won by each party list; and the other half are contested by individual candidates. Mr Putin said the strong endorsement for United Russia was "the reaction of our citizens to foreign pressure on Russia" and a vote in favour of stability. Three obedient "systemic opposition" parties will remain in the Duma. But two liberal anti-Kremlin parties, Yabloko and Parnas, garnered less than 2% each and failed to enter the parliament; in the vote for individual candidates, Dmitry Gudkov, the last opposition figure in the previous Duma, was swept away. In any case, the distribution of deputies among pro-Putin parties has little effect on Russia's policies. What the Kremlin says, the Duma does.

The most telling statistic of the day was the turnout, which at 48% was the lowest since the fall of the Soviet Union. Moscow and St Petersburg, home to the urban middle class, were especially inactive. Fewer than 35% of Muscovites showed up at the polls, down from some 66% in 2011. The decision not

to vote reflects the apathy and sense of powerlessness felt by Russia's population. Many keep saying that "ot nas nichego ne zavisit," meaning "nothing depends on us".

The Kremlin also did its best to deprive the election of any drama. The vote was moved up from December to September, leaving little time for voters to engage with the campaign after their summer holidays. Ella Pamfilova, a respected human-rights ombudsman, was put in charge of the Central Electoral Commission and told to keep the vote clean. Although accusations of fraud trickled in regularly throughout the day, including several videos capturing blatant ballot-stuffing, the election appeared less compromised than in 2011, when widespread rigging triggered mass rallies. Fresh protests are unlikely.

That does not mean that Russians are content. A grinding economic crisis has taken its toll. Russia's central bank predicts that GDP will contract by 0.7% this year, after a 3.7% drop last year. Many complain of rising prices and falling wages. "You go into the store and your money gets you nothing," says Marina (who declined to state her last name, quipping, "Tomorrow they'll burn my car"). Corruption rankles with voters, especially as they seek to live on less. "It's unbearable," she adds, shaking her head. Labour unrest is bubbling. One-third of Russians believe the country is headed in the wrong direction.

For all the malaise, politics has turned into a referendum on Mr Putin—and he remains highly popular, despite falling approval ratings for local authorities. "I think he wants what's best for Russia," Marina says. With the opposition neutralised and plagued by infighting, there is nowhere else to turn. Resistance, as the Kremlin has shown, can only end badly. Several demonstrators arrested after the protests of 2011 remain in prison. Alexey Navalny, the face of those protests, has been convicted and barred from running for elected office; Boris Nemtsov, another opposition leader, was assassinated (several Chechens have been charged in connection with the crime).

As attention turns to the presidential elections in 2018, when most expect Mr Putin to stand for a fourth term, the repressive trend seems set to continue. It was probably no coincidence that, on election night, Kommersant, an authoritative daily, reported on leaked plans to create a powerful new Ministry of State Security (MGB). This would merge the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB's main successor agency, with the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), which handles espionage abroad, and the Federal Guard Service (FSO), which is responsible for protecting government officials. The reorganisation would return the security services to the centralised form of the old KGB.

The new ministry and United Russia's dominance of the Duma ought to end any illusion that the Russian system could allow resistance from within, argues Oleg Kashin, a prominent columnist. "Power and the state in Russia are one and the same," he writes. "And any citizens' participation in politics is not expected."

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Daily chart: Voting peculiarities in Russia's elections

(<http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/09/daily-chart-12>)