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The Ruling Elites: a Problem for Russia's National Security



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National security: global threats and internal contradictions

Ensuring national security is a core function of public authorities. Here we mean not only the security from external aggression, but also the competitiveness of the domestic situation in the country – its economic model, government system, social structure, etc. Historical experience of Russia, perhaps, as that of no other world power, clearly shows that the very inner undermining of state foundations entails the most severe consequences, affecting generations of people, the demographic structure of the nation, and the basics of mentality. Such was the deplorable outcome

of the collapse of the Soviet Union, from which the Russian society has not recovered yet. Such was the result of the collapse of the Russian Empire, which took more than 50 years to recover from. On the other hand, the same Russian experience shows that thanks to mobilization of all production and human power it is possible to counteract almost any external aggression. As it was, for example, during the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945).

Therefore, it is pointless and extremely dangerous to reduce national security to territorial integrity and military power. History teaches that its main threats are hidden inside, rather than outside¹. A key factor in national security is the lack

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¹ For example, inner contradictions led to the Netherlands Revolution in the 16th century, the English Revolution in the 17th century and the Great French Revolution in the 18th century.

of adequate response from the ruling elite to a long and growing discontent of the population concerning the dynamics of the standard of living and issues of social justice in society; this sooner or later leads to social explosion. Whether this social unrest is “fuelled” by geopolitical rivals, to what extent international political situation interferes with the internal policy of the state, etc. – all these issues are extremely important, but secondary. And in this sense, the main role in ensuring national security belongs to the effectiveness of public administration regarding the internal situation in the country; to put it more precisely – the effectiveness of the ruling elite in satisfying the critical needs of the population in improving the quality of life and social justice.

When describing the contemporary ruling elite in Russia, many experts do not mince their words; this fact in itself proves the existence of a protracted crisis in public administration². The head of state has repeatedly drawn attention to the lack of efficiency in the work of Russian officials,

It is important to note that in 2012 (the first year of the third presidential term), the context of the President's speech was quite “mild” – it was about the duration of the issues and the need to intensify efforts to address them. The subsequent Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly contained more and more phrases such as: **“Let's comprehensively go over these issues again and finally bring the situation in line with common sense and attune it to the times”** (2013), **“There is now a clear understanding of what should be done, so now we must just start doing it”** (2014) and **“How many years have we been talking about this? Yet things are not moving forward”**. (2015; see appendix). Thus, Vladimir Putin clearly expresses his dissatisfaction with the progress of the implementation of the tasks and priorities set out in 2012, and in fact – with the inefficiency of public administration. It looks as though the President is forced to tolerate an incompetent execution of his decrees.

(Source: Ilyin V.A. *Effektivnost' gosudarstvennogo upravleniya i nakaplivayushchiesya problemy sotsial'nogo zdorov'ya* [Public administration efficiency and the aggravation of public health issues]. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz* [Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast], 2015, no. 6 (42), p. 26)

their inaction against the background of aggravating social issues.

The relevance of the task to increase public administration efficiency in dealing with domestic issues is complicated by the randomness of global processes and the increasing pace of global competition.

² “Unfortunately, many of today's people whom it should pain to see the state suffering and who should not take bribes do exactly the opposite. And only by mistake and out of habit do we call these dirty officials the elite... Russian elites often represent placeholders who have accidentally risen to the levers of power, secured their position there and are now using it for personal gain”. (source: *Za derzhavu obidno! Tamozhnya – delo tonkoe* (mnenie politologa F. Biryukova) [It pains to see the state suffering! Customs is tricky business (an opinion of political scientist F. Biryukov)]. *Gazeta «Zavtra»* [Newspaper “Tomorrow”], 2016, 4 August, no. 31 (1183), p. 5).

Having established itself as a key player in the international political arena and confirming this status by subsequent actions³, Russia has taken upon itself the historical responsibility for making an adequate response to emerging global challenges; it has also taken up a role of full-fledged participant in geopolitical competition with leading world powers. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia's geopolitical opponents could not but meet with hostility the emergence of another competitor. A hybrid warfare launched in these circumstances, on the one hand, showed that they are really afraid of Russia's revival from obscurity of the 1990s; on the other hand, it increased dramatically the relevance of public administration efficiency issues in Russian domestic life, making them the most important weapon in global competition.

G. Hegel, the classic of the German philosophical thought, pointed out that history repeats itself, and it does it until people have learned the lessons they should learn from history.

A century ago, irreconcilable differences and geopolitical ambitions of leading world powers led to the outbreak of the First World War, in which 34 out of 56 sovereign states participated⁴.

For the past 100 years, the world civilization has reached a qualitatively new level of development. Technological progress has changed the social and demographic structure of society, brought the quality of life to a new level, led to the aggravation of new global threats (such as new diseases, concerning, first of all, mental health; the threat of nuclear war, depletion of natural resources, etc.).

However, although the entire global civilization and each individual state are fundamentally different from their counterparts of 100 years ago, they have a lot of similarities that help make historical parallels and learn from the past.

The present-day world is also plagued by contradictions: Russia is searching for ways to reduce international confrontation by establishing uniform rules of conducting foreign policy, but it is opposed by the growing geopolitical "appetite" of the U.S. in the Middle East and in Europe, due to which the problem of international terrorism and the uncontrolled influx of refugees in the countries of the Old World has come to the fore, resulting in not only social but also cultural and political crises. All this is accompanied by more complex

³ We are talking about Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich conference on security policy held February 10, 2007 and his subsequent actions aimed to strengthen Russia's international position, including that in the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts.

⁴ "The outbreak of the war of 1914–1918, which had become a global armed conflict, defined the balance of forces prevailing in the world economy in previous years. The U.S. and Germany – the highly industrialized countries that topped the world economy – were much inferior to the old European countries such as Great Britain and France in export of capital and colonial possessions – the factors accompanying industrial strength. And vice versa, Great Britain and France – the countries that had been leaders in the global industrial production in the 19th century – were pushed back to the third and fourth places before the war of 1914; but they still remained the largest exporters of capital and the largest colonial powers" (source: Prichiny ekonomicheskikh protivorechii i sopernichestva vedushchikh stran nakanune Pervoi mirovoi voyny [Causes of economic contradictions and rivalry between leading countries on the eve of the First World War]. *Baza dannykh "Mir znanii"* ["World of Knowledge" database]. Available at: http://mirznanii.com/info/1-prichiny-ekonomicheskikh-protivorechii-i-sopernichestva-vedushchikh-stran-nakanune-pervoy-mirovoy-_278616).

threats associated with the unpredictability and randomness of world events that set increasingly complex issues before the capitalist system dominant in developed countries.

After the “successful” implementation of the strategic plan for the collapse of the Soviet Union⁵, the country that used to be one of the two most powerful nations of the world in the second half of the 20th century, the U.S. actually became a monopolist and dictated its political, economic and ideological will⁶. U.S. policy of double standards and its military intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states have become a regular phenomenon. “The neoconservatives who after September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks got their hands on all the levers of Washington’s foreign policy proceeded from the fact that in a relatively short historical period (ten years), they

would be able to suppress all their major competitors on the planet by economic, financial, and in some places – military means. After this the United States can preserve its “dollar empire”, continuing to rob the rest of the world”⁷.

However, along with the neoliberal model of capitalism spreading around the world, “its own contradictions and imbalances were accumulating and becoming more and more pronounced – first of all, the growth of income inequality that caused gradual reduction in demand for manufactured goods”⁸. After a few years of American hegemony, there appeared several signs suggesting that the dominant power with its economic, managerial, spiritual and value system was failing in its role as the sole leader: “The United States overstrained itself because of the need to carry on several wars at the same time”⁹.

⁵ “If we consider this from a present-day perspective and take into account the facts already known, we need to keep in mind the following. In the early 1980s, when Ronald Reagan assumed office as President, CIA Director William J. Casey put forward a program that would, in fact, facilitate the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today we can say for sure that our political adversary implemented a deliberate program to destabilize and destroy the Soviet Union as a country and state. It is very important for understanding the current situation in Russia.” (Source: Ivashov L. Spodruchniki i nasledniki Reigana [Henchmen and heirs of Reagan]. *Literaturnaya gazeta* [Literary newspaper], 2016, no. 31, August 3. Available at: <http://www.lgz.ru/article/-31-6562-03-08-2016/avgust-1991/>).

⁶ “The United States has made many countries dependent on it in economic and political sense. The U.S. has established a global system for bribing with the dollar the ruling elite of several countries, i.e. a global comprador system. The U.S. uses the dollar to buy not only resources, but also rulers, legislation and lawmakers, laws, and economic policies of dependent countries. By ruling the comprador minority of dependent countries, the U.S. is exploiting to its advantage the work of the social majority, which leads a miserable existence and is struggling against extinction. This is what the dollarization of the world is. This is what a unipolar world is. This is American-style globalization, the world domination of the U.S. it is no coincidence that the crisis of dollarization means the crisis of American globalization” (source: Sotsial’nyi kontrakt vlasti s syr’evym oligarkhatom: rost bez razvitiya: interv’yu S.S. Gubanova na radio “Govorit Moskva” ot 18.03.2009 [Social contract between the government and commodity oligarchy: growth without development: an interview of Sergei Gubanov on the radio “Moscow Is Speaking”, March 18, 2009]. *Informatsionno-analiticheskaya sluzhba “Russkaya liniya”* [Information-analytical service “Russian Line”]. Available at: http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2009/03/19/social_nyj_kontrakt_vlasti_s_syr_evym_oligarhatom_rost_bez_razvitiya/).

⁷ Vopros v lob Rostislavu Ishchenko [Direct question to Rostislav Ishchenko]. *Gazeta “Zavtra”* [Newspaper “Tomorrow”], 2016, no. 31 (1183), August 4, p. 1.

⁸ Kagarlitskii B. Kto podavit vosstanie elit [Who will suppress the revolt of the elites]. *Ekspert* [Expert], 2016, no. 30–33, p. 52.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

In 2007, Russia again spoke about the dangers of a unipolar world and once again asserted itself as an equal international partner¹⁰. In 2008, the dependence of the world economy on the U.S. economy led to the fact that the mortgage and banking crisis in the United States (which began back in 2007) escalated into a global financial crisis that showed that “the ability of the liberal elites to control the situation are limited, and their resources are being exhausted”¹¹.

Today leading foreign and domestic scientists predict difficult times for capitalism, which may bring it to a global crisis. They focus on the following theses:

1. “The world is accumulating the sources of a crisis that will be structural, i.e. no possible solution to this crisis can be found within the standard political and investment decisions of today... Capitalism cannot flourish, if institutions are not reformed, employment restored, and environmental, health and other issues somehow solved...”¹²

2. “Before the Global Financial Crisis ideas like the Efficient Markets Hypothesis and the Great Moderation were very much alive. Their advocates dominated mainstream economics... The result was a global economy in which both households and nations lived far beyond their means. It is clear that there is something badly wrong with the state of economics. A massive financial crisis developed under the eyes of the economics profession, and yet most failed to see anything wrong... The ideas that caused the crisis and were, at least briefly, laid to rest by it are already reviving and clawing their way through up the soft earth. If we do not kill these zombie ideas once and for all, they will do even more damage next time”¹³.

3. “In the second decade of the 21st century not only in Russia but in many countries around the world there emerged a need for a humanistic turn of the sciences of man and society, the turn that expresses a need for the humanistic evolution of society itself”¹⁴.

¹⁰ An excerpt from Vladimir Putin’s speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 10, 2007: “I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today’s world. And this is not only because if there was individual leadership in today’s – and precisely in today’s – world, then the military, political and economic resources would not suffice. What is even more important is that the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilization... Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy. We are not going to change this tradition today.” (source: *Ofitsial’nyi sait Prezidenta RF* [Official website of the RF President]. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>).

¹¹ Kagarlitskii B. Kto podavit vosstanie elit [Who will suppress the revolt of the elites]. *Ekspert* [Expert], 2016, no. 30–33, p. 53.

¹² Wallerstein I., Collins R., Mann M., Derluguian G., Calhoun C. *Est’ li budushchee u kapitalizma?: sbornik statei* [Does capitalism have a future?]. Moscow: Institut Gaidara, 2015. 320 p.

¹³ Quiggin J. *Zombi-ekonomika. Kak mertvye idei prodolzhayut bluzhdat’ sredi nas* [Zombie economics: how dead ideas still walk among us]. Translated from English by A. Gusev. Under the scientific editorship of A. Smirnov. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola ekonomiki, 2016. Pp. 11, 14.

¹⁴ Lapin N.I. Gumanisticheskii vybor naseleniya Rossii i tsentry vnimaniya rossiiskoi sotsiologii [Humane choice of Russia’s population and the centers of attention of Russian sociology]. *Sotsis* [Sociological studies], 2016, no. 5, p. 29.

4. “Suddenly we find that socialism in the two leading countries in the capitalist world-system has not only been revived, but has exposed itself as a powerful political alternative to the dominant liberal mainstream... The liberal “end of history” ended too quickly. And if this wave has not reached us, it is only because both our liberalism and our capitalism are very specific, and our political process is far from the game played by the rules of the Western world. But it is impossible to shut out a revolution with the help of an idea, and there is no doubt that soon we will hear the steps of a new socialism in Russia as well”¹⁵.

The clash of capitalist and socialist development paradigms is expressed in the exacerbation of geopolitical competition and is accompanied by tensions in the international political situation, intermittent and protracted short-term local armed conflicts and revolutions breaking out in different countries. The existence of the nuclear weapon, which makes a world war meaningless since “there can be no winner in a global conflict”¹⁶ is, perhaps, the main barrier preventing the outbreak of a third world war, this time, a nuclear war.

However, the fact that a nuclear war is futile does not imply the absence of hostilities; it only “dictates” the way in which they are carried out. Today, the

leading world powers engage in hybrid warfare through information resources that deal with public consciousness. **Thus, global competition between countries is unfolding against the background of the problems similar to those that led to the First World War 100 years ago. The only difference is that at the beginning of the 21st century, geopolitical rivalry is developing at a qualitatively new level – technological, economic, political, etc.**

So today the task of finding historical parallels that are necessary for an effective learning of the lessons of history is especially relevant for all countries in the world and primarily for the key players (such as the U.S., China, EU countries, Russia, India) whose role is crucial for the further development of events in the international political arena.

Some causes of the Russian revolution 1905–1917

The First World War went down in history as one of the most cruel and slaughterous wars¹⁷. Participating in the war became for many countries “the last drop that spilled the cup” of internal contradictions that had accumulated and affected mostly general population. In the post-war years, many countries of Europe

¹⁵ Kholmogorov E. O nereshennoi probleme sotsializma [About an unresolved issue of socialism]. *Gazeta “Zavtra”* [Newspaper “Tomorrow”], 2016, no. 17 (1169), April 28, p. 3.

¹⁶ Putin V.V. Rech' na zasedanii Mezhdunarodnogo diskussionnogo kluba “Valdai” 22.10.2015 [Speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, October 22, 2015]. *Ofitsial'nyi sait Prezidenta RF* [Official website of the RF President]. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548>

¹⁷ According to expert estimates, Russian military losses during the First World War exceeded those of all other world powers. Irrecoverable losses (killed in action, died of wounds, missing in action, died in captivity and did not return from captivity) amounted to: 3.3 million for Russia, 2 million for Germany, 1.5 million for Austria-Hungary, 1.4 million for France, 0.7 million for the British Empire, 0.5 million for Italy, 0.08 million for the U.S. (source: Stepanov A. Poteri naseleniya Rossii v Pervoi mirovoi voine [Loss of the population of Russia in the First World War]. *Zhurnal “Demoskop Weekly”* [Journal “Demoscope Weekly”], 2014, no. 623–624. December 15–31, p. 7).

and the world experienced a wave of revolutionary movements that ushered in a new era, called contemporary history. So did Russia, which, according to some experts, had lost more than any country in that war¹⁸.

“Not only did the Russian revolution change Russia, it also radically changed the whole world. And the present-day world would be unthinkable without it, just like the world of the 19th century – without the French revolution”¹⁹.

The Russian revolution that started in 1905 in Saint Petersburg when Imperial troops opened fire on a crowd of workers during a peaceful march led by priest Georgy Gapon stemmed from Russia’s international situation and contradictions accumulated within Russian society itself. In the late 19th – early 20th century, the Russian Empire, despite the growth of the total

industrial production, lagged significantly behind leading countries of the West by this indicator (*Tab. 1*).

Russia’s major problem consisted in its lagging considerably behind the Western countries in the standard of living and quality of life. By the end of the 19th century, the rural class comprised about 77% of the population (*Tab. 2*). It should be mentioned that there was not much in common between the Russian peasant and the European hereditary landholder. Residents of a European village felt they were owners of the land to a much greater extent, than that they were its subjects. And such a village was moving toward a more profound change in the whole society, toward its transformation into an urban, market society... Even after the abolition of serfdom, on the threshold of the 20th century, the idea of hereditary land

Table 1. Shares in global industrial production

Country	1881–1885		1896–1900		1913	
	In %	In % of the leader’s (U.S.) contribution to global industrial production	In %	In % of the leader’s (U.S.) contribution to global industrial production	In %	In % of the leader’s (U.S.) contribution to global industrial production
Russia	3.4	11.9	5	16.6	5.3	14.8
USA	28.6	100.0	30.1	100.0	35.8	100.0
Great Britain	26.6	93.0	19.5	64.8	14	39.1
Germany	13.9	48.6	16.6	55.1	15.7	43.6
France	8.6	30.1	7.1	23.6	6.4	17.9

Source: Petrov Yu. Rossiya v 1913 godu: ekonomicheskii rost [Russia in 1913: economic growth]. *Nauka i zhizn'* [Science and life], 2014, no. 7, p. 6.

¹⁸ “The outcome of the First World War are well-known: political and military victory of the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan over Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria; and in Russia – large-scale civil war, national-territorial breakup and foreign military intervention. Out of the frying pan of the First World War Russia fell into the fire of the civil war and foreign intervention” (source: Stepanov A. Poteri naseleniya Rossii v Pervoi mirovoi voine [Loss of the population of Russia in the First World War]. *Zhurnal “Demoskop Weekly”* [Journal “Demoscope Weekly”], 2014, no. 623–624. 15–31 December, p. 8).

¹⁹ *Revolutsiya 1917-go radikal’no izmenila ves’ mir: interv’yu direktora Instituta globalizatsii i sotsial’nykh dvizhenii B. Kagarlitskogo informatsionnomu portalu Pravda.ru* [The revolution of 1917 radically changed the world: an interview with B. Kagarlitsky, Director of the Institute of Globalization and Social Movements at the information portal “Pravda.ru”]. Available at: <http://www.pravda.ru/news/society/07-11-2013/1181206-revolution-0/>

Table 2. Distribution of population of the Russian Empire by estates in 1897

Estate	Men		Women		Both sexes *	
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
Noblemen by birth and their families	583824	0,9	636345	1,0	1220169	1,0
Personal noblemen, officials and their families that did not belong to nobility	303653	0,5	326466	0,5	630119	0,5
Clergymen of all Christian denominations and their families	275813	0,4	313134	0,5	588947	0,5
Hereditary and personal citizens of honor and their families	175689	0,3	167238	0,3	342927	0,3
Merchants and their families	137522	0,2	143657	0,2	281179	0,2
Townsmen	6534117	10,5	6852275	10,8	13386392	10,7
Peasants	47969068	76,8	48927580	77,5	96896648	77,1
Military cossacks	1448382	2,3	1480460	2,3	2928842	2,3
Non-Russians	4423808	7,1	3874157	6,1	8297965	6,6
Finland natives without class distinction	16811	0,0	18774	0,0	35585	0,0
Persons not belonging to these estates	210801	0,3	143112	0,2	353913	0,3
Persons who did not refer themselves to any estate	36410	0,1	35425	0,1	71835	0,1
TOTAL Russian subjects	62115898	99,4	62918623	99,6	125034521	99,5
Foreign subjects	361450	0,6	244050	0,4	605500	0,5
TOTAL Russian and foreign subjects	62477348	100,0	63162673	100,0	125640021	100,0

* Calculations: Demoscope Weekly. Available at: http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_sos_97.php
Source: *Pervaya Vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g.* [The first General census of the Russian Empire, 1897]. Ed. by N.A.Troinitskii. Volume 1. Obshchii svod po Imperii rezul'tatov razrabotki dannykh Pervoi Vseobshchei perepisi naseleniya, proizvedennoi 28 yanvarya 1897 goda [General national corpus of the data on the results of the First General Population Census made on January 28, 1897]. Saint Peterburg, 1905. Table 8. Distribution of population by estates and conditions.

tenure and, moreover, private ownership of land, did not ripen in the Russian society and seemed to be something foreign in the Russian village...”²⁰

At the same time, despite Russia's lagging behind the West in terms of socio-economic structure and quality of life, Russian society in the 19th century already

developed a feature that N. Berdyaev called “the instinct of state might”²¹. After the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century, Russia – “the only free Orthodox state after the fall of Byzantium”²² – has become a new geopolitical pole in Eastern Europe. The status of the “Third Rome” made it necessary for Russia to participate in European, if not

²⁰ *Ibidem*. P. 22.

²¹ “By the 19th century, the Empire was very unhealthy both spiritually and socially. It is typical of Russians to combine in themselves antinomian and opposite principles. Russia and Russian people can be characterized only by contradictions. A Russian people can be characterized equally fairly as a people that needs statehood and oppression, and at the same time, anarchy and freedom; as a people inclined to nationalism and national conceit, and as a people of a universal spirit, capable more than any other people of humanness; as a people that is cruel and unusually humane, inclined to inflict suffering and unmeasurably compassionate. This controversy created by the entire Russian history and the eternal conflict between the instinct of state might and people's instinct of freedom and love of truth” (source: Berdyaev N.A. *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* [The origin of Russian Communism]. Paris, 1955. P. 15).

²² In 1453, Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire and Orthodox culture, the “heir” to Greece and Rome, was taken by the Turks and remained the capital of the Ottoman Empire until 1922. Many historians consider the fall of Constantinople a key moment in European history. Byzantium ceased to exist as a political force, soon after the fall of Constantinople the Ottoman Empire enslaved the remaining Orthodox countries in the Balkans (source: Padenie Konstantinopolya (29 maya 1453 goda) [The fall of Constantinople (May 29, 1453)]. *Sait Khrama Zhivonachal'noi Troitsy na Vorob'evykh gorakh* [Website of the Church of the Holy Trinity on the Vorobyovy Gory]. Available at: <http://hram-troicy.prihod.ru/articles/view/id/1166651>).

global, affairs and, moreover, to participate **as a principal actor**, which required strong economic, political, military and cultural interaction with neighbors, primarily with the West... By the beginning of the 20th century, Russia felt like a powerful nation, accustomed to win, to push the boundaries and dictate its own will to the neighboring states”²³.

However, “to feel like a powerful state” is not the same thing as to be one. Russia’s objective necessity to compete with the leading countries of the West was combined with its elementary lagging behind them in terms of political, economic, and social development. The level of productive forces in the country did not meet the requirements of that time. The tsarist regime was not able to find a way out of this contradiction; this fact led to the revolutionary events of 1905 and 1917 and the change of the regime, and predetermined the further development of Russia and the world in the middle of the 20th century.

Russia in the 20th and 21st centuries: history repeats itself

The pre-revolutionary Russian Empire, the Soviet Union in the period of its “decline” and today’s Russia are divided by significant historical time periods. For the past 100 years the Russian society and state, like the whole world, has changed qualitatively. It is sufficient to mention the revolutionary events of 1905–1917, the victory in the Great Patriotic War, the exploration of space and the invention of nuclear weapons and we will understand

how different the eras of the early 20th and 21st centuries were. The 70-year period of the Soviet regime made the Soviet Union one of the main powers in the world, and today we can only guess what the possible level of economic development and political authority of Russia would have been, if the government had not made mistakes and had not failed to “feel” the changing needs of the population, and if it had not been for the betrayal of national political elites in the late 1980s that led to the “parade of sovereignties” and the subsequent collapse in all the spheres of life in the era of the “turbulent 1990s”.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the ruling elite of the Russian Empire failed to meet the growing needs of the wide layers of the population; the situation was similar in the late 1980s, when the ruling elite of the Soviet Union failed to create the conditions to meet the needs of Russians in material prosperity and grant them more freedoms (first of all, freedom of speech and freedom of choice). The political “machine” created by Soviet power worked successfully for many years: thanks to this “machine” the Great Patriotic War was won; the Soviet economy owes its prosperity in the postwar years to this “machine”; and thanks to precise planning and the key role of the state in the governance of the country, the Soviet Union was able to become one of the two leading powers in the world. But this “machine” worked effectively to strengthen the statehood, rather than meet the social needs of the population. The Soviet system turned out to be rigid, the bureaucratic apparatus of the ruling elite did not manage to adapt to the

²³ Vishnevskii A.V. *Serp i rubl': konservativnaya modernizatsiya v SSSR* [Sickle and ruble: conservative modernization in the USSR]. Moscow: OGI, 1998. P. 14.

conditions when Russian society became “tired” of the dullness and monotony of the Soviet ideology and the values of capitalism and democracy of the Western world started to penetrate Russian society. “The Soviet leadership generally underestimated narrow-mindedness of the narrow-minded individual. The Soviet people were treated to everything that was wholesome in all respects, but they wanted something that was delicious, tart, effervescent, and bright”²⁴.

The tragedy of the collapse of the USSR does not consist in the fact that Americans successfully implemented a strategic plan to eliminate a geopolitical rival; the tragedy is the fact that within the very political elite of the Soviet Union there were people who were willing to implement that plan, and this is already an internal problem of the system, rather than a problem with “foreign enemies”.

Today one can speak about the capacity of the Soviet Union only in the subjunctive mood. Actually, Russia is far inferior to its geopolitical competitors (USA, Japan, Western Europe) in terms of economic development²⁵.

²⁴ Voevodina T. *Chego sovkam v sovke ne khvatalo* [What Soviet people did not have in the Soviet Union]. *Literaturnaya gazeta* [Literary newspaper], 2015, no. 33, August 26 – September 01.

²⁵ The index of actual volume of GDP per capita in Russia is 45% of the U.S. level. For comparison: in Germany and Canada – 82% for both, in France – 73%, in the UK – 70%, in Japan – 69% (source: Russian Statistical Yearbook – 2015, data for 2011).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and, more broadly, of the whole Soviet life was rather an external than internal phenomenon. We somehow forget that the Soviet Union collapsed virtually at the peak of its military and industrial might, more precisely, at a stagnant slide from that peak. And that breakout was perceived by a vast majority of citizens with delight and enthusiasm, and was welcomed with stormy and prolonged applause. The overthrow of the “sovok” (a Russian slang word that denotes the Soviet Union, Soviet system or a Soviet citizen; the word sounds like “Soviet” but means “dustpan” in normal language. – Translator’s note), judging by all these attitudes, was neither a conspiracy, nor a coup; it was a truly nationwide cause. Granted, it involved conspiracy, and revolution, and betrayal, but without people’s support, and not even support but direct participation, it would have failed.

(Source: Voevodina T. *Chego sovkam v sovke ne khvatalo* [What Soviet people did not have in the Soviet Union]. *Literaturnaya gazeta* [Literary newspaper], 2015, no. 33, August 26 – September 01.)

“**The instinct of state might**” which, according to Berdyaev, characterized Russian society in the 19th – 20th centuries, is inherent in the modern Russian society as well. It “woke up” together with national identity, which “is the basis of the Russian civilization project, is deeply rooted and widespread in people’s minds, although it was as if in a “sleeping”, latent condition”²⁶. The reason for this “awakening” can be found in events such as Vladimir Putin’s speeches in Munich (2007), at the meeting

²⁶ Gorshkov M.K. “Russkaya mehta”: opyt sotsiologicheskogo izmereniya [“Russian dream”: an experience of sociological measurement]. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological studies], 2012, no. 12, p. 10.

of the Valdai International Discussion Club (2013), and after the Russian team's successful performance at the Olympic Games in Sochi (2014), accession of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation (2014), and after the effective participation of Russia in the Syrian conflict" (2013, 2015).

The results of sociological research help answer the question of what is meant by "the instinct of state might" and why this "state might" exists today in an "instinctive" form. According to VTsIOM, 75% of Russians believe that Russia has considerable influence on the state of affairs in the world; as many (75%) believe that Russia at present is a great power or it can become one in the next 15–20 years²⁷. In people's opinion, Russia is feared (53%) and respected (41%) in the world, and its impact on the global community is growing (43%). 68% of Russians (according to Levada-Center) "are proud of today's Russia" (the opposite view is expressed by only 24%; *Insert 1*)²⁸.

However, the current standard of living and quality of life are not among the things that Russians are proud of in their country, rather it is Russian history, science, culture, army, and sport (20–40% according to Levada-Center, and 70–80% according to ISEDT RAS²⁹). It is not the life in Russia that is the source of this pride, but Russia's

previous heritage, which, of course, will stay forever in the memory of generations: classics of Russian and world literature, music, painting; the first flight of man in space, the victory in the Great Patriotic War, sport achievements of the USSR national team, etc.

Not more than 16% of Russians are proud of their current life in the country (according to ISEDT RAS); 12% are proud of their fellow countrymen (according to Levada-Center), 5% are proud of Russia's economic achievements, 5% are proud of Russian education system, and 2% are proud of Russian healthcare system (*Insert 2*).

An acute need for social justice is a feature that Russia had in the beginning of the 20th century and that it has retained in the early 21st century. Historians indicate that at the end of the 19th century "the remnants of feudalism: political injustice, absence of the labor law, arbitrary rule of masters, and widespread abuse weighed upon the workers and peasants alike... These and other facts prove that Russian society experienced an acute shortage of social justice"³⁰.

Today, the need "to live in a more just and reasonably ordered society" ranks third in a list of the most important dreams of Russians (33%). The first one is the need "to live in wealth, to be able to spend money

²⁷ *Rossiya – velikaya nasha derzhava: press-vypusk VTsIOM ot 10.06.2016* [O Russia, for ever you're strong sacred country: VTsIOM press release of 10 June 2016]. Available at: <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115728>

²⁸ *Natsional'naya gordost': press-vypusk Levada-Tsentra ot 30.06.2016* [National pride: the press release of Levada-Center from 30 June 2016]. Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/2016/06/30/natsionalnaya-gordost/>

²⁹ Significant differences in the proportion of respondents according to the results of the polls carried out by Levada-Center and ISEDT RAS are associated with the question wording, the number of answer options and the method of research. However, the essence remains the same – if Russians are proud of anything in their country, they are not proud of how life is in modern Russia.

³⁰ Kashnikov B.N. Ideya spravedlivosti v teorii i praktike russkogo terrorizma kontsa 19-go – nachala 20-go veka [The idea of justice in the theory and practice of the Russian terrorism of the late 19th – early 20th century]. *Rossiiskii nauchnyi zhurnal* [Russian scientific journal], 2008, no. 3 (4), p. 49.

“without counting the kopecks” (40%); the second – the dream about “good health” (33%)³¹.

The desire for social justice can also be seen in the results of regional sociological studies. Thus, according to ISEDT RAS data as of June 2016, 57% of people believe that “modern Russian society is arranged unfairly”; the opposite opinion is shared only by 11% of people³².

Thus, although in 100 years that passed since the events called “the Russian Revolution” Russian society and the world situation faced qualitative changes, they still have general conceptual features that point to a possibility of revolution today.

Russian philosopher and sociologist Pitirim Sorokin notes that revolution “is not a random event” and it is caused by two factors³³:

1. The first one relates to the driving forces behind revolution masses: “An immediate prerequisite for any revolution has always been the increase in the number of suppressed basic instincts of the majority

of the population, and the inability to satisfy them even to the minimum extent”.

2. The second factor relates to the response of the authorities: “...A revolutionary explosion requires that the social groups that guard the existing order did not have a sufficient arsenal of tools to suppress the destructive encroachments from below... The atmosphere of pre-revolutionary eras always amazes the observer with the impotence of the authorities and degeneration of the ruling privileged classes. They are often not able to perform elementary administration functions, not to mention resisting the revolution using force”.

“If both conditions – the pressure “from below” and the weakness of “the top” – match, then revolution becomes inevitable”.

Of course, unlike the pre-revolutionary Russian society, modern society has a constructive attitude toward the authorities³⁴, so today we are not talking about “mass repressions” and other means of “suppressing the destructive encroachments”. **However, the signs of the first of the two causes of revolution mentioned by Pitirim Sorokin are obvious – basic instincts, which for Russians comprise a sense of social justice and an opportunity to live “without counting the kopecks”³⁵, do not find their satisfaction.**

³¹ Gorshkov M.K., Krumm R., Tikhonova N.E. (Eds.). *O chem mechtayut rossiyanе: ideal i real'nost'* [What the Russians dream of: ideal and reality]. Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013. P. 22. The question allowed for choosing up to three answer options. Among other options there were the following: “to have good children” (23%), “to have my own apartment, house” (21%), “to live an interesting life, to discover and implement my potential” (18%), “to have a good family” (17%), “to start my own business” (15%), “to get a good education (specialty)” (12%), “to be useful to society, to make my contribution to the development of Russia” (11%), “to get a good job” (7%), “to find true love” (6%), “to become a respected and famous person” (4%), “to become a very beautiful and attractive person” (1%) “other” (2%), “I have no dream” (9%).

³² The survey was conducted in June 2016, 32% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

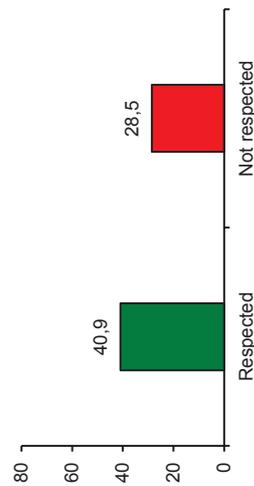
³³ Sorokin P. *The Sociology of revolution*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1967. (source: Sztompka P. *Sotsiologiya sotsial'nykh izmenenii* [The sociology of social change]. Translated from English under the editorship of V.A. Yadov. Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1996. P. 377).

³⁴ For example, researchers have noted that members of the middle class “are convinced of the futility of revolutionary change. This segment of society is not just ready to cooperate with the government, it is largely loyal to the authorities, ready to agree with them and obey their will, and work together to change things for the better” (source: Skorobogatyi, P. *Trevozhnyi i loyaly'nyi* [Alarming and loyal]. *Zhurnal “Ekspert”* [Journal “Expert”], 2015, no. 45, November. Available at: <http://expert.ru/expert/2015/45/trevozhnyij-i-loyalnyij/>).

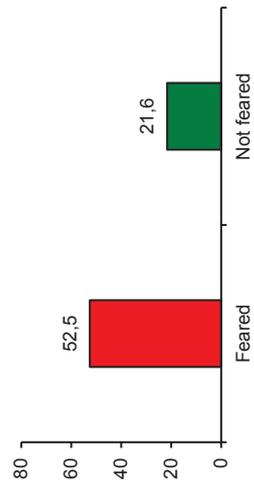
³⁵ Gorshkov M.K., Krumm R., Tikhonova N.E. (Eds.). *O chem mechtayut rossiyanе: ideal i real'nost'* [What the Russians dream of: ideal and reality]. Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013. P. 22.

Insert 1

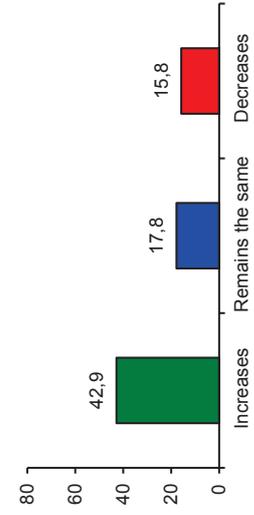
Attitude toward Russia in people's assessments (in % of the number of respondents)



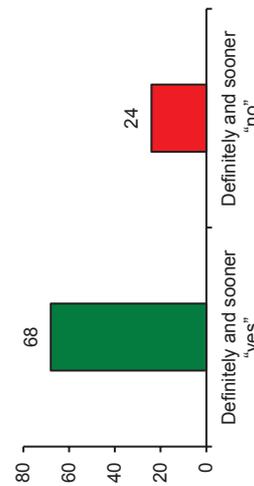
In your opinion, is Russia respected or not respected?
(ISED T RAS data, June 2016)



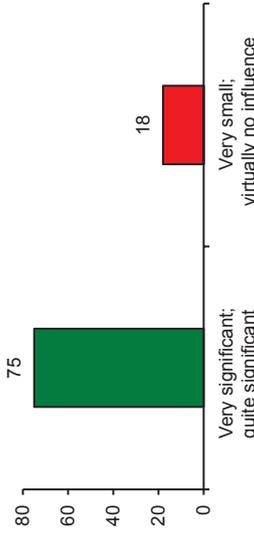
In your opinion, is Russia feared or not feared in the world?
(ISED T RAS data, June 2016)



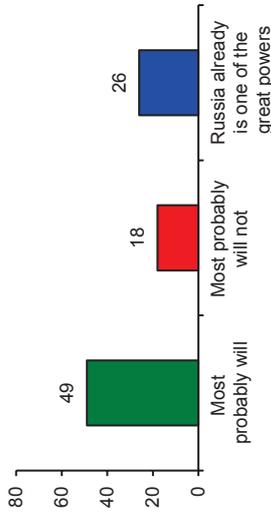
In your opinion, is Russia's influence in the world in the past years increasing, decreasing or does it remain the same?
(ISED T RAS data, June 2016)



Are you proud of today's Russia?
(Levada-Center data, May 2016)



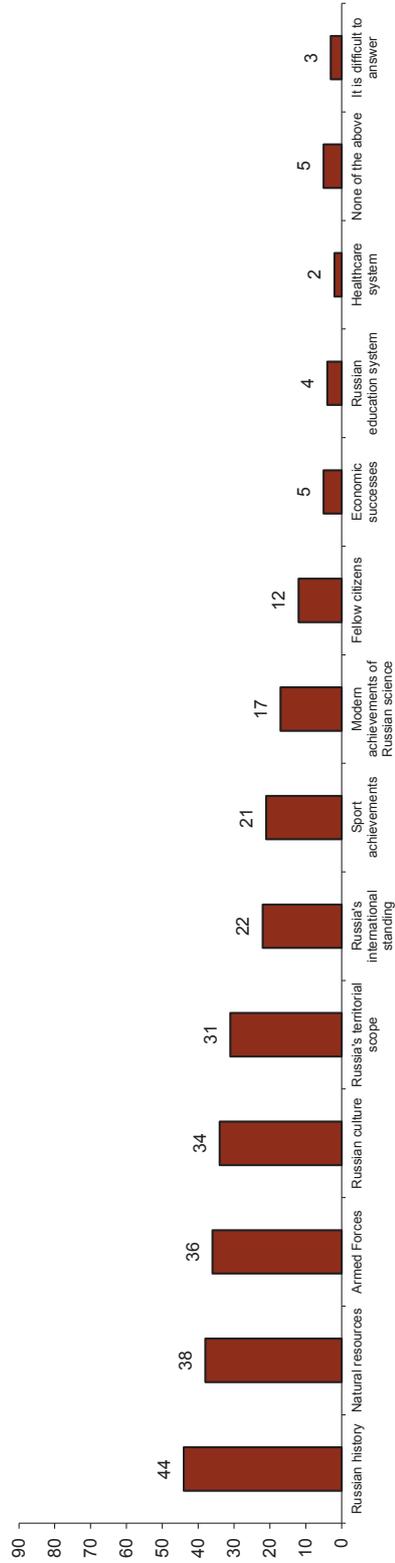
In your opinion, what influence does Russia have in international affairs now?
(VTsIOM data, 2016)



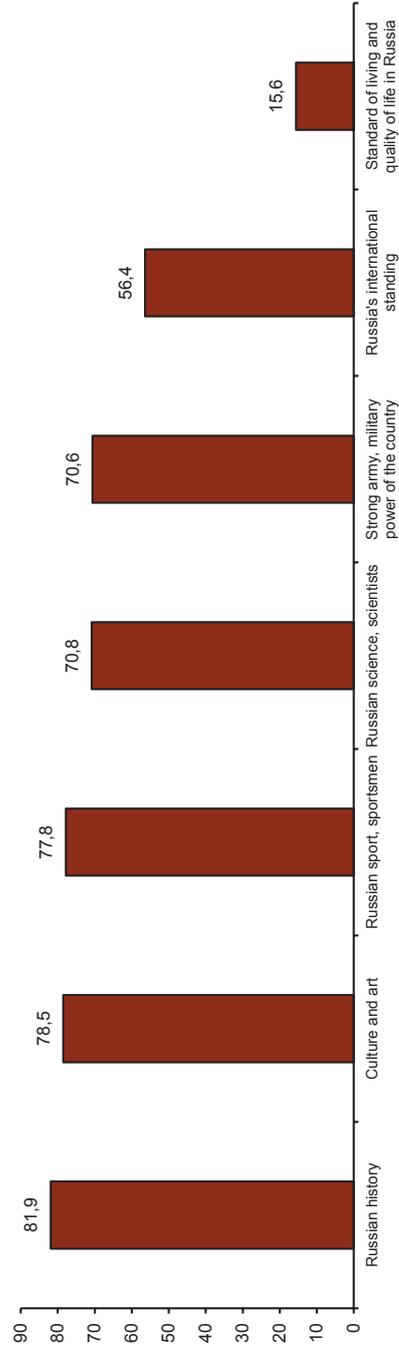
In your opinion, will Russia be able to become a great power in the coming 15–20 years?
(VTsIOM data, 2016)

Insert 2

Major reasons to be proud of Russia (in % of the number of respondents)



Source: Levada-Center data, May 2016. Question: "What makes you proud of Russia first of all?"



Source: ISED T RAS data, June 2016. Question: "Could you say that you are proud of...?"

Historical parallels drawn between the Russia of the late 19th – early 20th century and the Russia of the beginning of the 21st century will inevitably lead to reflections on the relevance of issues related to public administration efficiency. The tension of the current situation in the country and in the international arena, as well as 100 years ago, dictates special requirements to the current government and to the political elite. Our history teaches us that a protracted and growing nature of unsatisfied needs of the population leads to tragic consequences for the current government; this is why the disregard of these needs, and the lack of effectiveness in solving these problems are unacceptable; this, in the first place, brings to the fore the problems and prospects of the Russian parliamentary system.

On the difficult path toward the development of parliamentarism

The beginning of the 20th century in the Russian history was marked not only by the events of the Russian Revolution, but also by the formation of the institution of parliamentary control³⁶. However, despite certain steps that the Emperor had taken in the direction of limiting the power of the monarchy, the revolutionary events of 1905–1917 could not be avoided, and it proved a simple truth: **no institutions and laws that**

³⁶ In 1905, Nicholas II signed the Imperial Manifesto “On the improvement of the state order”. In 1906, a document “Establishment of the State Duma” was signed and the Code of fundamental state laws of the Russian Empire was approved; the documents attempted to combine the principle of autocracy and the principle of “separation of powers”. According to some experts, these documents can be regarded as “the first Russian Constitution”, although they were never referred to as the constitution officially (source: Volchkova N.N. *Parlamentarii kontrol’ v Rossii: istoricheskii aspekt* [Parliamentary control in Russia: historical aspect]. *Analiticheskii portal “Otrasli prava”* [Analytical portal “Branches of the law”]. Available at: <http://отрасли-права.рф/article/13117>).

aim to develop parliamentarism are able to perform their task if the system of public administration has not created favorable conditions for their effective functioning and if it does not respond to key challenges of national security.

The establishment of the State Duma was a forced measure that Nicholas II had to implement due to the critical social situation of that time. Therefore, during the disputes between the Duma and the members of the Government, the Emperor regularly made decisions in favor of the latter, and dissolved the Duma several times³⁷. As for the government, from the very beginning, it was swamping the State Duma deputies with the so-called “legislative noodles” – current trifle matters that have no political importance either for the authorities or the country.

In turn, the Duma, fearing another dissolution, was loyal to the Government. In addition, during the First World War, domestic issues in Russia receded into the background; Duma meetings were held under the traditional slogan “We fight until we win”, and only the last convening of the Duma under the pressure of “economic chaos, the aggravation of nationwide crisis in the country during the war, which put the country on the brink of starvation and economic exhaustion, having caused anti-war sentiment among the masses” was forced

³⁷ According to the Manifesto of February 20 on the transformation of the State Council, the State Duma was elected for a period of five years, while the Emperor was given the right to dissolve it. However, the Duma of the first convocation worked from April 27 to July 9, 1906, after which it was dissolved. The Duma of the second convocation lasted from February 20 to June 3, 1907; the Duma of the third convocation – from November 01, 1907 to August 30, 1912; the Duma of the fourth convocation – from November 15, 1912 to October 06, 1917.

to update the internal agenda of life in the country, though it was done “amidst uncertainty, confusion and division”³⁸.

In the end, whatever the causes of inefficiency of performance of State Duma deputies in the Russian Empire in 1905–1917, they failed to fulfil their main task of ensuring the implementation of laws aimed to satisfy the priority need of the population in social justice. Historians note that “after the State Duma was established in Russia, the representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie enthusiastically declared that Russia would have a Parliament at last, and from that day on the country would enter the era of parliamentarism. The bourgeois-liberal camp betrayed the revolutionary movement and was quite satisfied with the autocracy with the State Duma. The bourgeoisie achieved what they had desired. The autocracy as an essential barrier against people’s revolution was preserved”³⁹. Russia’s public administration system in the early 20th century was characterized by “**mutual economic interest of the monarchy,**

³⁸ Zakonodatel'naya deyatelnost' IV Gosudarstvennoi Dumi [The legislative activity of the State Duma of the fourth convocation]. *Informatsionnyi portal "Rossiiskaya Imperiya. Istoriya gosudarstva rossiiskogo"* [Information portal “Russian Empire. History of the Russian state”]. Available at: <https://www.rusempire.ru/rossijskaya-imperiya/gosudarstvennaya-duma-ri/gduma-ri-4-sozyva/45-zakonodatelnaya-deyatelnost-iv-gosudarstvennoj-dumy.html>

³⁹ *Istoriya otechestvennogo gosudarstva i prava: uchebn. posob.* [History of the Russian state and law: textbook]. Ed. by O.I. Chistyakov. 1999. Part. 2. 544 p. Available at: <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/teoria-gosudarstva-i-prava-6/184.htm>

In vain did the liberal bourgeoisie believe that with the establishment of the State Duma Russia had got itself a Parliament. The Duma did have some external features of the Parliament. It could direct requests to the government – a reorganized Council of Ministers – and to its individual members. However, ministers could either consider those requests or pay no attention to them. The government had no liability to the State Duma. The ministers were appointed and dismissed by the Tsar, they did not report to the Duma and did not depend on it, despite the fact that the very reorganization of the Council of Ministers was connected to the establishment of the Duma.

The State Duma even made attempts to pass a no-confidence motion against the government. The act of no confidence from the State Duma received no response of the government, it just paid no attention to it. There were even cases when after the Duma had criticized certain officials for their abuse of power, the Tsar, who hated the Duma, promoted those officials. Thus the Tsar showed that he paid no regard to the Duma.

(Source: *Istoriya otechestvennogo gosudarstva i prava: uchebn. posob.* [History of the Russian state and law: textbook]. Available at: <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/teoria-gosudarstva-i-prava-6/184.htm>)

the landlords and the bourgeoisie”⁴⁰; this interest determined the outcome for the domestic political and social situation in the country: a rise of popular discontent without an adequate response from the authorities made the events of 1905 and 1917 inevitable.

By and large, history repeated itself 70 years later: the unwillingness of the ruling elites to hear the voice of the people became one of the inner levers that facilitated the collapse of the Soviet Union. People’s

⁴⁰ Tsarskaya Rossiya v nachale XX veka [Tsarist Russia in the early 20th century]. *Federal'nyi portal Protown.ru* [Federal portal Protown.ru]. Available at: <http://www.protown.ru/information/hide/5967.html>

growing need for information diversity was not satisfied; the needs of the intelligentsia to manifest freedom were suppressed. “Probably, having understood what was necessary, one could create an information environment that would correspond to people’s “wish list”. After that, one could use this environment to carry out Soviet propaganda. But in order to realize all this and then set the appropriate task and implement it, it was necessary to have people with vision and imagination, and there were none of such people among the leadership”⁴¹.

Today, generally speaking, the government faces the same challenges as 100 years ago: there is a growing need for social justice and improvement of the dynamics of the quality of life. Moreover, experts point out the lack of efficiency in the work of the Russian Government in recent years, the lack of consistency in the actions of ministers, and the fused interests of the ruling elite and representatives of the oligarchic clan⁴².

The President’s struggle against “the comprador forces, whose interests and assets are within the sphere of influence of the

⁴¹ Voevodina T. Chego sovkam v sovke ne khvatalo [What Soviet people did not have in the Soviet Union]. *Literaturnaya gazeta* [Literary newspaper], 2015, no. 33, August 26 – September 01

⁴² For example: S.S. Gubanov: “However, the administrative resource is, unfortunately, concentrated in the hands of a group of economists with the comprador ideology, who stand for the idea of reliance on foreign capital and assure that the West will help us. Now they have put forward a program for modernization of the raw-materials exporting model through privatization and tax maneuvers. However, as we have already shown, to upgrade the raw-materials exporting model means the same as to upgrade the system-wide crisis in Russia. In the best case it will mean only a continuation of a zero-sum game” (source: Gubanov S.S. *Sistemnyi krizis i vybor puti razvitiya Rossii* [System-wide crisis and the choice of ways for Russia’s development]. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial’nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz* [Economic and social changes: facts, trends, forecast], 2015, no. 2 (38), p. 33);

S.Yu. Glazyev: “A set of ideas, which is put forward by our key economic agencies, is, in fact, a continued dissemination of the same logic of the Washington consensus: you do not need any independent policy, you do not need to manage your own development, because multinational American and European corporations will decide everything for you... Today it turns out that the government simulates its management of economic development. And in fact, this management depends on the fluctuations of international market, on external shocks and on decisions that are made abroad” (source: Glazyev S.Yu. *Pravitel’stvo gotovo sdat’ vlast’ Zapadu* [The government is ready to hand over its power to the West]. *Novostnoi portal Newsland.com. Novosti ot 25.06.2016* [News portal Newsland.com. News of June 25, 2016]. Available at: <https://newsland.com/user/4296757178/content/sergei-glazev-pravitelstvo-gotovo-sdat-vlast-zapadu/5310381>);

Yu.Yu. Boldyrev: “The Russian Government pursues an irresponsible policy and does not respond properly to economic challenges... If it carries on with such a policy (that is, an irresponsible policy of “doing nothing” and waiting till the West will have mercy, and the price of oil will rise), then it is indeed possible to watch the sun and to forecast the rate at which the price of oil that is beyond our control increases” (source: Boldyrev Yu.Yu. *Pravitel’stvo provodit politiku “nichegonedelaniya”* (interv’yu Yu.Yu. Boldyreva Agentstvu biznes-novostei ot 24.03.2015 [The Government is pursuing a policy of “doing nothing” (an interview with Yuri Boldyrev to the from March 24, 2015)]. *Ofitsial’nyi sait Agentstva biznes-novostei* [Official website of the Business News Agency]. Available at: <http://abnews.ru/2015/03/23/pravitelstvo-provodit-politiku-nichegonedelaniya-boldyrev/>);

V.A. Fadeev: “Currently dominant logic of the Russian authorities that implies a decrease in the risk of negative developments in the economy and even creation of factors favorable for economic growth, actually increases these risks and draws the economy into a long depression” (source: Fadeev V.A. *Naiti istinnye tseli* [To find the true goals]. *Zhurnal “Ekspert”* [Journal “Expert”], 2016, no. 6 (974), 8–14 February, p. 18);

T.A. Golikova: “If the current government turned out in 1998, it would likely have neither the strength nor the will to cope with the situation that demanded immediate and tough solutions. Having got used to the continuous growth of oil prices, the government relaxed: being satisfied by tactical measures, the government seems to hope that oil will rise sharply again in a little while, and all the problems will take care of themselves. It is high time to learn once again to work in crisis conditions” (source: 2015 god byl upushchen [The year 2015 was left out]. *Gazeta “Vedomosti”* [Newspaper “Vedomosti”], 2016, February 03. Available at: <http://www.vedomosti.ru/economics/characters/2016/02/03/626586-2015-god-bil-upushchen>).

“collective West”⁴³, has been going on for more than 15 years (since the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s first presidency). This struggle is becoming increasingly uncompromising and tough⁴⁴, but it has not resulted in any significant breakthrough so far. Therefore, the necessity to improve the effectiveness of parliamentary control in the system of public administration in modern Russia is no less important than it was in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century and in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. ***“Without real elections, without real opposition, and without parliamentary control over the executive power, it is impossible to establish a competitive administrative environment and build an effective management system in the 21st century.”***⁴⁵

September 18, 2016, Russia will hold the election of the deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation of the 7th convocation. The previous State Duma has done much to enhance the efficiency of the mechanism of parliamentary control (in particular, the Law “On parliamentary control” was adopted, which expanded

the supervisory powers of the Accounts Chamber, etc.), but, by and large, modern parliamentarism in Russia has the same flaw as 100 years ago: **the existence of a legal and institutional framework of the parliamentary system does not guarantee its effective functioning, i.e. does not guarantee the possibility to address key challenges of national security on a system-wide basis.**

Against the backdrop of international political events that were unfolding during the period of work of the State Duma of the 6th convocation (the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts, accession of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, international sanctions, deployment of the hybrid warfare), the “merging of the parliamentary opposition with the ruling party” took place. According to experts, “in such situations, the effect of consolidation around the flag is automatic. The parliamentary opposition did not have other options, except joining this patriotic parade... As a result, the State Duma has ceased to perceive adequately the critical assessments from without”⁴⁶.

The situation in the international political arena largely dictated the key laws that marked the work of the State Duma of the 6th convocation⁴⁷. They were in line

⁴³ Gordeev A. Spor Kudrina s Putinyom. Rossiya na pereput’ye [Kudrin disputes with Putin. Russia at the crossroads]. *Gazeta “Zavtra”* [Newspaper “Tomorrow”], 2016, no. 22 (1174), June 02, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ilyin V.A. Vybory v Gosudarstvennyu Dumu—2016. Ekonomicheskaya politika Prezidenta v otsenkakh naseleniya [State Duma Election 2016. Economic policy of the President assessed by the people]. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial’nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz* [Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast], 2016, no. 3 (45), p. 24.

⁴⁵ Glazyev S.Yu. Prichiny degradatsii ekonomiki [Reasons for degradation of the economy]. *Informatsionno-analiticheskoe izdanie “Internet protiv teleekrana”* [Information-analytical publication “The Internet against television”]. Available at: <http://www.contrtv.ru/common/4407/>

⁴⁶ Vinokurova E. Palata nomer shest’: glavnoe, chem zapomnitsya ukhodyashchii sozyv Gosudarstvennoi Dumy Rossii [Ward number six: the most important things by which the outgoing State Duma of Russia will be remembered]. *Internet-gazeta Znak ot 24.06.2016* [Internet Newspaper “Sign”, issue of June 24, 2016]. Available at: https://www.znak.com/2016-06-24/glavnoe_chem_zapomnitsya_uhodyachiy_sozyv_gosudarstvennoy_dumy_rossii (an opinion of political scientist A. Gallyamov).

⁴⁷ Among them: Dima Yakovlev Law, the Law on non-profit organizations – “foreign agents”, the Law on direct elections of governors, the Law on the introduction of the “Platon” system, etc.

with issues discussed in society and in the media, but most of them were not related to the major issues that people are concerned about – inflation, decline in the standard of living and quality of life (*Insert 3*).

Accounts Chamber experts regularly criticize the Government, but their opinion is not taken into consideration. The approval of the Cabinet of Ministers by the State Duma is held through a single list that initially brings to naught their personal responsibility.

The most telling indicator of efficiency of work of the State Duma can be the level of people's trust in it. Experts at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences point out that "in Russian society there is a request to change the composition of State Duma officials. Russians are no longer satisfied with the current alliance of party functionaries, businessmen and the so-called "media personalities" (athletes, artists, entertainers) existing in the Duma... Russians would like to see the next Parliament, first, more professional, and second, more adequately representing the major social groups and strata of society and,

thirdly, in the new Parliament there should be a place for civil activists and well-known public figures, many of which have already gained experience and political "weight"⁴⁸.

People's skeptical attitude toward the activities of the deputies is confirmed by the results of regional sociological studies. According to ISEDT RAS, the trust in the deputies after a sharp drop in 2009 (from 42 to 34 p.p.) remained at the same level (*Fig. 1*). The new Duma of the 6th convocation has not introduced any changes in this dynamics. Among all the state institutions, the State Duma has the lowest level of trust among the population, and this is registered throughout the period of 2000 to 2016; that is, during the last three compositions of the deputies. Judging by the data for April 2016, 62% of the people trust Russian President, 50% – the Government, 41% – the Federation Council, 34% – the State Duma, 19% – political parties (*Insert 4*).

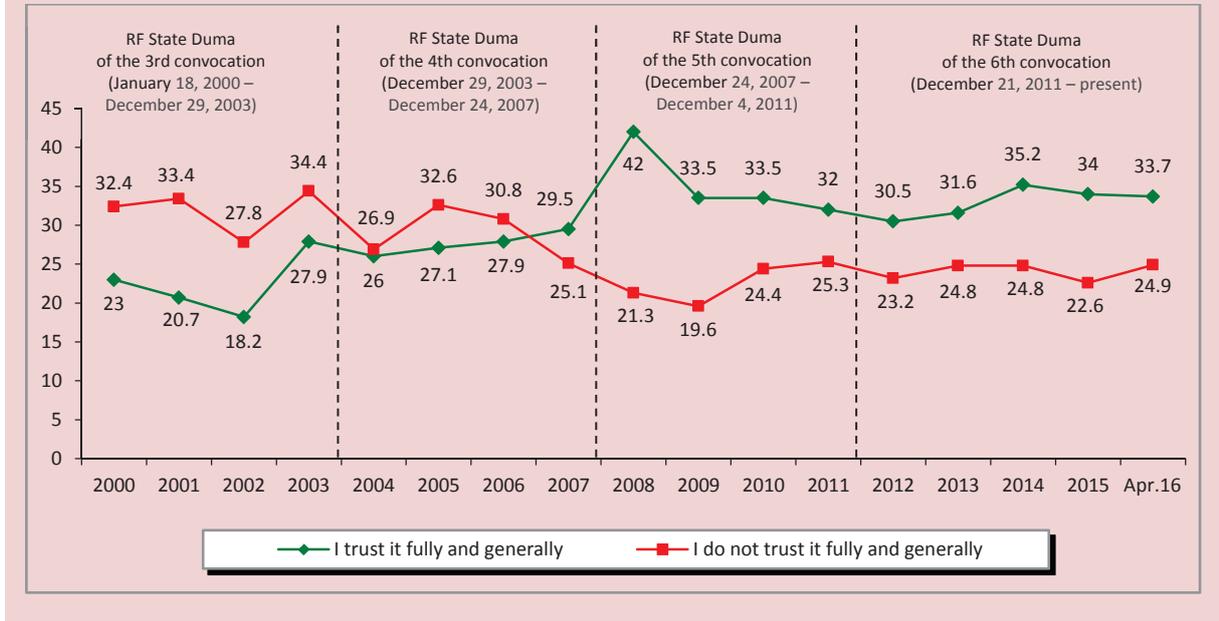
Thus, the key tasks that were set out before the deputies of the State Duma of the 6th convocation (and, more broadly, before the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation)⁴⁹, have not been resolved. In

⁴⁸ *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo vesnoi 2016-go: trevogi i nadezhdy: informatsionno-analiticheskoe rezyume po itogam obshcherossiiskogo sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya* [Russian society in the spring of 2016: alarms and hopes: the information-analytical summary on the results of a nationwide sociological research]. Moscow, 2016. P. 23.

⁴⁹ For example: S.E. Naryshkin: "The state must not miss the chance granted by history itself. In particular, we must do everything so that the mistakes of the early period of formation of parliamentarism would not be repeated....if we want sustainable development for decades ahead, we must, consistently and without turning back, strengthen the institutions of democracy. We must increase citizens' trust in the legislative power, enhance its credibility, reputation and independence... In the coming years, we must do everything to ensure significant growth of the authority of the Parliament as an independent and effectively functioning branch of government. It is necessary to achieve maximum transparency of the Parliament. It must not only hear the views of all strata and groups of society, but to have permanent "feedback" with them" (source: Naryshkin S.E. *Demokratiya i parlamentarizm* [Democracy and the parliamentary system]. *Rossiiskaya gazeta* [Russian newspaper], 2012, no. 5750 (77), 9 September. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2012/04/09/narishkin.html>;

S.V. Zheleznyak: "Modern Russian Parliament needs to respond effectively to the changes occurring in the life of the country and society, to provide the processes of socio-economic development with timely legislative support formed on the basis of broad public discussion" (source: Zheleznyak S.V. *Novye informatsionnye tekhnologii povyshayut otkrytost' Gosdumy* [New information technologies increase the transparency of the State Duma]. *Ofitsial'nyi sait partii "Edinaya Rossiya". Novosti ot 09.04.2012* [Official website of the party "United Russia". News of 09 April 2012]. Available at: <http://er.ru/news/80640/>).

Figure 1. Dynamics of trust in the State Duma of the Russian Federation
(as a percentage of the number of respondents)



general, it will be up to the deputies of the 7th convocation to solve them, and the longer the solution is delayed, the more obvious the process of growth of social tension in the country will be. Despite the fact that the share of Russians who are ready to take part in protest actions is, according to various estimates, about 20%⁵⁰, it would be a strategic mistake to ignore the existence of social tensions at the latent level, since it is extremely difficult to forecast revolutionary changes in society; for the authorities and historians, the changes become obvious only “after the fact”, when it is already impossible to do anything to improve the situation.

In lieu of a conclusion. Before the election to the State Duma of the seventh convocation, September 18, 2016...

⁵⁰ The proportion of people who consider mass protests possible, according to VTsIOM (as of July 2016), is 21%; according to ISED T RAS (as of August 2016) – 18%.

A brief historical overview leads to the conclusion that the Russian Empire at the turn of the 20th century, the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and the Russian Federation in the early 21st century have much in common. Historical parallels can be drawn in the socio-economic development of the state (lagging behind Western countries), and in the specifics of social consciousness (“the instinct of state might”), and the efficiency of public administration (the inability to fulfill the needs of the population in social justice and in enhancing the quality of life).

Furthermore, like 100 years ago, Russia has to deal with the domestic socio-economic agenda in very difficult conditions of the international political situation, where the country plays a key role and, therefore, cannot stand aside from global processes.

Insert 4

Level of trust in governmental and non-governmental institutions (in % of the number of respondents)*

Governmental and non-governmental institutions	RF State Duma (3 convocation) January 18, 2000 – December 29, 2003			RF State Duma (4 convocation) December 29, 2003 – December 24, 2007			RF State Duma (5 convocation) December 24, 2007 – December 4, 2011			RF State Duma (6 convocation) December 21, 2011 – present						
	2000	2003	Dynamics 2003 to 2000		2004	2007	Dynamics 2007 to 2004		2008	2011	Dynamics 2011 to 2008		2012	Apr. 2016	Dynamics Apr. 2016 to 2012	
			+	-			=	+			-	=			+	-
RF President	57.1	64.3	+7		54.4	60.3	+6		65.2	50.5	-15		45.7	61.9	+16	
RF Government	42.7	42.7		0	35.2	41.9	+7		60.2	47.4	-13		39.6	49.5	+10	
Church	42.3	45.9	+4		42.9	44.8	+2		51.9	47.5	-4		41.4	45.9	+5	
Army	37.0	30.9	-6		27.1	28.7	+2		37.8	34.1	-4		31.3	42.6	+11	
Federation Council	28.3	34.9	+7		27.1	34.9	+8		47.6	35.5	-12		32.3	40.8	+9	
Police	27.2	25.7	-2		23.7	28.3	+5		36.5	32.1	-4		29.3	39.7	+10	
Procuracy	30.9	28.8	-2		28.8	31.1	+2		40.9	35.4	-6		33.9	38.7	+5	
Federal Security Service	34.2	34.9	+1		28.4	34.2	+6		43.8	35.8	-8		33.2	38.2	+5	
Court	31.6	31.3		0	31.0	32.1	+1		41.3	35.8	-6		36.1	36.8	+1	
State Duma	23.0	27.9	+5		26.0	29.5	+4		42.0	32.0	-10		30.5	33.7	+3	
RF Public Chamber	-	-		-	-	-			-	27.3			28.1	32.6	+5	
Vologda Oblast Public Chamber	-	-		-	-	-			-	25.7			25.4	28.5	+3	
Trade Unions	28.4	24.7	-4		26.5	28.6	+2		35.9	30.0	-6		25.6	26.1	+1	
Media	30.2	21.6	-9		31.8	31.0	-1		27.5	29.2	+2		28.7	24.5	-4	
Non-governmental organizations	-	-		-	-	24.4			32.6	26.7	-6		26.5	22.0	-5	
			5	5	5	5	5	11	1	1	3	1	12	2	13	0
Total number of changes in all the governmental and non-governmental institutions	Russian President Vladimir Putin (1 term, January 2000 – May 2004)			Russian President Vladimir Putin (2 term, May 2004 – May 2008)			Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (May 2008 – May 2012)			Russian President Vladimir Putin (3 term; May 2012 – present)						

* Ranked according to the data as of April 2016.

All in all, the question concerns 18 governmental and non-governmental institutions. This table shows the first 15 that enjoy the greatest trust of the population (according to the data as of April, 2016).

Legend:

+ upward trend of the indicator

- downward trend of the indicator

= absence of change or absence of data

At the beginning of the 20th century, the tsarist monarchy was unable to bring public administration to such a level that its effectiveness could be seen by wide layers of population. The basic needs of people were not satisfied, and this led to the revolutionary events that radically changed not only Russia itself, but the whole world.

The same thing happened in the late 1980s: the system of public administration was efficient in coping with the task of strengthening the state and enhancing its industrial and military power; but it failed to consider timely the growing needs of the population that demanded an increase in their well-being and granting of democratic freedoms; all these factors led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Today, government authorities again face the same problems, and in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, they will have to take more effective action than 100 and 30 years ago. “One of our key lessons today is that the problem of Russia is the simultaneous existence of unsatisfied democratic and social demands that were long overdue a hundred years ago. This is a reason for the tragedy”⁵¹.

The approaching State Duma election can (and, in our opinion, should) become a turning point in enhancing the effectiveness of public administration. At least those tasks

⁵¹ Dugin A.G. Segodnya Rossii neobkhodima konservativnaya revolyutsiya. A. Dugin v programme Vitaliya Tret'yakova “Chto delat?”, kanal “Kul'tura”, VGTRK, 6 iyunya 2005 g. [Today, Russia needs a conservative revolution. A. Dugin in the program of Vitaly Tretyakov “What to do?”, the channel “Culture” VGTRK, 6 June 2005]. *Informatsionno-analiticheskii portal “Evraziya”* [Information-analytical portal “Eurasia”]. Available at: <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&sid=2478>

It is true that now there is a pre-revolutionary situation in Russia. The orange revolution, which began in the autumn of last year, is now just frozen and hidden, but it has not dissolved. It was the same with the revolution of 1905; it, too, was hiding, and then it broke loose.

(Source: Prokhanov A.A. Esli by ne bylo Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, Gitler zavladel by vsei Evropoi [If it were not for the October revolution, Hitler would have taken possession of the whole Europe]. *Gazeta “Komsomol'skaya Pravda”* [Newspaper “Komsomol truth”], 2012, November 06 [e. RES.]. Available at: <http://www.vologda.kp.ru/daily/25979/2913360/>).

to be solved by the Federal Assembly and the State Duma of the 6th convocation have not been resolved, and the relevance of bringing the Russian parliamentary system to a qualitatively new stage in its development continues to grow.

However, there is another possible scenario. If in the coming months of political life (especially after the election of a new composition of the State Duma) there are no significant changes in the system of government, if Russian people continue to experience increasing demand for social justice and improving the quality of life, then social tensions in the country could increase significantly and this could affect the overall psychological atmosphere in which the presidential election will take place in 2018. Ultimately, the efficiency of all the chambers of the Federal Assembly today can become a key factor in the presidential election.

Finding solutions to priority tasks that the Federal Assembly and, in particular, the

State Duma of the Russian Federation, have to deal with requires that two conditions are observed simultaneously:

first, the presence of political will, because the roots of the problems of Russian parliamentarism go deep into the structure of the system of public administration prevailing in the last two decades. The merged interests of the political elite and the big oligarchy exist at all levels of the management system, and they systematically and comprehensively impede the implementation of national interests. It is impossible to find a solution to this problem without making tough domestic political decisions;

second, an integrated approach to improving the efficiency of public administration. History shows that adopting laws and establishing any special institutions does not guarantee the efficiency of public administration; this can be said about any of the branches of government. The key task is to ensure that these laws and institutions actually work, and it is a strategic objective not only for the State Duma, but also for the President, who has assumed personal responsibility for dealing with domestic issues in the country⁵².

The years 1905 and 1917 predetermined the century that we lived through. But the prelude and the epilogue are two different things. Granted, the problems are the same today, but at that time they stood before the beginning of their solution, and today they stand after its ending; at that time it was a creative upsurge with all the attendant excesses of the revolution, today it is the period of decadence, decomposition, weakness and so on. There are similarities between today and that day, and in general, today's questions are not solved again, but all these questions of 1905, over a hundred years, during the 70 years of the Soviet regime, were solved, and after them there emerged other issues, and today we are back...

(Source: Dugin A.G. Segodnya Rossii neobkhodima konservativnaya revolyutsiya. A. Dugin v programme Vitaliya Tret'yakova "Chto delat'?", kanal "Kul'tura", VGTRK, 6 iyunya 2005 g. [Today, Russia needs a conservative revolution. A. Dugin in the program of Vitaly Tretyakov "What to do?", the channel "Culture" VGTRK, 6 June 2005]. *Informatsionno-analiticheskii portal "Evraziya"* [Information-analytical portal "Eurasia"]. Available at: <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&sid=2478>

Thus, the negative historical experience of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union puts before the government and the President of the Russian Federation the urgent question that *public administration should create conditions facilitating the comprehensive and systematic solution of key challenges of national security at all stages of development of the Russian statehood*.

What will be the response of the President to the growing need for improving the quality of life and social justice in society? To what extent will Russia's historical

⁵² The National Security Strategy–2015 stipulates that “the state policy of the Russian Federation in ensuring national security is carried out through the concerted action of all the elements of the system **under the guidance of the President of the Russian Federation** and with the coordinating role of the Security Council of the Russian Federation” (source: Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 31 dekabrya 2015 goda №683 “O Strategii natsional’noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii” [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December, 31, 2015 No. 683 “On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation]. *Rossiiskaya gazeta* [Russian Newspaper], 2015, 31 December. Available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2015/12/31/nac-bezopasnost-site-dok.html>).

experience in ensuring the functioning of the system of administration be taken into account? Today these questions are becoming a cornerstone of national security, because for Russian society they have acquired the nature of lingering expectations. The first months of work of the State Duma of the 7th convocation will have to show determination

in the actions of a new political elite in achieving national interests and first and foremost – in the implementation of the main needs of the population, which will be essential for ensuring national security and subsequent competitiveness of Russia in the 21st century without twists and turns like those in the history of the 20th century.

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