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**RUSSIA'S REGIONAL ELECTIONS:  
A STEP TOWARDS FEDERALISM**

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# RUSSIA'S REGIONAL ELECTIONS: A STEP TOWARDS FEDERALISM

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## Introduction

Last year, Russia had a bumper harvest of elections. In the span of twelve months, from December 1995 to December 1996, three nation-wide races were held: elections to the State Duma in December 1995, presidential elections in June-July 1996, and gubernatorial elections in almost fifty of Russia's regions in September-December 1996. Given the fact that head of the state and local leaders were being elected openly and freely for the first time in the Russian history,<sup>1</sup> this year was a political breakthrough.

To appreciate more thoroughly of this electoral cycle, one has to go back only nine years to when Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement of "alternative elections" (that is, a ballot with more than one candidacy) to the CPSU and Soviet bodies seemed a staggering innovation in a country used to a single candidate and unanimous vote. Today, elections are no longer a symbolic and cultural predicament; they have become a psychological, political and technological routine.<sup>2</sup> The 1996 electoral marathon gives conclusive evidence to the fact that a new form of legitimacy, previously unfamiliar to the national political culture, has been firmly established in Russia, and the political elite at federal and regional levels feels compelled to submit to the test of the ballot box.<sup>3</sup>

Now, if no extraordinary circumstances arise, the country takes a break until the 1999 Duma elections (after second-round elections took place in three regions early this year, there are just a few remaining: Irkutsk and Nizhny Novgorod Oblasts in 1997, and Krasnoyarsk Territory in 1998 among them). The political elite starts a new life cycle. Among re-elected officials, a closer look should be given to regional leaders who emerged as real winners of the recent electoral marathon. Despite the fact that gubernatorial elections in Russia were far less glamorous and headline-seizing than the presidential or parliamentary ones (by autumn 1996, there had been a certain election fatigue among Russia's politicians, the media and the population, while the West considered that the game had been made with Boris Yeltsin's victory in July, and hardly paid any attention to the governors' race), it is perhaps in the regional struggles that features of the new Russian regime have taken shape.

## 1. A democratic mandate

To begin with, regional elections were an important step towards a democratic legitimization of the political system. For the first time, local leaders were elected directly by the Russian population. The former governors' corps was partly composed of "accidental people" appointed by the President of Russia on the basis of their ideological affinity and personal loyalty

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<sup>1</sup>Russian presidential campaign of 1991 fell short of a full-scale national election, since Russia, as one of the republics within the USSR, was not a fully independent state at the time.

<sup>2</sup>Andrei Fadin, "Obschestvennoye soglasiye v telom dostignuto" [Public Accord Has Been Reached in General], *NG-Stsenarii*, no. 4, July 1996

<sup>3</sup>Sergei Medvedev, "Landscape After the Battle: Rethinking Democracy in Russia", *International Spectator*, Vol. 32, no. 1 (January-March 1997), p. 71

to Boris Yeltsin rather than representing their respective regions. In this sense, the Federation Council (FC), often called the Senate, i.e. the upper chamber of the Russian Parliament which under the 1993 Constitution was formed of regional heads of the executive, derived its legitimacy primarily from Moscow.

This situation persisted when President Yeltsin signed his Decree no. 1969 on 3 October 1994 (accidentally or not, this was the first anniversary of the bombing of the Russian White House) extending the moratorium on gubernatorial elections for another year, and a follow-up Decree no. 951 of 17 September 1995, suspending regional elections until autumn 1996.

In late summer 1996, after Boris Yeltsin's victory in the presidential race, and just before the expiry of the moratorium on regional elections, there was a strong temptation in Moscow to suspend them once again. In fact, both the authority and the opposition were already exhausted by electoral battles. The Kremlin was afraid to compromise its presidential victory, and the opposition, demoralized by Gennady Zyuganov's defeat, needed time to regroup its forces. On top of this, after holding an incredibly costly presidential campaign (some analysts estimate its price at \$ 20 billion<sup>4</sup>), the Center simply couldn't afford further financial support of its candidates. (And in fact it didn't; the Kremlin only financed the "pacesetting" campaign of the Saratov governor Dmitry Ayatskov won by a landslide, but after that was only putting its bet on the likely winner).

According to *Segodnya* daily, in August 1996 the Presidential Administration drafted a plan to hold elections in several regions in September, after which a new moratorium on regional elections would be announced. This secret plan was also endorsed by leaders of the Communists.<sup>5</sup> Its implementation was prevented by Boris Yeltsin's critical heart condition, a sudden possibility of extraordinary presidential elections, and the ensuing hesitations of the elite. The opposition, too, considered this as a chance to recapture some of the ground lost through Gennady Zyuganov's defeat. The new political circumstances gave a go-ahead to the regional elections.

In other words, gubernatorial elections took place despite considerable anti-electoral phobias of both the Government and the opposition. The very fact of holding them can be interpreted as a victory of the constitutional procedure over considerations of political expediency. It was the second time during that year that the political elite overcame the temptation to call off elections: earlier, the presidential elections had to be safeguarded against multiple appeals to cancel them under the pretext that "one shouldn't elect a chief physician in a mental hospital". Both cases testify to the entrenchment of legal norms and mentality in the Russian polity, and a further advance of procedural democracy. This was also emphasized in Boris Yeltsin's message to the new governors' corps in late December 1996, in which he stressed that they are no longer "voivodes"<sup>6</sup>, but elected representatives, bound by common responsibility for the future of Russia.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tatiana Koshkareva, "Ekonomika predvybornogo protsessa" [Economics of the Electoral Process], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 September 1996

<sup>5</sup>Gleb Cherkasov, Vladimir Shpak, "Regional'nie vybory: pobedu prazdnuyut vse" [Regional Elections: A Victory Celebrated by All], *Segodnya*, 26 December 1996

<sup>6</sup>*Voivode* was a governor of town or province appointed by the Tzar and later by the Russian Emperor from 16th to 18th century.

<sup>7</sup>Cited in: Dmitry Volkov, "Tsentr preduprezhdaet regiony o solidarnoi otvetstvennosti" [The Center Warns the Regions of Solidary Responsibility], *Segodnya*, 27 December 1996

Yet another evidence of the establishment of legal norms were the elections of the governor in the Amur Oblast, initially won by the opposition candidate Anatoli Belonogov by a margin of 189 votes. The local election commission recognized some minor violations of the electoral procedure (some distant crews of gold miners couldn't vote on time), and the case was taken to court, which ruled to cancel the election results.<sup>8</sup> The second election in March 1997 brought Anatoli Belonogov a more convincing victory. Taking an electoral dispute to court, and not deciding it by order and administrative rule is also quite new for the Russian polity, a sign that "Russia's election procedure has become fully legal", according to the head of Russia's Central Electoral Committee Alexander Ivanchenko.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The two-party game: A view from Moscow

Like the 1996 presidential race, regional elections were organized and interpreted along bipartisan lines: the Government vs. the opposition. At least it seemed so from Moscow, where sponsors, coaches and spectators were split into two camps, sitting on opposite stands, and watching the all-Russian election game.

The governmental camp, or the so-called "party of the authority" (*partiya vlasti*), was guided by the Presidential Administration and by the All-Russian Coordination Council (OKS) headed by Sergei Filatov. It supported almost all acting governors, and also some of the likely winners; sometimes it also supported both the governor and the forerunner: Alexander Belyakov and Vadim Gustov in the Leningrad Oblast, Vassily Desyatnikov and Gennady Shtin in the Kirov Oblast, etc.

The opposition was rallied around the Popular Patriotic Union of Russia (NPSR). It split the candidates into three groups: totally acceptable, relatively acceptable "neutrals", and totally unacceptable. Candidates of the first and second groups were supported by NPSR, regardless of whether they sought such support.

Given such flexible criteria, both camps sometimes ended up supporting the same candidate like the acting governor of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (AO) Alexander Philippenko. A popular joke in the Moscow political milieu put it that "the biggest chances has a candidate of the government supported by NPSR". In other words, it soon became evident that bipartisan political criteria have become extremely relative compared to the presidential elections, if not irrelevant at all.

It came at no surprise that both sides interpreted the summary result of regional elections in their favor. In late 1996, the Kremlin claimed that 20 re-elected governors plus 17 new ones that are inclining towards the "party of the authority" make the total score 37:8. Opposition, for its part, enrolled all new "independent" governors, that it had supported in one or another way, on its own list, adding them to 14 "own" candidates, and claimed the victory with the score of 25:20.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Dmitry Kamyshev, Vladimir Shpak, "'Krasnoe voskresenie' pered 'krasnym chetvergom'" ['Red Sunday' on the Eve of 'Red Thursday'], *Segodnya*, 25 March 1997

<sup>9</sup>Cited in: Sergei Mulin, "Zaboty Tsentrizbirkoma" [Concerns of the Central Electoral Committee], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 December 1996

<sup>10</sup>Gleb Cherkasov, Vladimir Shpak, "Regional'nie vybory: pobedu prazdnuyut vse" [Regional Elections: A Victory Celebrated by All], *Segodnya*, 26 December 1996

Applying this sport-like bipartisan logic, the “party of the authority” has clearly defeated the opposition. NPSR took gubernatorial posts in some traditionally “red” regions (those who voted for the Communists both at the parliamentary and the presidential elections), but not in the regions that voted for Boris Yeltsin in June and July; in other words, the Communists made no advances on the opponent’s territory (See Appendix A: Results of the gubernatorial elections). On the contrary, the “party of the authority” took over some regions that were considered part of the “red zone” (e.g., the Chita Oblast, and the Jewish AO). Among the new opposition governors, there are no secretaries of the CPRF Oblast committees, and only three former Communist deputies in the State Duma; most of them are former heads of regional legislatures, and in this sense “persons of the authority”. In a word, one can see a clear lack of qualified regional cadres within the opposition.

Speaking geographically, models of political preferences of the population remained mostly unchanged compared to the presidential and parliamentary elections. The “party of the authority” traditionally leads in prospering Moscow with the surrounding region, and in St. Petersburg (they all matter numerically). Its other stronghold turns out to be the Volga Region (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Astrakhan’) — here, some regions have been won from the opposition. Thirdly, it is the resource-rich North (Vologda, Arkhangelsk, Perm’, Komi-Permyak, Yamalo-Nenets, Khanty-Mansi, Taimyr and Evenk AOs, as well as Yakutia-Sakha), and the Far North-East (Magadan, Chukotka, Kamchatka, Koryak AO and Sakhalin).

The opposition performed traditionally well in the North Caucasus (Stavropol’ and Krasnodar Territories), South Siberia (Kemerovo, Altai) and naturally in the so-called “red belt” south of Moscow, encompassing the impoverished Oblasts of the non-black-earth area and some of the black-earth regions (Kaluga, Kursk, Kurgan, Bryansk, Ryazan’, Tula).

### 3. A victory for the “third force”

However, trying to analyze political preferences of the new governors’ corps, traditional political geography and party affiliation turn out to be of little avail. Already during election campaigns, party preferences of most candidates were becoming blurred and arbitrary, as argued above. After winning the election, a governor becomes even less confined by party ideology. He is no longer responsible to bosses and sponsors in Moscow, but rather to the region, and first of all to its economy. If appointed governors tended to be politically-charged, elected ones have to focus on the local economy.

Loyalty to the party ideology has been immediately questioned by the old Yeltsin rival and new Kursk governor Alexander Rutskoi who was quick to debunk his opposition identity and to pledge cooperation with Moscow in solving the region’s problems. Another example of a pragmatic evolution of an opposition regional leader is a prominent critic of the Government, the Krasnodar governor Nikolai Kondratenko.<sup>11</sup> Of “red” governors elected before Autumn 1996, such evolution was made by leaders of Belgorod, Smolensk and Lipetsk Oblasts. In general, Russian analysts predict a complete “decolorizing” of the “red belt” in which ideological oppositioners will turn into pragmatic managers.<sup>12</sup> The same holds true for candidates of the

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<sup>11</sup>Konstantin Katanyan, “Obnishchaniye regionov oslablyayet gosudarstvo” [Impoverishment of the Regions Weakens the State], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 April 1997

<sup>12</sup>Anatoli Snegov, “KPRF i inertsia protesta” [CPRF and the Protest Inertia], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 December 1996

“party of the authority” protected by a democratic mandate and no longer dependent on their loyalty to Moscow.

“Decolorizing” of political affiliations and depolitization of regional leadership has become one of the main outcomes of the elections. A binary “government-opposition” scheme seems to be no longer valid for the analysis; this was a projection of Moscow’s political rules and jargon into a qualitatively different regional situation. The new regional agenda is not about political labels; it is day-to-day management of local affairs and region’s rights with respect to the Center. Consequently, the real winners of gubernatorial elections were neither the governmental, nor the opposition candidates, but the so-called “strong economic managers” (*krepkie khozyaistvenniki* — if only a specific Russian/Soviet/socialist term *khozyaistvo* could be translated as “economy”<sup>13</sup>). These kind of leaders are symbolized by a figure of the Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov. Most of the new, or re-elected, governors fall into this category; according to some analysts, they are 35 among 45 elected by the end of 1996.<sup>14</sup>

“Strong economic managers” emerge as a “third force” on the Russian political scene, as an alternative to both the Government and the opposition. There’s a certain degree of cohesion among them, and they act as an independent, if not officially registered, group within the Federation Council. By some estimates, there are at least 17 members of the FC ready to join the “party of economic managers”; these include supporters of the Government such as the Samara governor Konstantin Titov and the Yakut president Mikhail Nikolaev, and active members of the opposition such as the Chelyabinsk governor Petr Sumin.<sup>15</sup>

Emergence of the regional “third force” marks in a new twist in Russia’s federal politics of the last six years. Roughly speaking, this can be divided into three periods:

1. The “ideological” period of 1991-1993 in the wake of the August 1991 coup, when the dichotomy of “democrats vs. Communists” was projected onto the regional level, and regional leaders were appointed in accordance with their political affiliation.
2. The period of 1993-1996 in the wake of the October 1993 strife, less ideologically charged, but no less politicized, when a model of “the government vs. the opposition” was imposed by the Center on the periphery. This period was characterized by a moratorium on regional elections, and a strain of bilateral treaties on the division of powers between the Center and subjects of the Federation, starting with the February 1994 Treaty with Tatarstan.
3. The current period in the wake of the 1996-1997 regional elections when governors emerge as the “third force” defying the “government vs. the opposition” model. In fact, both the Government and the opposition, residing and operating in Moscow, favor a more unitary structure of the state, while the regional “third force” is likely to push for greater federalism. Hence a third model, “the Center vs. the regions”.

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<sup>13</sup>For differences between “economy” and *khozyaistvo*, see Vladimir Chervyakov, “Russian Economic Elites in the Political Arena” in *Post-Soviet Puzzles: Mapping the Political Economy of the Former Soviet Union* ed. Klaus Segbers and Stephan de Speigeleire (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995), Vol. I: Against the Background of the Former Soviet Union, p. 216

<sup>14</sup>Gleb Cherkasov, “Kreml ne zhdet bol’shikh nepriyatnostei ot Senata” [The Kremlin Does Not Expect Big Trouble from the Senate], *Segodnya*, 27 December 1996

<sup>15</sup>Gleb Cherkasov, Vladimir Shpak, “Regional’nie vybory: pobedu prazdnuyut vse” [Regional Elections: A Victory Celebrated by All], *Segodnya*, 26 December 1996

As a matter of fact, current phase could become a period of de-politization of federal relations in Russia. Some years ago, in one of the first methodological analyses of regionalization in Russia, Vladimir Kagansky observed that

“The construction of the region obliges it to be apolitical. Behaving in the most similar manner, Communists, democrats, technocrats, nationalists holding power in the regions render these political identities senseless. Regionalism absorbs politics proper. But then regionalization is the mechanism of depoliticization and de-ideologization”.<sup>16</sup>

Today, Russia’s federal structure seems to be moving in this very direction. For instance, the new Federation Council proved to be less politicized than the previous one.<sup>17</sup> At the first meeting of the new FC on 22 January 1997 the senators, unlike their colleagues in the State Duma, sidelined their ideological differences and party affiliations, publicly displaying solidarity and lack of intention to split into factions. Preserving the cohesion of the regions, at least at a declaratory level, becomes one of the main political assets of the FC in its disputes with the Government.

#### **4. The new role of the Federation Council**

As a matter of fact, the new democratic mandate of the FC, and the emergence of a regional “third force” (“party of economic managers”) provide for an enhanced role of the parliament’s upper chamber within the system of state institutions. The post-election Senate feels itself not merely an assembly of regional representatives, but a fully developed and legitimate body of the federal authority, and is ready to fight for its own interests in this capacity.<sup>18</sup>

Before the elections, the FC had lower political ambition, enjoying a firmly established (but not formalized) relationship with the Center. This was primarily a forum for personal meetings, lobbying and bureaucratic trading between heads of the local executive and members of the federal Government. The trading itself took place within committees and regional associations of the FC, as well as within the federal ministries, most often in the Ministry of Finance. Regional governors and federal executives concluded package deals in which central transfers, subsidies and subventions were traded for senators’ votes in approval of governmental bills. All political activity was mostly confined to the same level of committees and regional associations of the FC: it was there that a “red” senator could demand the resignation of the cabinet, and a democratic senator could attack the Communist Duma speaker; but political declarations were hardly ever taken to plenary sessions. If the FC ever sought greater powers, it was with

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<sup>16</sup>Vladimir Kagansky, “Sovetskoe prostranstvo: konstruktsia i destruktzia” [The Soviet Space: Construction and Destruction] in *Inoe. Khrestomatiya novogo rossiiskogo samosoznaniya* [The Other. Anthology of New Russia’s Self-consciousness], ed. Sergei Chernyshov (Moscow: Argus, 1995), Vol. 1: Rossiya kak predmet [Russia as an Object], p. 113.

See also: Vladimir Kagansky, “Russian Regions and Territories” in *Post-Soviet Puzzles: Mapping the Political Economy of the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Klaus Segbers and Stephan de Speigelleire (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995), Vol. II: Emerging Geopolitical and Territorial Units: Theories, Methods and Case Studies, pp. 49-65; Sergei Medvedev, “Post-Soviet Developments: A Regional Interpretation” in *Ibid.*, pp. 5-48

<sup>17</sup>Sergei Mulin, “Sovet Federatsii ne budet politizirovannym” [The Federation Council Will Not Be Politicized], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 25 December 1996

<sup>18</sup>Vladimir Shpak, “Sovet Federatsii gotov uluchshat’ Konstitutsiyu” [The Federation Council is Ready to Improve the Constitution], *Segodnya*, 23 January 1997

the aim of selling them later to the Government in exchange for new subsidies, subventions, etc.

The FC thus played a classical role of a moderator between the oppositional Duma and the Government, a Russian variant of the mechanism of checks and balances.<sup>19</sup> This role was further promoted by the figure of the FC speaker, the Orel governor Yegor Stroev — perhaps the only “heavyweight” politician (he is a permanent member of the top ten in the *Nezavisimaya gazeta* list of Russia’s 100 leading politicians) equally appealing to the Government and the opposition. Under his guidance, the FC pursued a moderating, and moderate, role.

But now the context has changed. Since all senators, except six of them, have full democratic mandates, the FC takes a more assertive stand. From winning tactical concessions from the Government, it turns to a strategic goal: becoming a political player in its own right. Signs of this came as early as the first post-election session of the FC at which speaker Stroev called the Senate “a guarantor of political stability”: before, this epithet could only be attributed to the President.<sup>20</sup> It soon became clear that the FC is seeking to amend the Constitution, especially in what concerns budgetary federalism. Demands of the FC put forward in early 1997 include the following:

- modifying the procedure of adopting the 1998 budget, discussing it first in the FC, and only after that submitting it to the Duma;<sup>21</sup>
- the right to appoint key ministers in the Government, including the three “power ministers” and the Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Senate also issued recommendations to Boris Yeltsin in forming the new Government in March 1997, insisting on giving the Minister of Agriculture Viktor Khlystun the post of Vice-Prime Minister;
- the right of decision-making in questions of war, peace, and emergency rule;<sup>22</sup>
- finally, in the situation of a severe budgetary crisis (wage arrears, non-payments, etc.), and with unpronounced consent of the FC, some of the regional legislatures (e.g. in Sakhalin and Irkutsk Oblasts) voted to stop paying taxes to the federal Government that is indebted to them; same steps were taken by the Tula governor Nikolai Sevryugin during his last days in office before he lost his post to Vassily Starodubtsev.<sup>23</sup>

It is conceivable that in the next few months these spontaneous demands by the governors will become bills and laws, meaning that the FC is really determined to redraw the constitutional balance between the Government, the Duma and the Senate, or, to be more precise, between the Center and the periphery. It is too early to say whether the FC could get as far as breaching the balance of powers, but the State Duma has already shown signs of worry. It recently filed an inquiry with the Constitutional Court questioning whether the FC is a fully legitimate body if all elected governors become its members automatically.

The new federalist perspective of the FC can also be seen in the re-election of Yegor Stroev as its speaker. He was chosen over the Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov who, despite his profile of

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<sup>19</sup>Konstantin Katanyan, “Orlovsky tyazhelovoz” [The Orel Heavy Draught-Horse], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 February 1997

<sup>20</sup>Vladimir Shpak, “Sovet Federatsii gotov uluchshat Konstitutsiyu” [The Federation Council is Ready to Improve the Constitution], *Segodnya*, 23 January 1997

<sup>21</sup>Konstantin Katanyan, “Obnishchaniye regionov oslablyayet gosudarstvo” [Impoverishment of the Regions Weakens the State], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 April 1997

<sup>22</sup>Vladimir Shpak, “Senat gotovitsa k pryzhku” [The Senate is Ready to Jump], *Segodnya*, 19 February 1997

<sup>23</sup>Vladimir Shpak, “‘Prazdnik neposlushaniya’ senatorov zakanchivayetsa” [‘The Display of Disobedience’ among the Senators is Coming to an End], *Segodnya*, 23 April 1997



*kepkii khozyaistevnik* (“strong economic manager”) and independent behavior on the Russian political scene,<sup>24</sup> is still seen as a man too deeply involved with the Center and new financial elites, and thus favoring a more unitary Russia. On the contrary, Stroevev, having his roots in the heavily subsidized Orel Oblast, is considered to be a true spokesman of the periphery, a man able to promote the federalist agenda much further.

On a more practical plane, the 1997-model FC caused more headache for Boris Yeltsin and the Government than it used to do, voting down two presidential candidates to the Constitutional Court (Mikhail Fedotov and Mikhail Krasnov), declining the governmental law on taxation of the purchase of foreign currency, and adopting the Law on Restitution of Cultural Valuables in its conservative anti-Western wording on the eve of Boris Yeltsin’s visit to Germany in April.

For their part, federal bodies of the executive, first of all the Presidential Administration under Anatoli Chubais, try to counteract the governors’ offensive by reinvigorating the institution of local self-government (e.g. supporting the Vladivostok mayor Vladimir Cherepkov in his fight against the governor of the Maritime Territory Yevgeni Nazdratenko), and the obliterate institution of regional representatives of the President, vesting them with the right to control transfers and use of subsidies to the regions. Then there’s also a carrot: while some of the governors used the All-Russian Action of Protest on 27 March 1997 to publicly display their dissatisfaction with the Government, it was immediately following these manifestations that some governors were offered posts in the new cabinet (so far, only the Nizhny Novgorod governor Boris Nemtsov accepted the offer, becoming a Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Fuel and Energy).

In general, it seems that the FC managed to prove its newly found strength to the federal executive. Speaking before the Senate in late April, Anatoli Chubais proposed a peace deal: in exchange for cooperation, he promised the governors to leave the regional transfers intact during the sequestration of the 1997 federal budget, and a full access to drafting of the 1998 budget. One cannot but notice the difference between this “big offer” and old-style private deals between individual governors and ministers: the federal executive now recognizes the FC as a single player, a cohesive and independent political force.

## **5. Conclusion: The new center-periphery relationship**

Endorsement of the FC’s role by the federal authorities means a final institutionalization of regional elites under the new regime. Their evolution included a full cycle: from possessing of power in the Soviet system — through a period of chaotic regionalization in the early 1990s (including a violent privatization of territory, property and authority) — to their democratic legitimation and political recognition at the federal level after the 1996 elections. Regional elites are now “fully licensed” and built into a vertical structure of post-Soviet authority.

This can also be described as a gradual transfer from an informal contract between the federal and regional elites based on Soviet-type bureaucratic trading to a legal division of spheres of influence. The institutionalization of center-periphery relationship takes place both at the level of legal documents (constitutions and charters of the subjects of the Federation; federal and regional laws on federal governance and local self-government; bilateral treaties on the division

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<sup>24</sup>Luzhkov is also known to have supported, or openly financed, a number of candidates in the gubernatorial elections.

of powers between the Center and subjects of the Federation, modeled after the 1994 Treaty with Tatarstan, etc.), and in everyday political practice, including the shaping of electoral systems in the regions. In a word, vested regional interests with respect to the Center are being gradually legalized and put into the foundation of a new federal system in Russia. The regional game is now more and more played on the constitutional field — or at least in a civilized manner.

Another result of recent regional elections is a changed balance along the center-periphery axis. While in the first half of the 1990s political models were mostly projected from the Center into the periphery (like the “democrats vs. Communists” opposition), it is now the regions who exert a greater influence on the Center and generate specific models of political behavior.<sup>25</sup> The regional component was constantly increasing during the 1995 parliamentary and 1996 presidential campaigns: in the last Duma elections, national party lists were often compiled from regional groups of candidates. Another example is the recent disagreement between the Russian Government and the IMF over quotas for the export of oil that threatens the release of the \$ 2,9 billion extended credit for Russia.<sup>26</sup> Earlier, Russia pledged to remove all quotas, and in fact did so with the exception of two oil enterprises in Tatarstan (in Yelabuga and Kazan’). So far, lobbying of the Tartar president Mintimer Shaimiev has prevailed over demands of the IMF: a situation hardly imaginable in the early 1990s.

Looking into the future, one can expect a growing role of regional elites during the current political cycle. By the Duma elections of 1999 and the 2000 presidential elections they are likely to become a political elite of the federal level that might put forward the goal of taking over the Center.<sup>27</sup> Already now two regional leaders — Yuri Luzhkov and Boris Nemtsov — are listed among prospective presidential candidates for the year 2000, making their advances to regional elites; but it might well be that the true regional candidate on the presidential elections will be a more federalist-minded Yegor StroeV.<sup>28</sup> In any case, it is evident that now the main story of Russian politics goes about the Center and the periphery, not about the Government and the opposition. From a marginal trade for several thousand individuals inside the Moscow Garden Ring, politics move into a regional dimension. Perhaps here starts a change from chaotic post-Soviet regionalization to more civilized forms of regionalism and federalism.

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<sup>25</sup>Vladimir Gel’man, “Stanovlenie regionalnykh rezhimov v Rossii” [The Making of Regional Regimes in Russia], *NG-Stsenarii*, 19 September 1996

<sup>26</sup>Alexander Bekker, “Legkoi progulki u Chubaisa v Vashingtone ne predviditsa” [Chubais Does Not Expect an Easy Trip to Washington], *Segodnya*, 29 April 1997

<sup>27</sup>Dmitry Badovsky, “Presidentskie vybory i regional’nye elity” [Presidential Elections and Regional Elites], *Segodnya*, 1 July 1996

<sup>28</sup>Konstantin Katanyan, “Orlovsky tyazhelovoz” [The Orel Heavy Draught-Horse], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 February 1997

## Appendix A. Results of gubernatorial elections in Russia, September 1996 – March 1997

Region	Number of candidates	Winner (% votes)	2nd place (% votes)	Political profile of the region	Who supported the winner	Election results as seen by:		
						The authority	The opposition	“ <i>Segodnya</i> ”
Saratov Oblast	3	D. Ayatskov (81.4)	A. Gordeev (16.3)	Red	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Amur Oblast	3	A. Belonogov (60.5)	Yu. Lyashko (24.4)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Leningrad Oblast	7	V. Gustov (52.4)	A. Belyakov (31.7)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	Econ. man.
Rostov Oblast	3	V. Chub (62.1)	L. Ivchenko (31.7)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Vologda Oblast	6	V. Pozgalev (80.5)	M. Surov (4.3)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Kaliningrad Oblast	7	L. Gorbenko (49.6)	Yu. Matochkin (44)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	Econ. man.
Kirov Oblast	4	V. Sergeenkov (50.6)	G. Shtin (45.6)	Mixed	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Yamalo-Nenets AO	4	Yu. Neyolov (68.0)	V. Goman (17.0)	Pro-govern	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Pskov Oblast	7	Ye. Mikhailov (56.5)	V. Tumanov (36.9)	Red	LDPR	PA	NPSR	LDPR
Kursk Oblast	4	A. Rutskoi (78.9)	V. Shuteev (17.9)	Red	NPSR	PA	NPSR	PA
Sakhalin Oblast	6	I. Fakhrutdinov (39.4)	A. Cherny (27.4)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Jewish AO	2	A. Volkov (71.6)	S. Leskov (16.6)	Red	PA	PA	PA	PA
Stavropol Krai	5	A. Chernogorov (55.1)	P. Marchenko (40.1)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	PA
Chita Oblast	5	R. Geniatulin (30.9)	Ya. Sheviryayev (22.7)	Red	PA	PA	PA	PA
Kaluga Oblast	3	V. Sudarenkov (63.5)	O. Savchenko (30.5)	Mixed	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Khanty-Mansi AO	2	A. Filippenko (72.3)	G. Korepanov (9.3)	Pro-govern	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Magadan Oblast	3	V. Tsvetkov (45.9)	V. Mikhailov (41.3)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	Econ. man.
Altai Krai	3	A. Surikov (49.4)	L. Korshunov (46.1)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Kamchatka Oblast	6	V. Biryukov (60.9)	B. Oleinikov (27.7)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Murmansk Oblast	8	Yu. Yevdokimov (43.5)	Ye. Komarov (40.7)	Pro-govern	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	Econ. man.
Komi-Permyak AO	3	N. Poluyanov (70.0)	A. Fedoseev (17.0)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Koryak AO	4	V. Bronevich (46.1)	S. Leushkin (25.3)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	PA
Ust-Ordynsky AO	3	B. Maleev (38.5)	A. Batagaev (25.8)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Kurgan Oblast	3	O. Bogomolov (67.7)	A. Koltashev (31.9)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Samara Oblast	2	K. Titov (63.0)	V. Romanov (32.0)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Ivanovo Oblast	4	V. Tikhomirov (50.1)	S. Sirotkin (22.1)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Nenets AO	7	V. Butov (49.0)	V. Khabarov (39.0)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	Econ. man.
Astrakhan' Oblast	2	A. Guzhvin (52.0)	V. Zvolinskii (39.0)	Red	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Bryansk Oblast	9	Yu. Lodkin (54.7)	A. Semernev (25.6)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Vladimir Oblast	6	N. Vinogradov (62.9)	Yu. Vlasov (22.4)	Mixed	NPSR	PA	NPSR	PA
Perm' Oblast	7	G. Igumnov (64.6)	S. Levitan (29.9)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Khabarovsk Krai	6	V. Ishaev (77.0)	V. Tsoi (7.2)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Arkhangel'sk Oblast	4	A. Yefremov (58.0)	Yu. Gus'kov (33.0)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA

Ryazan' Oblast	5	V. Lyubimov (56.1)	I. Ivlev (38.4)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Kostroma Oblast	3	V. Shershunov (64.1)	V. Arbusov (30.7)	Mixed	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Krasnodar Krai	7	N. Kondratenko (82.0)	V. Krokhmal' (7.1)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Voronezh Oblast	5	I. Shabanov (48.0)	A. Tsapin (40.8)	Red	PA	PA	PA	PA
Chelyabinsk Oblast	9	P. Sumin (51.0)	V. Soloviev (15.0)	Mixed	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	Econ. man.
Volgograd Oblast	5	N. Maksyuta (50.9)	I. Shabunin (44.2)	Red	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	Econ. man.
Tyumen' Oblast	7	L. Roketsky (58.8)	S. Atroshenko (32.9)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Republic of Khakassia	5	Alexei Lebed' (71.9)	Ye. Reznikov (19.8)	Mixed	Alexandr Lebed'	PA	PA	Lebed'
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	5	M. Nikolaev (60.3)	A. Alekseev (26.1)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	Econ. man.
Republic of Marii-El	6	V. Kislitsyn (59.0)	L. Markelov (36.0)	Red	Lebed'	PA	NPSR	Lebed'
Taimyr AO	3	G. Nedelin (64.4)	G. Subbotkin (11.8)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Chukotka AO	3	A. Nazarov (63.0)	B. Yetylen (23.0)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Evenk AO	4	A. Bokovikov (35.9)	A. Yakimov (35.1)	Mixed	Econ. man.	PA	NPSR	PA
Ulyanovsk Oblast	2	Yu. Goryachev (42.3)	A. Kruglikov (33.8)	Mixed	PA	PA	PA	PA
Tula Oblast	4	V. Starodubtsev (62.7)	V. Sokolovskii (15.1)	Mixed	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR	NPSR
Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria	1	Valery Kokov (98.0)	—	Pro-govern	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Republic of Adygeia	3	Aslan Dzharirov (57.9)	Aslanbi Sovmiz ( n/a )	Red	PA	PA	n/a	n/a
Republic of Ichkeria (Chechnya)	7	Aslan Maskhadov (59.3)	Shamil Basaev (23.5)	—	PA	PA	n/a	PA

Notes:

*Red* – regions that voted for the Communists at both parliamentary and presidential elections

*Mixed* – regions that voted for the Communists at the parliamentary elections and for Boris Yeltsin at the presidential elections

*Pro-govern* – regions that voted for the “party of the authority” at both parliamentary and presidential elections

*PA* – “party of the authority”: supported by the Presidential Administration (Anatoli Chubais) and the All-Russian Coordination Council (Sergei Filatov)

*NPSR* – The Popular Patriotic Union of Russia (Gennady Zyuganov)

*LDPR* – The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (Vladimir Zhirinovskiy)

*Econ. man.* – “party of strong economic managers” (independent governors, representatives of the “third force”)

Source: *Segodnya*, 26 December 1996 (updated according to the results of regional elections in January-March 1997).

## **Appendix B. The structure of the Council of the Federation**

Speaker: Yegor Stroev (Governor, Orel Oblast)

10 Committees:

1. Committee for budget, tax policy, financial, currency and customs regulation and banking activities

Chairman: Konstantin Titov, Governor, Samara Oblast. 21 members.

2. Committee for social policy

Chairman: Vladimir Torlopov, Chairman of the State Council, Republic of Komi.

10 members.

3. Committee for constitutional law, judicial and legal questions

Chairman: Vladimir Platonov, Chairman of the Moscow City Duma

4. Committee for economic policy

Chairman: Yevgeni Sapiro, Chairman of the Legislative Assembly, Perm' Oblast

5. Committee for international affairs

Chairman: Mikhail Prusak, Head of Administration, Novgorod Oblast

6. Committee for the CIS affairs

Chairman: Oleg Bogomolov, Head of Administration, Kurgan Oblast

7. Committee for agricultural policy

Chairman: Yevgeni Savchenko, Head of Administration, Belgorod Oblast

8. Committee for the affairs of the Federation, the Federative Treaty and regional policy

Chairman: Anatoli Sychev, Chairman of the Oblast Soviet, Novosibirsk Oblast

9. Committee for the affairs of the North and the indigenous people

Chairman: Alexander Nazarov, Governor of Chukotka

10. Committee for science, culture, education and the environment

Chairman: Valeri Sudarenkov, Head of Administration, Kaluga Oblast

Source: *Segodnya*, 5 March 1997