

## 1: Nomenklatura - Wikipedia

*Political Elite and the New Russia convincingly argues that although reforms in Russia have been initiated by those close to the President, in fact local and national elites have been the crucial strategic actors in reshaping Russia's economy, democratising its political system and decentralising its administration.*

By Gareth Porter Special to Consortium News The narrative of Russian intelligence attacking state and local election boards and threatening the integrity of U. But the real story behind that narrative, recounted here for the first time, reveals that the Department of Homeland Security DHS created and nurtured an account that was grossly and deliberately deceptive. DHS compiled an intelligence report suggesting hackers linked to the Russian government could have targeted voter-related websites in many states and then leaked a sensational story of Russian attacks on those sites without the qualifications that would have revealed a different story. When state election officials began asking questions, they discovered that the DHS claims were false and, in at least one case, laughable. A Sensational Story On Sept. DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson and other senior DHS officials consulted with many state election officials in the hope of getting their approval for such a designation. Meanwhile, the DHS was finishing an intelligence report that would both highlight the Russian threat to U. But several secretaries of state—“the officials in charge of the election infrastructure in their state”—strongly opposed the designation that Johnson wanted. Media stories continued to reflect the official assumption that cyber attacks on state election websites were Russian-sponsored. In July, Illinois discovered an intrusion into its voter registration website and the theft of personal information on as many as , registered voters. The Mueller indictments of GRU officers would unaccountably put the figure at , Significantly, however, the hackers only had copied the information and had left it unchanged in the database. That was a crucial clue to the motive behind the hack. In an interview with me last year, Ken Menzel, the legal adviser to the Illinois secretary of state, confirmed what Ozment had testified. In the other successful cyberattack on an electoral website, hackers had acquired the username and password for the voter database Arizona used during the summer, as Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan learned from the FBI. But the reason that it had become known, according to Reagan in an interview with Mother Jones , was that the login and password had shown up for sale on the dark web—“the network of websites used by cyber criminals to sell stolen data and other illicit wares. Thus, there were reasons to believe that both Illinois and Arizona hacking incidents were linked to criminal hackers seeking information they could sell for profit. Meanwhile, the FBI was unable to come up with any theory about what Russia might have intended to do with voter registration data such as what was taken in the Illinois hack. When FBI Counterintelligence official Bill Priestap was asked in a June hearing how Moscow might use such data, his answer revealed that he had no clue: So DHS and other agencies were consciously sowing public doubts about U. No doubt it was the Russians. As cybersecurity expert Jeffrey Carr pointed out , the Russian hackers who coordinated the Russian attack on Georgian government websites in used a Texas-based company as the hosting provider. The cybersecurity firm ThreatConnect noted in that one of the other two IP addresses had hosted a Russian criminal market for five months in But that was not a serious indicator, either. Private IP addresses are reassigned frequently by server companies, so there is not a necessary connection between users of the same IP address at different times. This methodology conveniently ignored the fact that criminal hackers were constantly trying to get access to every database in those same state, country and municipal systems. Not only for Illinois and Arizona officials, but state electoral officials. In fact, 14 of the 21 states on the list experienced nothing more than the routine scanning that occurs every day, according to the Senate Intelligence Committee. State Officials Force DHS to Tell the Truth For a year, DHS did not inform the 21 states on its list that their election boards or other election-related sites had been attacked in a presumed Russian-sponsored operation. The excuse DHS officials cited was that it could not reveal such sensitive intelligence to state officials without security clearances. But the reluctance to reveal the details about each case was certainly related to the reasonable expectation that states would publicly challenge their claims, creating a potential serious embarrassment. But the notifications, which took the form of phone calls lasting only a few minutes, provided a minimum of information and failed

to convey the significant qualification that DHS was only suggesting targeting as a possibility. And if they complained, they got a more accurate picture from DHS. Lin of Stanford University explained to me in an interview. But including any incident in which that motive was theoretical meant that any state website could be included on the DHS list, without any evidence it was related to a political motive. In an intelligence analysis obtained by The Intercept and reported in June , NSA analysts wrote that the GRU had sent a spear-phishing emailâ€”one with an attachment designed to look exactly like one from a trusted institution but that contains malware design to get control of the computerâ€”to a vendor of voting machine technology in Florida. The hackers then designed a fake web page that looked like that of the vendor. But the idea that Russian military intelligence was planning to hack the voter rolls in American Samoa, an unincorporated U. A close analysis of the relevant paragraphs, however, confirms the lack of any real intelligence supporting that claim. A careful reading of the relevant paragraphs shows that the claim is spurious. So any deletion by Kovalev of his search history after the FBI alert would not be evidence of his involvement in the hacking of the Illinois election board website. But most of the addresses on the list had no connection with Russian intelligence, as former U. When someone at the Burlington, Vt. But instead of quietly investigating the address to verify that it was indeed an indicator of Russian intrusion, DHS immediately informed The Washington Post. The result was a sensational story that Russian hackers had penetrated the U. The threat to the power grid was a tall tale created by a DHS official, which the Post had to embarrassingly retract. Any evidence of such an intrusion must be taken seriously by the U. But in light of the DHS record on alleged threats to election infrastructure and the Burlington power grid, and its well-known ambition to assume leadership over cyber protection, the public interest demands that the news media examine DHS claims about Russian cyber threats far more critically than they have up to now. Gareth Porter is an independent investigative journalist and winner of the Gellhorn Prize for journalism.

## 2: Divisions within the Russian Political Elites Â» American University in Moscow

*Political Elite and the New Russia convincingly argues that although reforms in Russia have been initiated by those close to the President, in fact local and national elites have been the crucial.*

Wright Mills wrote of the "elite" in his book *The Power Elite* as "those political, economic, and military circles, which as an intricate set of overlapping small but dominant groups share decisions having at least national consequences. Insofar as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them". These memberships in turn pave the way to the prominent social clubs located in all major cities and serving as sites for important business contacts". Mills contended that since the end of World War II, corporate leaders had become more prominent in the political process, with a decline in central decision-making for professional politicians. Most prominent corporate leaders and politicians were strong proponents of military spending. According to Mills, in the s when the military emphasis was pronounced, it was corporate leaders working with prominent military officers who dominated the development of policies. These two groups tended to be mutually supportive. According to Mills, the power elite rose from "the managerial reorganization of the propertied classes into the more or less unified stratum of the corporate rich". Instead, class rule is manifested through the activities of a wide variety of organizations and institutions. Leaders within the upper class join with high-level employees in the organizations they control to make up what will be called the power elite". Wright Mills to describe a relatively small, loosely connected group of individuals who dominate American policy making. This group includes bureaucratic, corporate, intellectual, military, media, and government elites who control the principal institutions in the United States and whose opinions and actions influence the decisions of the policymakers. Bush in office identified 7, institutional positions of power encompassing 5, individuals. Age Corporate leaders aged about 60; heads of foundations, law, education, and civic organizations aged around 62; government employees aged about In the economic denomination, as of October [update], only 32 6. Social clubs Most holders of top positions in the power elite possess exclusive membership to one or more social clubs. About a third belong to a small number of especially prestigious clubs in major cities like London, New York City, Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D. Sociologist Christopher Doob gives a hypothetical alternative, stating that these elite individuals would consider themselves the overseers of the national economy. Also appreciating that it is not only a moral, but a practical necessity to focus beyond their group interests. Doing so would hopefully alleviate various destructive conditions affecting large numbers of less affluent citizens. They therefore, have a wide range of knowledge and interests in many influential organizations, and are, as Mills describes, "professional go-betweens of economic, political, and military affairs". Sociologist Manuel Castells writes in *The Rise of the Network Society* that contemporary globalization does not mean that "everything in the global economy is global".

## 3: Elite - Wikipedia

*Studies of political elites have emerged rapidly in post-Communist Russia. This state-of-the-art article reflects on various developments in the field, analyzes research projects and frameworks, and focuses on two major issues of elite research: stratification studies and transition studies.*

Under the conditions of post-communism, it is contended, the leader recruits associates from the power ministries police, security and army. Some things, however, have changed. Now the Soviet political and military threat has been superseded by economic control over energy supply. This image of President Putin, acting as Puppet Master, controlling the strings of power, occludes a more complicated process of elite interaction between the Presidential leadership and economic and political leaders and institutions. The strongest political leader is dependent not only for sustenance on support of military and economic resources, but also on those who mobilise and financially sponsor electoral campaigns and provide political backing. The factual, as opposed to the assertive, base in support of these commonly held views is surprisingly fragile. Others have strongly contested this conclusion. The Russian scholar, O. He contends that the dominant group was, and still is, composed of people from business corporations and generalises from this that Russia is a corporate state. Such an approach brings to the forefront the role of capital and also draws attention to actual and potential differences of economic and political interests among members of the economic and political elites. The Hybrid Economy The political elites work in the context of a hybrid economic system. Under Western and Russian capitalism, there are two frameworks of power: In the West and particularly in the USA, the scope and activity of the state is restricted as an actor in the economy. In Russia, the state has an independent economic property base as well as a stronger coordinating role over business. But a corporate state does not undermine capitalismâ€”the state may strengthen it through financial support, contracts and subsidies. Moreover, unlike China, Russia is not a state capitalist formation because the private corporate sector is much more strongly entrenched. There is a potential here for conflicts between the state and corporations if the state intervenes to direct their resources to politically inspired though legitimate goals, or when it redefines relationships with foreign corporate interests. The hybrid economic system gives rise to two main elite constituencies. A statist oriented bloc leaning towards President Vladimir Putin and a liberal Western-oriented set of interests symbolized by current Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. The Putin Bloc President Putin can rely for support on a faction of the business elite as well as the political elite, which seeks to assert a state driven variety of corporate capitalism. Interests here include the power ministries emphasized by Goldman over whom the President has control; he is also dependent for support on a circle of directors of state owned companies or partly privatised companies, often controlled by government friendly oligarchs. Through joint ownership and overlapping director ships the government seeks to coordinate the Russian economy. In , some 85 per cent of world energy resources are owned by state firms. According to Heiko Pleines, in Russia, state ownership of oil resources rose from 13 per cent in to 40 per cent in The gas industry, even under Yeltsin, remained under state control and accounted for 85 per cent of production in These figures show a remarkable rise in state ownership of oil production under Putin. However, in a global context, state ownership of oil assets is lower than the world norm. The nature of state ownership is put into perspective when we consider that the number of economic enterprises with foreign capital rose steadily from 16, in to 19, in There were over 4 million private companies in operation in Between â€”, capital export from Russia amounted to billion dollars. Russia joined the WTO in ratified in after protracted negotiations. Members of the business eliteâ€”oligarchs like Gusinsky and Berezovskyâ€”lost their TV channels. Putin has been able to secure political control: Putin has also firmly controlled the state media and limited foreign-based Non Government Organisations. The state controlled media support government policies. As Castells has put it: Putin shifted the balance of power from corporate business to the politicians forming the ruling elite. His compact with the oligarchs has allowed them to keep their assets and profits and he has maintained political order. Putin has his own political apparatus. Through it Putin can also channel resources as patronage as well to influence elections. In the latter he has been successful. Liberal-democratic advocates standing for election

against Putin received a derisory share of the vote, even compared to the second largest party, the KPRF Communist Party of the Russian Federation. This is one side of the story. On the other side are more liberal market orientated politicians and interests. The government includes neo-liberal reformers supported by external bodies such as the IMF particularly in the Ministry of Finance. Dmitri Medvedev has been belittled somewhat in the Western media and portrayed as a soft pedaling partner on a tandem a Putin Batman and Medvedev Robin partnership , yet his policies are liberal and Western leaning. He has consistently advocated more liberal policies and, when President, was supported by neo-liberal members of the political elite. He represents a more American orientated neo-liberal market ideology. On 22 June , Medvedev announced that the following private sations would take place: He has long declared the importance of Russia joining the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which promotes a free market economy. He views the components of democracy like a Western liberalâ€™favouring a market society, the rule of law and accountability of government to society. In this context, external political actors also become a major determinant of the direction of economic change. He strongly promotes a more positive attitude towards the West, particularly to the USA. Biden also courted the democratic opposition during his visit. Unlike Putin, who has the backing of the United Russia party and considerable electoral support, Medvedev is politically weak and he lacks a strong popular domestic political base. Even if one concedes that the elections are biased against his challengers, Putin has considerable charisma and is clearly favoured by public opinion reflected in his landslide electoral victories. Both internally and through the international media, the new liberals seek to discredit Putin personally and politically. Massive Western media campaigns del egitimate the election process by amplifying the extent of election fraud. The proposed antidote is further privatisation and minimising the role of the state. Internally, a democratic opposition has arisen in a somewhat haphazard coalition of divided civil society groupings. One leader is Mikhail Kasyanov, a previous Prime minister under Yeltsin, who has consistently campaigned against Putin. Among his demands are a new round of market reforms, a move to an American type corporate economy and the institution of the rule of law. Support for the private sector was shown by the government bailing out privatised companies, rather than nationalising them. A Russian capitalist class coupled to foreign affiliates is able to maintain an area of autonomy against the Putin administration. Any concerted attack by the political leadership against the oligarchs as a class would undoubtedly have foreign repercussions and lead to internal instability. The tensions between the Russian leadership and leading Western trading nations reflect the attempts of President Putin to maintain a Russian national presence in strategic industries and to support the Russian emerging transnational energy companies. President Putin might like to move further in the direction of a national capitalist economic formation, combining a state-led economic formation with significant private, as well as state owned capital. But he and his circle are currently limited by the constraints not only of the domestic oligarchs, but also of foreign companies, especially those with affiliates in Russia.

### 4: Russia's political elite during Putin's third presidency: « [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*The Russian researcher Olga Kryshchanovskaya discusses Russian political elites and their role in the political process in Russia. According to Kryshchanovskaya, a new class of rich people is emerging, a hereditary aristocracy which has yet to be legitimized in the Russian collective consciousness.*

Etymology[ edit ] The Russian term is derived from the Latin *nomenclatura* , meaning a list of names. The term was popularized in the West by the Soviet dissident Michael Voslenski , who in wrote a book titled *Nomenclatura: The Soviet Ruling Class* Russian: Specifically, the *nomenclatura* consisted of two separate lists: The Politburo , as part of its *nomenclatura* authority, maintained a list of ministerial and ambassadorial positions that it had the power to fill, as well as a separate list of potential candidates to occupy those positions. Coextensive with the *nomenclatura* were patron-client relations. Officials who had the authority to appoint individuals to certain positions cultivated loyalties among those whom they appointed. The patron the official making the appointment promoted the interests of clients in return for their support. Powerful patrons, such as the members of the Politburo, had many clients. Moreover, an official could be both a client in relation to a higher-level patron and a patron to other, lower-level officials. Because a client was beholden to his patron for his position, the client was eager to please his patron by carrying out his policies. The Soviet power structure essentially consisted according to its critics of groups of vassals clients who had an overlord the patron. The higher the patron, the more clients the patron had. Patrons protected their clients and tried to promote their careers. Vladimir Lenin wrote that appointments were to take the following criteria into account: Known as *uchraspred* , these organs supervised appointments to important party posts. At the all-union level, the Party Building and Cadre Work Department supervised party *nomenclatura* appointments. This department maintained records on party members throughout the country, made appointments to positions on the all-union level, and approved *nomenclatura* appointments on the lower levels of the hierarchy. Every party committee and party organizational department, from the all-union level in Moscow to the district and city levels, prepared two lists according to their needs. The basic *osnovnoi* list detailed positions in the political, administrative, economic, military, cultural, and educational bureaucracies that the committee and its department had responsibility for filling. The registered *uchetnyi* list enumerated the persons suitable for these positions. Patron-client relations[ edit ] An official in the party or government bureaucracy could not advance in the *nomenclatura* without the assistance of a patron. In return for this assistance in promoting his career, the client carried out the policies of the patron. Patron-client relations thus help to explain the ability of party leaders to generate widespread support for their policies. The presence of patron-client relations between party officials and officials in other bureaucracies also helped to account for the large-scale control the party exercised over the Soviet society. All of the 2 million members of the *nomenclatura* system understood that they held their positions only as a result of a favor bestowed on them by a superior official in the party and that they could easily be replaced if they manifested disloyalty to their patron. Self-interest dictated that members of the *nomenclatura* submit to the control of their patrons in the party. Clients sometimes could attempt to supplant their patron. For example, Nikita Khrushchev , one of Lazar M. Seven years later, Leonid Brezhnev , a client of Khrushchev, helped to remove his boss from power. The power of the general secretary was consolidated to the extent that he placed his clients in positions of power and influence. Firstly, in a centralized government system, promotion in the bureaucratic-political hierarchy was the only path to power. Thirdly, political rivalries were present at all levels of the party and state bureaucracies but were especially prevalent at the top. Fourthly, because fulfillment of the economic plan was decisive, systemic pressures led officials to conspire together and use their ties to achieve that goal. The faction led by Brezhnev provides a good case study of patron-client relations in the Soviet system. Many members of the Brezhnev faction came from Dnipropetrovsk , where Brezhnev had served as first secretary of the provincial party organization. Kirilenko , a Politburo member and Central Committee secretary under Brezhnev, was first secretary of the regional committee of Dnipropetrovsk. Volodymyr Shcherbytsky , named as first secretary of the Ukrainian apparatus under Brezhnev, succeeded Kirilenko in that position. Finally, Nikolai Shchelokov ,

minister of internal affairs under Brezhnev, was a former chairman of the Dnipropetrovsk soviet. Patron-client relations had implications for policy making in the party and government bureaucracies. Promotion of trusted subordinates into influential positions facilitated policy formation and policy execution. In addition, patrons relied on their clients to provide an accurate flow of information on events throughout the country. This information assisted policymakers in ensuring that their programs were being implemented. The hypothesis that the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class does not correspond to a serious analysis of the real development and the real contradictions of Soviet society and economy in the last fifty years. Such a hypothesis must imply, from the point of view of historical materialism, that a new exploitative mode of production has emerged in that country. If this were so, we would be confronted, for the first time in history, with a "ruling class" whose general behavior and private interests which of course dictate that behavior run counter to the needs and inner logic of the existing socio-economic system. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the Soviet economy is the impossibility of reconciling the needs of planning, of optimizing economic growth not from an "absolute" point of view, but from within the logic of the system itself with the material self-interest of the bureaucracy.

### 5: Out With the Old, in With the New for Russia's Political Elite

*Political Elite and the New Russia convincingly argues that although reforms in Russia have been initiated by those close to the President, in fact local and national elites have been the crucial strategic actors in reshaping Russia's economy, democratising its political system and decentralising.*

The Russian researcher Olga Kryshtanovskaya discusses Russian political elites and their role in the political process in Russia. According to Kryshtanovskaya, a new class of rich people is emerging, a hereditary aristocracy which has yet to be legitimized in the Russian collective consciousness. First, we witnessed a division of power in Russia when two power centers co-existed, the Kremlin and the White House. But this was not the case. There are about 75 officials who hold key positions at the top of the Russian power hierarchy. None of these 75 key men was dismissed or replaced by Medvedev – none. Medvedev had to agree with Putin on all decisions concerning the most important appointments. Aside from that, Medvedev generally had a free hand to pursue his policy, and some things he implemented did not appeal to Putin. Nevertheless, this was indeed a division of power, though of a specifically Russian sort. Tandemocracy was a great novelty in Russian political history with its tradition of autarchy. But under Medvedev, it happened that the model of the absolute power was temporarily transformed. Two power centers coexisted between and One rather trivial example is the following. It might happen occasionally that meetings were scheduled at the same time in both the Kremlin and the White House, and some ministers just could not decide which meeting was most important. Even day-to-day politics was affected by this division. Tandemocracy led to a more important consequence, namely the fragmentation of the elite. This finally resulted in huge demonstrations that took place in the winter of 2008 and that accompanied the transition of the presidential power from Medvedev to Putin. This protest movement was able to take place only because it was supported by part of the political elite. The latter decided that Medvedev had a good chance of being reelected to a second presidency. Those people in the elite who did not hold the most important offices but rather held less powerful positions understood that if Medvedev remained president, their career opportunities might be considerably improved. Putin reacted to opposition from this part of the elite rather painfully and interpreted their behavior as treachery. As a result, some very high-placed officials who wanted to keep Medvedev as president lost their offices. Thus, tandemocracy provoked a tension inside the Russian political elite. Medvedev, as the youngest political leader in the recent history of Russia, wanted to see younger people in the state apparatus, a goal he actually publicly promised to pursue on several occasions. When it did not contradict his informal agreement with Putin, he did appoint newcomers, as happened with Russian regional leaders, or governors. Under Medvedev, the average age of governors decreased by fourteen years; before his presidency they had constituted one of the oldest parts of the bureaucracy. It was supposed, though not guaranteed, that these persons would be appointed to higher office. But these persons, and to some degree the public, understood it to mean that such appointments would be made in the immediate future. If you decide to incorporate newcomers, you should first decide what to do with old-timers. But Medvedev never solved this problem. Historically, the rotation of the political elite has posed a tremendous problem for Russian leaders. In political systems where elections are the true mechanism for such rotation, this type of problem can be solved more easily. You lose an election and leave politics. But in an authoritarian system where elections are fictional or of very limited significance, the rotation problem is much greater. That is why our country always had a tradition of the sinecure. Sinecures existed during the Soviet era and consisted of various consultants in the Soviet army or at the Supreme Soviet, the Parliament. Ambassadorial appointments fulfilled the same function. They got rid of the old elite, which then joined the opposition in the street. The ex-elite itself became a dangerous opposition. Putin tried to rebuild this system of rotation, but under Medvedev this balance was threatened again, which provoked irritation inside the political elite. Against the background of this tension, the opposition started its active protest movement, which appealed to a broad segment of the population in the capital and resulted in mobilization in the form of street demonstrations in and A political revolution in Russia was imminent. It was really an extraordinarily serious crisis that those in power managed to escape

only with great difficulty. That is why it was so difficult for him to regain his legitimacy and supreme political power. Was this domain too narrow? What was permitted, and what was prohibited according to their informal agreement? And how can we actually be certain about this? Naturally, we cannot possess exact knowledge about what these two men agreed to; we know nothing about their real conversations. The political system in Russia at the top remains strictly closed to outsiders. What we can do as researchers is observe the visible results of their decision making. Our method is similar to what was employed by old Kremlinologists during the Cold War. I identify myself as a Kremlinologist in terms of applying the same research methods. I just made a list of people who had worked or studied with Medvedev and were known to be his friends. This information is not secret and is accessible to the public. It was a list of 55 persons. And I discovered that most of these persons moved from St. Petersburg to Moscow in when Medvedev was appointed as the first deputy prime minister. For me as a researcher this confirmed that, starting in , Medvedev needed his own group of trusted people to strengthen his position. As we know with hindsight, this had few practical results for him in terms of acquiring independence and keeping the presidential office, but such an attempt was undertaken. An unfinished Russian revolution Now back to these spectacular social protests during the Winter of Discontent, â€” There are just rumors that they did play a direct role in this process. But as a researcher, I cannot rely on rumors, and I possess no precise information that would confirm or refute this statement. It is a reasonable hypothesis, but it lacks any confirmation since the mechanisms of ultimate power in Russia are informal and closed to the public. Ideally, institutions should frame the system of checks and balances. But in reality, there is no division of power in Russia, which means that informal groups have to undertake this role, to constitute a system of checks and balances themselves. Such a structure of power has traditionally been predominant in Russia, with historical roots going back many years. It existed during the Soviet era as well as during the pre-Soviet period. And because the real Russian politics remains strictly closed to outsiders, it is very difficult to study the political process. As a researcher, I am not so interested in decisions and actions undertaken by particular persons, but prefer to study what kind of resources, both political and financial, a certain informal group can mobilize. Political struggle is always about a struggle for resources needed by particular groups. And now back to your question about the role that the Family group played during the transition of presidential power from Medvedev to Putin. We might presume that some kind of affiliation existed between the Family and Medvedev, though there are no solid facts that would support this theory. But even if such a connection had existed, we must admit that this group could not rely on the same power and financial resources in as it used to do in or This might be one of the main reasons why Medvedev was always losing political struggles. Those elite groups that supported him lacked sufficient resources to win this struggle. I do not believe a revolution is possible where huge masses of people storm the Kremlin and the power structure collapses. There was a pyramid, a hierarchy of movements and interests, which constituted these protests. Discontented people in the street formed just the very bottom of this pyramid. At higher levels, you could find staunch, fanatical adherents of particular ideas as well as more pragmatic politicians who wanted to get into power themselves, and then there were certain financial interests. There were also paramilitary forces that were trained in camps in certain Russian regions and were to be used as part of a resistance against the government. But these forces were never mobilized, and the protests never exploded as those in Ukraine did this winter. The number of those who participate in street protests does indeed matter in all revolutions. We have just seen that millions of Ukrainians came to their Maidans all over the country. This human mass itself did have an impact on the political process. Here in Russia, the opposition failed to gather millions. What we saw was an intelligentsia which in quite traditional ways tried to question those in power. Our center made several sociological studies at those meetings and I can say with certainty that it was our old-style intelligentsia. But this never took place. He is probably not successful in terms of political strategy, but his tactical approach was very well thought through. He applied the policy of threats and bribery. The potential social base of the opposition among the poor was neutralized by increased state spending on various benefits and social programs. At the same time, Putin pursued a very harsh policy towards the opposition leaders. Each leader was taken and punished in a different way. Some of them were discredited, some were arrested. And Putin won this struggle in the end. The other side of the coin is the question how long this victory will endure.

I would not claim that it has remarkably strengthened, but Putin himself has changed as a political leader. Before, a number of factors constrained his own political will; he still had too many enemies to defeat: His first presidency was devoted entirely to the elimination of these alternative power centers.

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