

IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

Current work on corruption in Russia

“Corruption is the system feature of post-Soviet Russian capitalism (scientific and journalistic notes)” – so much paper, placed in two editions of “Russian Economic Journal” for 2011¹.

The author Yuri Boldyrev, Ph.D. in Economics, was in 1992 – 1993 Head of Control Department of the Presidential Administration, in 1993 – 1995 – member of the Council of Federation in 1995 – 2001 worked as deputy chairman of the Accounting Chamber. He is currently a columnist, “Literary Gazette” and the online newspaper «STOLETIE.RU».

At the beginning of the work stated that it specifically argued very “pregnant” for the authorities and society thesis, anyway appearing in all the texts on contemporary Russian author. To solve this problem, in our opinion, the author has succeeded, which greatly facilitated the careful structuring of the article.

In the first section of the article “Sly arrangements – sly recipes” the author critically comments on the widely popular among power structures radical and liberal concepts and ideas of corruption and struggle against it. In his opinion, the recipes of healing society from total corruption, corresponding to the fundamental tenets of radical liberalism, namely the rejection of the activity of the state in the economy, the transformation of state power in the entity providing certain services to citizens, about government services automation (“e-Government”) are wrong and untenable. Their implementation will not suppress corruption and creates new opportunities for its development as well.

In the next two sections “The control aspect of the problem: retro view” and “Continuing retro excursus: about the ideological support of the scenario of the country criminalization and the plot “corruption and the market economy” involving large amount of factual material the evolution of post-Soviet system of state control

(internal and external) is traced, which, according to Yu. Boldyrev, is important to the topic disclosure of corruption in Russia, to the analysis of the formation and historical dynamics of the latter.

The author emphasizes that the result of two decades of managerial activity of post-Soviet Russian leaders, and constructed “for them” power “vertical” are success in the sabotage and discredit of everything associated with the essence of effective macro-democratic management – with independent control of power. In confirmation of this there is a story about the rise and development of the Russian Audit Chamber, which is the supreme body of external state financial control. In the second half of the 90s the Audit Chamber identified and publicized the most brutal and unprecedented irregularities in the government and Central Bank public finance management and state property, and prepared fundamentally important conclusions on the draft laws initiated and lobbied by the executive branch.

¹ See: Boldyrev Yu. Corruption is the system feature of post-Soviet Russian capitalism (scientific and journalistic notes) // Russian Economic Journal. – 2011. – № 2. – Pp. 14-34 (beginning of article); № 3. – Pp. 46-54 (end of the article).

However, in the 2000s in the law “On the Audit Chamber of Russia” radical changes were made: the State Duma and Federation Council lost the right to appoint directors and auditors of the Chamber (those began to be appointed by the representation of the first official of the state). Thus the Chamber lost the status of the body of external state financial control, independent of the vertical of executive power and its actual head - the Russian president. It has evolved from a body of external government control into the “understudy” of internal control bodies of the executive power.

The author points to the fact that in the 1990s actively opposing the formation in new Russia of a system of independent state control and energetically parallel running of a priori fraudulent and predatory mechanisms of total forced privatization, stayed by the federal executive authority social forces deployed at the same time the proper ideological campaign including the promotion of the idea of the inevitability and even the usefulness of corruption. Conducted in the 1990s privatization resulted in the criminalization of governance mechanisms and consciousness of latter-day private owners as well. It was a high-tech implementation of a carefully planned, including in respect of ideological support, multi-pass algorithm, and providing not last of all the interests of external clients of “reduction” of our state and interests of asserted national criminal “elite”.

According to the author, based on the market economy corruption occurs under the direct influence of a combination of factors, including public morality prevailing in the society moral concepts (first of all - about the valid-profitable wealth inequality and acceptable extent injustice in distribution of national income); this morality in its turn is closely linked with the entire system of state regulation of socio-economic and politico-legal system. Given these general methodological premise as for the history of the formation of post-Soviet Russian capitalism, we can confidently assert

that since the beginning of the deployment of radical and liberal reforms took place conscious and deliberate use of the mechanisms of economic regulation, deliberately provoked and stimulated immoral and fraudulent behavior of counterparties in industrial and in general social relations. As a result, the most important from the standpoint of today’s anti-corruption struggle this problem is the problem of subjectivity: who is interested in this?

Designated methodological premise regarding the need for subjective approach to the suppression of corruption in Russia motivates the division of its diverse manifestations into two groups – apparat and state and political.

To these two types of corruption, as well as the principal directions counteracting them is devoted the next part of the article of Yu. Boldyrev.

The first type – apparat corruption – the one that the organs of the system of internal state control are to withstand. The author considers two mechanisms of suppression of this type of corruption. The first pertains to the career prospects and a decent wage rate of state employees (including senior officers). The second is the principle of presumption of a corrupted civil servant, which requires a special delicacy of the official within the statutory regulations. Though not judicial authorities prove the presence of in the actions of an official of a crime-corruption interest, but he himself must prove in court his innocence.

In the course of consideration of the problems of apparatus corruption Yu. Boldyrev, using extensive historical material, discusses the reasons for its conservation in Russia. As the first reason he calls the inadequate remuneration of civil servants. Referring to the 1990s, the author states two things. Firstly, throughout the decade, when the foundations for today’s customs and habits were built, salaries of civil servants were humiliatingly low.

Secondly, the media deliberately and aggressively imposed on the public understanding of unreasonably high wage rates of workers of legislative and executive branches, leaving from the comparison of salaries of civil servants and workers in the private sector.

The second reason for the existence of the apparatus corruption in Russia was, in the opinion of the author, frank indistinctness of application conditions of sanctions to managers. The relevant rules are formulated so that “we can bring to trial, but you also can forgive”. This entailed not the rule of law, and the formation of public loyalty to superiors, a kind of quasi-feudal dependence of subordinates, who thus find themselves on the many “hooks”.

The difference in revenue potential of officials and employees in the private sector has been implemented in a “wholesale buying” of public servants by banks. It was carried out in different forms – both direct and rude and more “intelligent” (i.e. associated with the prospect of future employment of public servants in the relevant credit institutions), but eventually provided the “loyalty” of public servants not so much to the state as the financial and speculative capital which interests are in general not coincide with national ones or opposed them.

The second type is the state and political corruption that impedes the national development of most modern nation states. It represents a more severe disease, because it is a tool for a variety of shadow and even legal forces that seek to subordinate the state institutions for their private interests against the interests of the society.

Yu. Boldyrev marks out the symptoms state and political corruption. The main is the lack of suppression of the apparatus corruption (bureaucracy), as corrupted and dependent officials are its best support. In addition, the author points to the attempts of ideological justification of usefulness of political corruption, the interpretation of it almost as a kind of good.

Thus, the supporters of the recognition of a public and policy mechanism of a democratic state by a variation of the same universe – the “market”, i.e. by “market politico-administrative services”, in principle, reject the existence of the interests of society. Hence there are no and can not be any strategic interests of the state, and every social stratum, each economic entity must simply acquire for money the services they need: to finance election campaigns, hire and outbid lobbyists, politicians and political parties, and etc., i.e. act purely through market methods. According to the logic of this approach, any question about the state and political corruption is meaningless and even absurd: who is stronger in the market and was able to promote their own “forces” to power, he also realizes its own private interests.

At the end of arguing on the state and political corruption, the author reaches the following conclusion. This type of corruption is a systemic phenomenon: the consequence of coercion of society to hypertrophied injustice and inculcating to it views on the normality of such a situation; the result of primitivization of the economic structure and content of the work of citizens, the priority of the criminal and distribution relations before the “productive” ones; the fruit of “atomization” and expansion of society, lost the ability to show solidarity and healthy value orientation.

Based on the above definitions, firstly, we can assume the following. Without setting the basic questions on values, justice, solidarity and unity of our society, as well as its objectives as a whole and the ideology of progress, the deployment of political reform on the prescriptions of radically and liberally minded part of the expert community only would dramatically broaden the “playing field” for public and political corruption, making the current bureaucratic and corruption relationships into relationships of free sale of “policy and information services”.

Secondly, - to formulate in general terms a “comprehensive” (including a number of directions) struggle recipe, the suppression program of state and political corruption. Of course, these are mainly public financing of election campaigns (as in France and Canada), and strict regulation of the media in times of such campaigns (as in France). However, the main lines are the actual provision of scientific and technological progress (instead of empty talk about an innovative upgrade) and the activation of mechanisms of radically more equitable distribution of national income (from the experience of many European countries), designed to bring the entire population out of poverty and give greater awareness of their civic choice.

In the next chapter “The global context of public and political corruption: the multinationals are coming”, touching on the question of the social forces that can implement a program of radical anti-corruption actions, the author points to the hidden process of reassignment of the global political system (and hence national political systems, including a number of states generally accepted democratic) to the global financial oligarchy. Yu. Boldyrev said that corruption as a global phenomenon consists of the almost total control of the international financial oligarchy key national media, culture, science and education of different countries, and then the national systems of formation of government bodies.

Returning to the general issues concerning

the danger of the state and political corruption for democracy Yu. Boldyrev indicates the difference of the two variants, reflecting the difference between the situation in Russia in the early 1990s and the current situation. In the 1990s the elected authorities were initially free in their actions and at least ideally, dependent primarily on the will of the voters. It could be protected by a variety of measures (including, of course, the threat of severe sanctions) against corruption temptations. At the present time, there is the following vicious circle: elected powers (political parties, presidents and governments), firstly, a priori financially (and, hence, in other respects) are dependent on those who was not elected by no means, and secondly, make every effort to that the Russian government steadily increases its subordination to fundamentals external to the national electoral process.

At the end of the article the author gives a pessimistic forecast about the possibility of repression in Russia of state and political corruption. He believes that although there is no reason to assume that in current continuing trends of degradation of the economy and industry, science and education, our country will be modernized, but in general will remain as a sovereign entity, even in completely observable and foreseeable future. Russia does not have the time (and hence, there is no chance) to a slow, gradual, evolutionary overcome of public and political corruption. There is the only one way out, the revolutionary one...

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