

EDITORIAL

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“Revolutionary” Words of the Russian President on November 7, 2024



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Abstract. November 7, 2024, speaking at the plenary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club in Sochi, Vladimir Putin expressed the hope that Russia would not return to “the path it followed before 2022”; a path fraught with “hidden, veiled intervention against our country”. Some experts assessed these words of the President as the beginning of a “revolution from above”, that is, as the beginning of an active process of renewal of elites in the country. Based on facts and expert assessments, we consider the process of elites renewal in Russia as an evolutionary process that has been going on for almost 25 years. In this context, we analyze a number of decisions made by Vladimir Putin from the very beginning of his presidential terms (since 2000). The launch of the special military operation in February 2022 and Vladimir Putin’s fifth presidential term (which began in May 2024 after the inauguration of the President) only accelerated this process. The article continues the monitoring (that started in June 2022) of federal laws and decrees adopted by the President and the RF Government. Special attention is paid to analyzing

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the effectiveness of migration policy in the Russian Federation as one of the specific examples of system-wide problems faced by the public administration as a whole. It is concluded that the key decisions of the head of state, especially those adopted during almost three years of the special military operation (such as the “Time of Heroes” program, personnel appointments in the RF Government, decision of the Constitutional Court to lift the statute of limitations on real estate acquired through corrupt proceeds, etc. act as a kind of practical tools to achieve the major goal: strengthening Russia’s national sovereignty in the context of civilizational conflict with the Collective West, as well as solving key tasks to achieve this goal – renewal of elites and consolidation of society. Our contribution consists in a comprehensive approach to analyzing the process of elites renewal in the country, including by systematizing the administrative decisions of the head of state made in the periods before and after the start of the special military operation.

Key words: Valdai Forum, live TV phone-in, renewal of elites, “Time of Heroes”, President.

November 7, 2024, speaking at the plenary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club in Sochi, Russian President Vladimir Putin noted: **“I would not like Russia to return to the path it followed before 2022, as I said in my speech. And this was a path that involved such a hidden, veiled intervention against our country, aimed at subordinating it to the interests of some other countries that still believed they had the right to do so”**¹.

The very next day, the newspaper *Moskovsky komsomolets* published an article with the headline **“Putin has acknowledged the betrayal of the elites: A revolution from above has begun”**².

Its author D. Popov³ noted that at the Valdai Forum the President uttered **“revolutionary words... words one could only dream of”, they are “worth a lot”**⁴.

“These words were revolutionary. To hear from the president that he does not want to return to the course that Russia followed before 2022, and a harsh assessment of this course, is something that good Russian people could only dream of... The president’s recognition that the country was heading for “subordination to the interests of some other countries”, and, roughly speaking, transformation to another Western colony, is worth a lot. Honestly acknowledging a problem is the first step toward starting to solve it. This, I dare say, is the beginning of a revolution from above, the reassembly of the system”⁵.



¹ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on November 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75521>

² Popov D. Putin acknowledged the betrayal of the elites: The revolution from above has begun. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2024/11/08/putin-priznal-predatelstvo-elit-nachalas-revolyuciya-sverkhu.html?ysclid=m4mavvlteb25960798>

³ D. Popov is a columnist for the politics department. He has been working at *Moskovsky komsomolets* newspaper since 1992 (source: official website of *Moskovsky komsomolets*. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/authors/dmitriy-popov/>).

⁴ Popov D. Putin acknowledged the betrayal of the elites: The revolution from above has begun. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2024/11/08/putin-priznal-predatelstvo-elit-nachalas-revolyuciya-sverkhu.html?ysclid=m4mavvlteb25960798>

⁵ Ibidem.

We cannot but agree with this. After all, in fact, it was a recognition of the fact that not all of the President's decisions, as it turned out, were made in a timely manner. Vladimir Putin spoke about this on December 19, 2024 during the "direct line": *"If it were possible to return to 2022, then I would have thought that **the decision to start the SMO should have been made earlier... and, knowing this, we just had to start preparing for these events, including the SMO**"...*

*"...if it were possible to look at the situation in 2022, knowing what is happening now, what would I think? That **such a decision, which was made at the beginning of 2022, should have been made earlier. This is the first point.***

And the second point is as follows. Knowing this, it was necessary to start preparing for these events, including the SMO"⁶.

Nevertheless, there are many indications that the President has launched a process that some experts have called a "revolution from above"; and this process is already in full swing. However, in our opinion, so far it is **not revolutionary, but evolutionary**, which is much more typical

*"Revolution is not a way out of the crisis, but a way to worsen this crisis... shaping our approaches, we will be guided by **the ideology of healthy conservatism**"⁷.*

for Vladimir Putin's ideology of "healthy conservatism".

The elements of this process were present long before the Valdai Forum and even before the start of the SMO. In fact, they took place throughout Vladimir Putin's presidential terms:

✓ the **principle of "equidistance of all market participants from the authorities"**⁸ (2000), thanks to which many influential oligarchs (M. Khodorkovsky*, P. Lebedev, B. Berezovsky, V. Gusinsky, etc.) were pushed away from the opportunity to influence political decisions in the country;

✓ Vladimir Putin's **Munich Speech (February 10, 2007)**, which became a direct signal not only to the international community, but also to the domestic elites that Russia has chosen its own path of development – the path toward strengthening national sovereignty;

✓ **amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation initiated by the President (2020)**, which were supported by Russian society in a referendum on July 1, 2020 and largely limited the ability of the ruling elites to have any ties with the Collective West⁹;

✓ **a law prohibiting extremist organizations from participating in elections**¹⁰ (2021); as a result, the activities of Alexei Navalny's headquarters** were suspended, that is, in fact, the possibility of the negative influence of the fifth column was reduced to zero ... Moreover, we note that this was a major step in the fight against foreign agents, but far from being the only one.

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

** The activities of Navalny's headquarters were recognized as extremist and banned on the territory of the Russian Federation.

⁶ "Direct line" with Vladimir Putin on December 19, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75909>

⁷ Vladimir Putin's speech at the plenary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 21, 2021. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66975>

⁸ Opening remarks by Vladimir Putin at a meeting with high-level campaign workers. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24146>

⁹ We note that these amendments for the first time mentioned "internal threats" to the sovereignty of the Russian Federation, its independence and state integrity, which the Federation Council must combat (Article 83, paragraph "zh"); a ban on foreign citizenship and residence permits was introduced for the Prime Minister, ministers and heads of federal bodies, governors, senators, deputies and judges (Art. 110, paragraph 4).

¹⁰ "On amendments to Article 4 of the Federal Law 'On basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right of citizens of the Russian Federation to participate in a referendum' and Article 4 of the Federal Law 'On elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation'": Federal Law 157-FZ, dated June 4, 2021.

“The State Duma approved in the second and third readings a bill on the introduction of special accounts for the income of foreign agents. The amendments, contributed **by 429 deputies** led by Speaker of the lower house of Parliament V. Volodin, **were supported unanimously.**

The law provides for **crediting to a special ruble account the income of foreign agents** from creative activities, the use of inventions and trademarks, income from the sale and rental of real estate and vehicles. In addition, interest on deposits, dividends and income from equity participation in organizations will be credited to a special account. The opening of a special account will become **mandatory** for both foreign agents and those who transfer fees to them. It will be possible to dispose of funds **only after the cancellation of the status of a foreign agent.**

The law was adopted on December 17, 2024 and will enter into force on March 1, 2025”¹¹.

“**The late Soviet elite** did not consider sovereignty to be an absolute value, as they were passionate about the idea of joining the West as a civilization, and this required renouncing their civilization... That is why the **Russian elite** saw its main task in destroying and dismantling Russia’s sovereignty rather than preserving and protecting it...

The whole problem is that the rise of Putin and his group is not natural, but accidental, spontaneous. If Putin had been a little more understandable to Yeltsin’s group, they would never have chosen him. If there had been another person instead of Putin, we would have had a different Russia, a second Ukraine. In fact, Yeltsin’s Russia is still alive and hidden behind Putin’s back in many ways. And everyone is afraid: if Putin leaves, they will come out. Everyone understands this; and therefore, the West considers the removal of Putin to be its main goal...”¹³

Thus, the evolutionary process of the renewal of the elites (or rather, creating conditions for this in the country) has been going on for almost all of the past 25 years.

However, we should note that while Russia was “following the path until 2022” and was witnessing a “covert intervention”, often “**the logic of circumstances was stronger than the logic of his [President’s] intentions**”¹².

After all, the circumstances were such that against the background of the post-Soviet elites who were “descendants” of the elites of the late Soviet era, that is, having deep, one might say, historical roots, in the system of public administration, only

the President and only a few people in his inner circle were (as experts note) “the main customers for the strategy of sovereignty”¹⁴.

There were simply no other elites in the President’s entourage, and the country had to be governed one way or another. And not just to be governed, but first (in the 2000s) it was necessary to literally save Russian statehood after the crisis of the “turbulent 1990s”, and then (after Vladimir Putin’s Munich Speech on February 10, 2007, in which he actually challenged the entire Collective West) to resist numerous and diverse efforts¹⁵ of United States and its satellites, undertaken in order to restrain the further strengthening of Russia’s national sovereignty and to return it to the state of a

¹¹ The State Duma deprived foreign agents of income in Russia. Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/Z2FcfJu3iHWU9NJy?ysclid=m4vcod89m4435449063>

¹² Batchikov S. When the bridges have been burned. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/kogda_mostoi_sozhzheni?ysclid=m4s3fh3p6b44886535

¹³ Khaldey A. Transfer and the sovereignty strategy: Customers and performers. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/transfer_i_strategiya_suvereniteta_zakazchiki_i_ispolniteli?ysclid=m4mqpbqhin219737568

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Such efforts included an attempt to arrange a “color revolution” in Russia by organizing mass protests in 2011–2012, collectively known as the Bolotnaya protests; the coup d’etat in Ukraine in 2014; economic sanctions; anti-Russian information policy; the desire to inflict a “strategic defeat” on Russia after the start of the SMO, etc.

“gas station masquerading as a country”¹⁶, in which it has been after the collapse of the USSR.

In these conditions, it was in many ways necessary to preserve the situation when the President is surrounded by a “conglomerate of clans and groups that compete with each other for resources”¹⁷ (or the Politburo 2.0, as analysts of the Minchenko Consulting holding described Vladimir Putin’s

entourage). But even in this situation, the head of state made targeted, but very significant, landmark decisions on a number of facts of corruption¹⁹, which were assessed by experts as nothing more than a **gradual “displacement of the liberal crowd”**²⁰.

Later, during the “direct line” on December 19, 2024, Vladimir Putin described this period of his activity as follows: “**I have done everything to ensure that Russia is an independent and sovereign power**”.

“Putin was not free to do as he chose and could not act with full force. Of course, he stopped Russia on the edge of the abyss, prevented the collapse of the state and its descent into complete chaos – this was his mission....

The steps he took in the first year of his rule are recorded in history: **he stopped the disintegration of Russia, dispersed the oligarchs, pacified the regional fronde and put Russia on a stable track, pushing it in the opposite direction from the abyss...** The rest of the years ... were not so intense, and Putin avoided decisive historical steps. **He periodically compromised with the West**, which is explained by Russia’s weakness and its unpreparedness for a direct frontal clash; and he followed the lead of the internal Atlanticist liberal lobby, implementing a course of liberal patriotism in domestic politics....

But he did not go beyond any declarative urges, that is, he was not seriously building an internal patriotic policy. He only nominally indicated the possibility of conservative patriotic changes, while adhering to strictly liberal economic models....”¹⁸

**Excerpt from the “direct line”
on December 19, 2024:**

Question of the reporter (S.Rosenberg, BBC News): “... do you believe you have taken care of Russia?”

Vladimir Putin’s answer: “**Yes. I believe I have not just taken care of it, but I believe we have stepped back from the edge of the abyss, because with everything that was happening in and around Russia before and since was leading us towards a complete, total loss of our sovereignty. Without sovereignty, Russia cannot exist as an independent state....**

I have done everything so that Russia can be an independent and sovereign state that is capable of making decisions in its own interests, rather than in the interests of the countries that were dragging it towards them, patting it on the back, only to use it for their own purposes”²¹.

¹⁶ U.S. Senator John McCain. Available at: <https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2014-03-16/Makkejn-Rossiya---eto-benzokolonka>

¹⁷ Vladimir Putin’s Big Government and the Politburo 2.0: The Minchenko Consulting report. August 2012. Available at: <https://minchenko.ru/analitika/?curPos=65>

¹⁸ Svitneva E. Experts: Chernyakhovsky, Shurygin, Delyagin, Ivashov, Vasserman, Korovin – about the “New Putin” and what we can expect from him. Available at: https://ruskline.ru/opp/2013/2/28/eksperty_chernyahovskij_shurygin_delyagin_ivashov_vasserman_korovin_o_novom_putine_i_o_tom_chno_nam_ot_nego_ozhidat/

¹⁹ For example:

✓ November 28, 2013, a criminal case was opened against former Russian Defense Minister Alexander Serdyukov on suspicion of negligence that caused damage in the amount of 56 million rubles;

✓ November 14, 2016, for the first time in the history of Russia, acting Minister of Economic Development A. Ulyukayev was detained (for a bribe of 2 million USD);

✓ Governors V. Yurchenko (Novosibirsk Region, 2014), A. Khoroshavin (Sakhalin, 2015), N. Denin (Bryansk Region, 2015), V. Gaizer (Komi, 2015), N. Belykh (Kirov Region, 2016), A. Solovyov (Udmurtia, 2017) and many others were arrested as well.

²⁰ Delyagin M. (source: Nakanune.Ru. March 4, 2013. Available at: <https://www.nakanune.ru/articles/17523/>).

²¹ “Direct line” with Vladimir Putin on December 19, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75909>

In a sense, **the President’s announcement of the beginning of the SMO became part of the evolutionary process of elites renewal**, since after that many representatives of the country’s political, economic, and cultural elites, most closely associated with the West, simply fled, and in Russia (for objective reasons dictated by the war with the West) **conditions began to be actively created** in which there is simply no place for those elites who openly sympathize with the West or are associated with it.

What has changed since the beginning of the SMO?

First, the SMO launched an active phase of a global process of the world’s transition from a unipolar to a multipolar form of existence, a struggle of many countries to overcome the colonialist hegemony of the United States. **Thus, the struggle for strengthening national sovereignty has ceased to be the goal of Vladimir Putin alone and only within Russia; it has begun to acquire a global character (as evidenced, for example, by the dynamic expansion of the BRICS association)**²².

Second, under the pressure of external threats to national security from the Collective West, the President’s ability to make any compromises with the domestic liberal-minded elites has actually “been reduced to zero”. Every flaw, or even outright sabotage, on the part of the managerial elites in the implementation of the instructions of the head of state in the conditions of the SMO acquires the character of **a direct internal threat to the existence of Russian statehood, which is as important in its consequences as an external threat.**

“The beginning of the SMO, which exposed the real facts and revealed a monstrous accumulation of lies in all reports that presented joyful pictures of what was going on to the top of the government, clearly showed the scale of betrayal by individual representatives of the bureaucratic, cultural, media and business elite... Many of those who left were hiding behind an anti-war position, although in fact they were fleeing from the criminal cases brought against them. As it turned out, while “honestly” working in Russia, they all always believed that their place was not here, among the former soviets, but there – in the civilized countries of the golden billion...”²³.

“Today, the task of purging the elite from representatives of the fifth column at all levels of government (who hate the president and despise the patriotic upsurge in society) is facing the president in full growth. In fact, today it is almost the main striking force fighting against us!... to ensure genuine sovereignty, at least three interrelated conditions must be fulfilled: 1) renewal/purge of the elite, 2) change of the economic model, and 3) ideological mobilization. Recent decisions by the president show that he understands this need very well”²⁴.

This was clearly demonstrated by such episodes as, for example, the retreat of Russian troops from Kharkov and the Kherson Region in September – November 2022, the mutiny of the Wagner PMC in June 2023, and the invasion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the Kursk Region in August 2024...

²² The proposal to launch the BRICS expansion process was received from China in May 2022. By August 2023, about 20 countries had applied to join the organization. Currently, about 30 countries have submitted applications.

²³ Batchikov S. When the bridges have been burned. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/kogda_mosty_sozhzheni?ysclid=m4s3fh3p6b44886535

²⁴ Ibidem.

Thus, after the start of the SMO, the process of renewal of the elites did not begin, but only intensified. Especially after Vladimir Putin received unconditional public support on March 17, 2024 and began his fifth presidential term until 2030.

According to the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, on March 17, 2024, the number of voters who took part in the presidential election amounted to 87.58 million people, **of which almost 77 million (87%) voted for Vladimir Putin.**

Compared to the previous presidential election held on March 18, 2018, the number of those who voted for Vladimir Putin **increased by 14 million (from 74 to 88 million).**

Compared to Vladimir Putin's first presidential election (March 23, 2000), it almost doubled, **by 37 million people (from 40 to 76 million).**

It was at this time (and after Vladimir Putin's inauguration on May 7, 2024) that the following **practical** tools for the renewal of the elites emerged:

1. The "Time of Heroes" program, which Vladimir Putin first announced on February 29, 2024 in his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation²⁵ and the participants of which **already** occupy senior positions in the administration system²⁶.

*"We shouldn't expect that the former participants of the SMO will easily and quickly turn into new elitists and, as such, completely replace the former discredited "elite". Successful military service is not at all a guarantee of equally successful fulfillment of relevant tasks in other fields of activity. **But it is important that, having taken leading positions in the country, the former participants of the SMO can become a kind of "patriotic filter" that will strictly filter out everything that runs counter to the interests and needs of our Motherland and its future**"²⁷.*

²⁵ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on February 29, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73585>

²⁶ Some participants of the "Time of Heroes" program who have already been appointed to senior positions in the administration system:

September 8 – Roman Kulakov became a deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Sevastopol.

September 14 – Artur Orlov was appointed head of "Dvishenie pervykh" youth movement.

September 17 – Alexey Kondratiev became a senator of the Russian Federation.

September 18 – Vladimir Saibel became Deputy Head of the Social Development Department of Russian Railways.

September 20 – Alexander Surazov became Head of the Committee on Physical Culture and Sports of the Altai Republic.

September 20 – Konstantin Yashin became Head of "Samara" Research and Production Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

September 23 – Igor Yurgin was appointed Acting Minister of Youth Affairs and Social Communications of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

September 23 – Zaur Gurtsiev became First Deputy Head of Stavropol.

September 25 – Evgeny Chintsov became Head of the Nizhny Novgorod City Duma.

October 2 – Artyom Zhoga was appointed Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Ural Federal District.

November 4 – Evgeny Pervyshov was appointed acting head of the Tambov Region.

November 5 – Maria Kostyuk (head of the "Time of Heroes" program) was appointed Acting Governor of the Jewish Autonomous Region.

December 2 – Pavel Yakushev was appointed Advisor to the Deputy General Director of ROSATOM State Corporation.

December 3 – Nikolai Korolev became member of the Government of Saint Petersburg.

December 11 – Kirill Losunchukov assumed the position of Deputy Minister of Investment, Industry and Science of the Moscow Region.

²⁷ Filatova V. The end of the era of "golden toilets": will front-line soldiers be able to replace oligarchs in government positions (opinion of A. Rozhnov, Doctor of Sciences (Law) at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation). Available at: <https://vm.ru/politics/1123591-konec-epohi-zolotykh-unitazov-cmogut-li-frontoviki-zamenit-oligarhov-nagodarstvennyh-postah>

Moreover, we should note that on December 14, 2024, at a meeting of the 22nd Congress of the United Russia Party, it was decided to include a significant number of SMO participants in the supreme and general councils of the party, and the RF President proposed to launch programs similar to the Time of Heroes program in the regions of the Russian Federation. Some experts drew attention to the fact that it is **“United Russia that has the strategic task ... to form a new managerial and indeed any other elite from those who participated in the SMO”**²⁸.

2. A number of personnel decisions made by the President in relation to the leadership positions of the “power block” are also among the practical tools for the renewal of the elites. First of all, this concerns the appointment of Andrei Belousov as Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, whom experts call not just “the person closest to the president, in charge of industrial strategy and economic

*“The conversation about the “new elite” becomes especially relevant in the perspective of life after the end of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It is very difficult to talk about deadlines and also about what kind of end it will be (for example, whether there will be a peace treaty, what compromises the parties will make). It is important that when this happens, the SMO participants will be integrated into more than just leadership renewal programs. They will inevitably find themselves involved in domestic political processes, both as candidates for governor and mayor, and as deputies at various levels”*²⁹.

strategy”, but “an outstanding intellectual, patriot and, of course, devoted to the idea of a strong, powerful state”³⁰. State Duma deputy M. Delyagin noted: “There are probably no more economists left in power, except Andrei Belousov”³¹.

“The updated General Council of the United Russia party includes two dozen SMO participants, four of them are participants in the first stream of the presidential program “Time of Heroes” ... The Supreme Council of United Russia includes 9 SMO participants, among which there are 6 participants of the ‘Time of Heroes’ program”³².

*“The guys who fought at the front proved their worth in battle. I am sure that they will not let us down in the future, they will fight for the result and achieve it.... **In this regard, I propose and consider it necessary to expand the federal project ‘Time of Heroes’:** to launch similar programs in the regions, as has already been done in the Stavropol Territory, the Belgorod, Voronezh, Ryazan, Samara, Tula regions and in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area. I ask the party to actively engage in this work. I’m counting on you very much that it won’t be formal: you need to work, look for people, and help them organize their training”*³³.

²⁸ D. Garmonenko At the 22nd Congress, United Russia established its monopoly. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-12-15/3_9156_er.html?ysclid=m4v095j3gr567466809

²⁹ About the new elite and SMO participants. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2024-12-10/2_9153_red.html?PREVIEW_SECRET_KEY=d749b7432669ec97b204f339fe30db9a&ysclid=m4qso1pafc408303892

³⁰ Dugin on Belousov’s appointment: “This grandiose decision fundamentally changes everything”. Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZkE83HyQ2AoRExHs>

³¹ Delyagin M. The change of the Minister of Defense is a reaction to people’s indignation. Available at: <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/633476>

³² Ivanov A. The 22nd Congress of United Russia: SMO participants are included in the governing bodies of the party in power. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/xxii_s_ezd_edinoj_rossii_uchastniki_svo_vklyucheni_v_sostav_rukovodyashih_organov_partii?ysclid=m4ths4tziw610909503

³³ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the 22nd Congress of the United Russia All-Russian Political Party on December 14, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75881>

May 14, 2024 – according to the Presidential Decree³⁴, First Deputy Chair of the Government of the Russian Federation A.R. Belousov was appointed Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation.

May 14, 2024 – according to the Presidential Decree³⁵, General of the Army A.V. Bortnikov was reassigned to the post of Director of the FSB, he has held this post since May 12, 2008.

October 14, 2024 – Vladimir Putin signed a law³⁶, according to which the head of state can extend the term of office for the chair of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, who has reached the age limit, for a year³⁷.

October 28, 2024 – the President extended the term of service of A.I. Bastrykin until August 27, 2025³⁸. The Investigative Committee became an independent agency on January 15, 2011. It was created on the basis of the Investigative Committee under the Prosecutor's Office of Russia, and A.I. Bastrykin was its head from the very beginning.

December 20, 2024 – on the recommendation of the President of the Russian Federation, I.V. Krasnov was reassigned to the post of Prosecutor General.

We emphasize that it is with the help of these people that the “cleansing” of today’s elites is going on. Some of these examples are presented in *Insert 1*, but, as experts note, “**it makes no sense to list by name all those arrested** (there are already 20 generals who took bribes), the number of criminal cases launched, as well as those who quickly and quietly fled abroad. Everyone knows their names and amounts of the stolen goods. These are former deputy prime ministers, ministers, heads of state corporations, MPs, and celebrities”...³⁹

By collecting information, and then launching more and more criminal cases against “the high and the mighty” on a daily basis, the “power block” is **clearing the way** for the arrival of new elites who are being trained within the “Time of Heroes” program. Thus, it is a two-way process.

*“Employees of the Investigative Committee (IC) opened **497** criminal cases on crimes in the field of the military-industrial complex (MIC) and the state defense order for eight months of 2024. Last year, during the same period, the Investigative Committee initiated **357** criminal cases of the same nature”⁴⁰. That is, this indicator has increased **by 39%**.*

³⁴ About the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation: Presidential Decree 383, dated May 14, 2024.

³⁵ About the Director of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation: Presidential Decree 386, dated May 14, 2024.

³⁶ On Amendments to Article 30 of the Federal Law “On the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation”: Federal Law 348, dated October 14, 2024.

³⁷ Previously, the age limit for service in the Investigative Committee was 65 years, while by decision of the heads of the investigative bodies, this period could be extended to 70 years. On August 27, 2024, A.I. Bastrykin turned 71.

³⁸ On extending the term of federal public service: Presidential Resolution 348, dated October 28, 2024.

³⁹ Batchikov S. When the bridges have been burned. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/kogda_mosty_sozhzheni?ysclid=m4s3fh3p6b44886535

⁴⁰ The Investigative Committee has initiated almost 500 cases of crimes in the field of defense industry and state defense order. Available at: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2024/09/17/1062766-sk-vozbudil-pochti>

Insert 1

Some facts of arrests and detentions carried out by law enforcement agencies in 2024⁴¹

<p>February 9, 2024 – I. Pechurin, a federal judge of the Odintsovo City Court, was detained. According to experts, “this is just the beginning, a precedent for breaking, changing the most bony, most closed system of our society – the judicial system”⁴².</p>
<p>April 24, 2024 – former first deputy chai of the Moscow Region Government, S. Strigunkova, has been arrested. Since February 2014, she has served as Deputy Minister of Economy of the Moscow Region. According to A. Bastrykin, “in 2021–2023, Strigunkova and her accomplices received bribes from the heads of construction companies in the amount of 5–10% of the amounts of concluded state contracts.... The total amount of bribes amounted to more than 170 million rubles. In total, more than 13 people were brought to criminal responsibility in the criminal case, including the heads of construction organizations”⁴³.</p>
<p>June 11, 2024 – S. Kharitonov, former head of the Central Housing and Communal Services Department of the Ministry of Defense, was sentenced to 9 years in a high-security penal colony (for taking a bribe in the amount of 65 million rubles).</p>
<p>December 6 – D. Mikhailov, general director of Lenbytkhim LLC, was detained in the case of large-scale fraud in the supply of property for the needs of the Ministry of Defense. According to the press service of the military investigative bodies of the Investigative Committee of Russia, the defendant is accused of fraud in the execution of the state defense order (Part 4 of Article 159 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation), more than 50 million rubles were stolen.⁴⁴</p>
<p>December 9 – I. Grabin, ex-deputy general director of Kursk Region Development Corporation JSC, was arrested. From February 2023 to September 2024, the ex-official was assigned administrative and economic functions in the corporation related to the management, disposal of property and finances. “He is accused of unjustifiably spending funds intended for the construction of fortifications in the Kursk Region (Part 3 of Article 285 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, “Abuse of official authority”)⁴⁵.</p>

⁴¹ We have cited facts about many other detentions and arrests of high-ranking officials (including former deputy defense ministers T. Ivanov, D. Bulgakov, and head of the Main Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation Yu. Kuznetsov, etc.) in previous articles. See, for example:

Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2024). Special military operation and the internal mobilization of society and elites. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 17(5), 9–39.

Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2024). “Returning the State to its native harbor”. On the issue of ensuring the continuity of sovereign development. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 17(4), 9–38.

Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2024). The fifth political cycle of Russian President Vladimir Putin: “Cosmetic repairs” for crony capitalism or a transition to “social capitalism”? *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 17(3), 9–35.

⁴² Frolov Yu.A. We live in a unique time of renewal and unique purges. Available at: <https://m.ok.ru/video/7918837434995?ysclid=m50rvkmj8xl11721205>

⁴³ RIA -novosti. December 9, 2024. Available at: https://ria.ru/20241209/strigunkov-1988155864.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referer=https%3A%2F%2Ffdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fstory%2F5261b8d-7120-53fe-988f-4621eb85a6ea

⁴⁴ *Izvestia*. December 9, 2024. Available at: https://iz.ru/1804301/2024-12-09/sud-arestoval-eks-zamgendirektora-ao-korporatcia-razvitiia-kurskoi-oblasti?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referer=https%3A%2F%2Ffdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fstory%2F5261b8d-7120-53fe-988f-4621eb85a6ea

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

3. October 31, 2024, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation decided to lift the statute of limitations on the real estate acquired through corrupt proceeds. According to lawyers, this gives the right to legally confiscate large assets acquired in the 1990s. Moreover, the important point is that “in

The Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation has decided that there is no statute of limitations for the return to the state of the property that was previously acquired through corrupt proceeds.

Voronin V. (lawyer, managing partner of Altavista Law Firm): “The running of the statute of limitations will now change significantly. They will be calculated not from the moment they are committed, but when they are revealed by the competent authorities. Thus, in fact, the statute of limitations for foreclosure on such property has been annulled.... **This gives us the right to assume the beginning of de-privatization, that is, the legalized confiscation of large assets acquired in the 1990s and their transfer to state revenue**”.

Rosenblat E. (head of the complex litigation practice, lawyer at the Moscow Bar Association Aronov & Partners): “Former officials cannot hide behind the expiration of the statute of limitations in order to preserve illegally acquired property”⁴⁶.

order to confiscate wealth, there is no need to prove corruption itself, the very fact that there is wealth is enough... if an official did not privatize in the 1990s, but was rapidly getting rich, then their wealth can be confiscated even today”⁴⁷.

According to a number of experts, this decision is, **perhaps, the most important and useful since the formation** of the Constitutional Court⁴⁸. In fact, it sets a precedent for the legitimate implementation of another very important area of activity within the framework of the elite renewal process, namely..

“October 31, the Constitutional Court of Russia made perhaps the most important and useful decision since its formation – it announced the abolition of the statute of limitations on corruption cases, along with the confiscation of property in favor of the state. High-ranking thieves who acquired their fortune back in the 1990s will no longer sleep peacefully – now the competent authorities can come for them. And future corrupt officials have been given a kind of ‘black mark’ – a signal has been sent that there will be no mercy in either 10 or 100 years”⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ Trifonova E. The Constitutional Court has set specific historical conditions for private property. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-10-31/3_9127_court.html?ysclid=m4chaykpzj908507909

⁴⁷ Kulikov V., Svinova E. The abolition of the statute of limitations for corrupt officials by the Constitutional Court will not change the results of privatization. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2024/11/01/otkuda-dengi.html> (opinion of M. Spiridonova, member of the Russian Bar Association, managing partner of Leges Bureau).

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Corrupt officials were given a “black mark”: There is no more statute of limitations in cases of robbery in Russia. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/korrupcioneram-vydali-chjornuju-metku-po-delam-o-grabezhe-rossii-bolshe-net-srokov-davnosti_1079834?ysclid=m4s3mkihby644009635

4. Return of privately owned enterprises to the State. According to experts, the “*process of ‘mild’ nationalization began back in February 2022, but only two years after the SMO did the authorities decide on tougher measures...*”⁵⁰, what was signaled by the Presidential Decree on the transfer of the Ulyanovsk Machine Tool Plant to state ownership⁵¹.

“Since the beginning of 2022, the Prosecutor General’s Office has been conducting about 50 cases related to large businesses. That is, almost all of them are connected with strategic enterprises that should become state-owned....

Three plants in Chelyabinsk (Kuznetsk Ferroalloys, Serovsky Ferroalloy Plant and Chelyabinsk Electrometallurgical Combine JSC) should return to state ownership... the enterprises were sold for an old song back in 1995. The controlling stake belonged to the oligarch Yuri Antipov, and the value of all securities is estimated at 168 billion rubles as of 2022.

The de-privatization of business in Chelyabinsk was carried out very quickly. All it took was to file a lawsuit. In early February 2024, the Arbitration Court seized all the property....”⁵²

Thus, according to some analysts, “things are coming true in Russia that have seemed impossible since the time of Yeltsin. The words about the revision of the results of privatization migrated from posters to resolutions of the Prosecutor General’s

Office and news agency reports... Factories are becoming national property, and their former owners can no longer solve anything with suitcases full of money in offices of top officials”⁵³.

According to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation I. Krasnov, “since 2022, **more than 100 enterprises, whose assets are estimated at 1.3 trillion rubles, have been returned to state ownership in Russia through court action**”⁵⁴.

Thus, elements of the elites renewal process were emerging before the Valdai Forum in 2024. However, while the whole world is going through a transitional period of formation change (from a unipolar to a multipolar form of existence) and while the outcome of this period largely depends on the strength of weapons, we cannot say with confidence that patriotic forces in Russia “*prevailed over the liberal*” (and “*precisely for this reason*”, as some experts note, “*Putin cannot get rid of the liberals*” who are closely associated with the West⁵⁵). So far, SMO goals have not been achieved; while the whole world is in an active stage of civilizational conflict, accompanied by the build-up of military potential, the preparation of countries for World War III, and the growing threat of the use of nuclear weapons, a lot depends on the situation “on the battlefield”.

First of all, the key question that quite rightly worries many experts is how the quality of our civilization will change in the next 50–70 years.

⁵⁰ Trishin M. The great nationalization has begun. Which defense enterprises have already been returned to the state? Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZdhSQvPOARfIdZ-M?ysclid=m4mle1k0hb652869732>

⁵¹ On amendments to the list of movable and immovable property, securities, shares in the authorized (pooled) capitals of Russian legal entities and property rights in respect of which temporary management is introduced, approved by Presidential Decree 302, dated April 25, 2023: Presidential Decree 133, dated February 19, 2024.

⁵² Trishin M. The great nationalization has begun. Which defense enterprises have already been returned to the state? Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZdhSQvPOARfIdZ-M?ysclid=m4mle1k0hb652869732>

⁵³ Revnivtsev A. Russians have been waiting for this for 30 years: The state is taking away factories from the oligarchs. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/russkie-zhdali-jetogo-30-let-gosudarstvo-zabiraet-u-oligarhov-i-zavody_963670

⁵⁴ More than 100 enterprises have been nationalized in Russia since 2022. Available at: <https://finance.rambler.ru/business/52889621-v-rossii-s-2022-goda-bylo-natsionalizirovano-bolee-100-predpriyatij/>

⁵⁵ Delyagin M. Why Putin can’t get rid of the liberals. Available at: <https://deita.ru/article/479377>

*“After the end of the hot phase of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, **major countries will gather and draw new borders, establish new rules, because no one in the world wants to constantly fight, there will be a ‘new Yalta conference’**”⁵⁶.*

*“The Ukrainian conflict will launch a series of political processes that are likely **to change the quality of our civilization for the next 50–70 years...**”⁵⁷*

In addition, we must not forget that more than 30 years, from the moment of the collapse of the Soviet Union to the moment when Vladimir Putin announced the start of the special military operation (that is, from 1991 to 2022, during which the new post-Soviet Russia was in a state of “covert intervention”), could not pass without a trace. According to experts, “... the enemy miscalculated plans to orchestrate an Orange revolution for us, **but they left a powerful fifth column in our rear**”⁵⁸.

*“There are at least 38,000 unfinished construction projects in the defense industry. That’s trillions of rubles. The question is, where is the money? After all, it was allocated from the state budget, relevant officials were accountable to the President... **Any ministry is rotten by now, not just the Ministry of Defense. An audit is needed everywhere... and it has been started everywhere**”⁵⁹.*

This is clearly demonstrated in a number of specific episodes of behavior and activities of individual representatives of the elites in the economy, politics, culture... (*Insert 2*).

The facts shown in *Insert 2* largely confirm the experts’ confidence that the elements of the elites renewal process “will definitely **meet with fierce, desperate resistance**”⁶⁰.

The head of state and the Government of the Russian Federation continue to actively implement concrete steps and make specific management decisions that create conditions for a comprehensive process of personnel changes in all key areas of life in accordance with the new conditions that have come after February 2022: in the economy, education, and national defense capability (*Insert 3*).

O. Matveychev (State Duma Deputy, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Information Policy): “As a result of amendments to the Constitution, some of the president’s powers were transferred to the State Duma. The idea was for ministers to be more attuned to working with the Duma and to become accustomed to the practice of public reporting. **Ministers and deputy prime ministers should understand that if society does not like their work, it can seriously complicate their future careers.** Therefore, the deputies of the State Duma regularly meet with government officials, the leaders of the factions meet with the Prime Minister.”

“In the old days, many ministers... **worked for the sake of reporting, in order to show their work to the president...** if we see unpopular ministers whose work raises questions, **they will immediately be attacked by opposition factions. This will already be a signal to the ministers that the ruling party can tell them ‘no’**”⁶¹.

⁵⁶ Aslamova D. Armenians are told that Russians are “white Turks”. Opinion of T. Kocharyan (media expert, editor-in-chief of Alpha News). Available at: <https://www.pravda.ru/world/1918773-armeniya/>

⁵⁷ Vinnik D. A thousand days of my war. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/zapiski_politrabotnika_tisyacha_dnej_moej_vojni?ysclid=m50s0let49974933563 (Vinnik D. – Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy), professor at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation).

⁵⁸ Fenenko A. The world after the SMO. Available at: https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/mir-posle-svo/?sphrase_id=152648206&ysclid=m03fqklwaj437058663

⁵⁹ Frolov Yu.A. We live in a unique time of renewal and unique purges. Available at: <https://m.ok.ru/video/7918837434995?ysclid=m50rvkmj8x111721205>

⁶⁰ Popov D. Putin acknowledged the betrayal of the elites: The revolution from above has begun. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2024/11/08/putin-priznal-predatelstvo-elit-nachalas-revolyuciya-sverkhu.html?ysclid=m4mavvlteb25960798>

⁶¹ A deputy on new powers of the State Duma: “Parliament may reject the candidacy of a minister”. Available at: <https://fedpress.ru/article/3307918>

Some examples of the activities of liberal-oriented elites in economics, politics, and culture

October 29–31, 2024 the Necropolis World Russia exhibition was held in Moscow. According to Ye. Andreeva, executive director of the Union of Funeral Organizations and Crematoriums, “the purpose of the exhibition was initially to create, revive and develop funeral culture, and modern PR methods attract young people” “*Death should be beautiful*” is one of the messages of the exhibition organizers⁶². However, many experts noted that “no one feels tragic emotions here at all. The situation is rather the opposite”⁶³. “*Compared to this event, Ivleeva’s ‘naked’ party is just a children’s matinee*”⁶⁴. It is noteworthy that the show took place in the Crocus Expo Hall, which is located next to Crocus City Hall, where a terrorist attack took place in March 2024, which claimed the lives of more than 140 people.

“In the beginning of November, a wave of public protests swept through the Kursk Region: those who had to flee the occupied territories were outraged because of the red tape in obtaining new housing... In November, Alexander Bogachev (head of Sudzhansky District) and Marina Degtyareva (head of Korenevsky District) were dismissed”⁶⁵.

December 5, the Presidential Decree was issued, according to which⁶⁶ A. Khinshstein was appointed acting governor of the Kursk Region (he replaced former Governor A. Smirnov). December 9, at an operational meeting with the regional government, A. Khinshstein announced: “Due to the requirements of the law, in connection with the resignation of the previous head of the region, I signed a decree as acting head of government on the resignation of the government; therefore, colleagues, I inform you that you are working as acting heads”⁶⁷. A. Khinshstein also announced his intention to apply to the Prosecutor’s Office and the Accounting Chamber for an audit of previous activities in the region”⁶⁸.

November 2024: “The latest calculations in the context of sectors show that in 2024, producer price growth accelerated due to an increase in the Central Bank rate by about 5%, and due to an increase in wages – by only 4%. In recent months, scientific evidence has emerged in the Russian Federation of the negative impact of high loan rates on macro-economic indicators. Business leaders confirm that they are reducing production programs and postponing investment projects”⁶⁹. “The Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance are headed by people who are far from being stupid and by no means deaf; and it is simply impossible to imagine that they do not understand what they have been doing and are doing, or do not understand the essence and meaning of numerous sensible proposals. It is obvious that the decisions they make are purely political”⁷⁰. Surely the leadership of the Central Bank understood what they were doing, and when they ignored repeated warnings that it was impossible to keep reserves in dollars, pounds and euros, and that such reserves could be arrested at any time. Academician Glazyev, in particular, repeatedly spoke about this at meetings of the National Financial Council. The seizure of more than 300 billion USD in reserves after the start of the SMO is exactly what the Central Bank’s management has warned about many times. But as we know, no one has been held responsible for the seizure of Russia’s foreign exchange reserves....”⁷¹

⁶² Kuzina N. Is there really no other place for this chapiteau? Reaction to the funeral exhibition at the Crocus. Available at: <https://rodima-history.ru/2024/10/31/neuzhto-dlia-etogo-shapito-ne-nashlos-drugogo-mesta-reakciia-na-pohoronnuuiu-vystavku-u-krokus-siti-holla.html>

⁶³ Guryanov S. The rumblings of the coffin: How was the Necropolis exhibition in Moscow? Available at: <https://iz.ru/1783545/sergei-guranov/raskaty-groba-kak-proslavystavka-nekropol-v-moskve>

⁶⁴ Orlova A. The capital of Russian Death: A temporary necropolis was opened next to the Crocus. Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZyKH3QLhRC1qGWw?ysclid=m4t4145dti0588328864>

⁶⁵ “To sweep through the whole hornet’s nest!”: Putin stopped the popular uprising in the Kursk Region. Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZINmgn38gjmz90-?ysclid=m4gz8dndpe479307313>

⁶⁶ About the Acting Governor of the Kursk Region: Presidential Decree 1035, dated December 5, 2024.

⁶⁷ Khinshstein dismissed the government of the Kursk Region. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20241209/khinshteyn-1988122011.html?ysclid=m4tn7o1t7n1181421>

⁶⁸ RIA-novosti. December 9, 2024. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20241209/hinshtejn-1988107342.html?in=#>

⁶⁹ Sergeev M. The Central Bank’s rate provokes price increases more than wage increases. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/economics/2024-12-12/1_2_9155_rate.html

⁷⁰ Batchikov S. When the bridges have been burned. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/kogda_mosty_sozhzheni?ysclid=m4s3fh3p6b44886535

⁷¹ Batchikov S. To fulfill the due. Available at: <https://dzen.ru/a/Zz2pLbpb9UDd-q4N?ysclid=m4qmpc0hg5441617476>

End of Insert 2

December 2024 – More than 700 employees of the Moscow Regional Ambulance Station complained to the president about the salary reduction. Since July, everyone has not received from 10 thousand rubles to 40–50 thousand rubles a month. After a new payment system for ambulance workers was launched in the Moscow Region in September, which theoretically should have increased their incomes, the exact opposite happened. Ambulance staff call this a classic “con game”: the salary was increased, and incentive payments were reduced. **“The trouble is that, judging by the reports that are being sent to the ministry, everything is fine on site. But in fact, there is a big game with numbers, the purpose of which is to throw dust in the eyes and “blur” reality.** Formally, there was a salary increase, but the fact that salaries did not increase at the same time remained behind the scenes. And this situation is not only in the capital... For example, the staff of the emergency department of the Komi-Permyatsky District hospital recorded a video message to the governor of the Perm Region about the critical situation in the workplace. After the salary increase from October 1 and the simultaneous abolition of 100% seniority allowances, the salary of paramedics became only 25 thousand rubles, while the situation for drivers was even worse – 21 thousand rubles. Similar situation is observed in the Samara Region... **Apparently, it is very unprofitable for someone that Russia should have a healthy nation”**⁷².

December 2024 – S. Glazyev: *“To bring the ruble to a stable state, it is only necessary to exclude the influence of speculative and incoming factors... We see that Russian banks have become the main speculators today, in the absence of international speculators who used to rock the ruble exchange rate and manipulate it with the connivance of the Central Bank. We know many examples when they started buying up foreign currency and then made super profits on the revaluation of this currency, playing against the ruble, contributing to its devaluation... This is a feverish purchase of foreign currency, which is conducted by Russian banks in order to profit from the devaluation and revaluation of their currency assets. It is this component of profit that is the most important for them today. Because there’s nothing to do except buy up currency and wait for the ruble to collapse”*⁷³.

⁷² Banishevskaya Yu. “They brought us to our knees”: A riot of emergency doctors – people are being forced to leave in order to clear places for migrants. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/nas-postavili-na-koleni-bunt-vrachej-skoroj-pomoshhi-ljudej-vynuzhdajut-uvolnjatsja-chtoby-raschistit-mesia-dlja-migrantov_1095244

⁷³ Glazyev named three obvious mistakes of the authorities and made the main conclusion: “A monstrous deception”. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/glazev-nazval-tri-ochev-idnyh-oshibki-vlastej-i-sdelal-glavnyj-vyvod-chudovishhnyj-obman_1093127

Many of these decisions are aimed at the future; they are changing the living conditions in the country.

For example, the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation proposed by the President back in February 2020⁷⁴ **today, at the end of 2024** allow the State Duma to actively insist on a law on testing migrant children in the Russian language, and the executive branch (represented by the RF Government) is forced to yield to this pressure.

Nevertheless, the practical implementation of the decisions taken will largely depend on specific representatives of the ruling elites, as they say, “on site”. Therefore, the President continues to draw the attention of officials to the fact that the result is important and not the reporting; in particular, this concerns the implementation of new national projects, which were presented by Chairman of the RF Government Mikhail Mishustin on December 5, 2024 and the first assessment of which is scheduled to be carried out in June 2025.

“I would like to emphasize once again that we should not be guided by bureaucratic logic – we should lower our benchmarks in order to simplify our work for ourselves and then report back. We should not do this, it is unacceptable. Why deceive ourselves...?”

I would like to emphasize once again that it's not just about sums and budget discipline, which is also very important. The main thing is that visible results follow: new kindergartens and schools, repaired roads and utility networks, modernized hospitals and polyclinics, modern production facilities created from scratch and landfills eliminated, and so on....

I repeat: it is the opinion of citizens that is of key importance... I suggest that at the next meeting of our Council in June we assess the start of the implementation of national projects, the progress of their implementation and the first results”⁷⁵.

December 10, 2024, the State Duma in the first reading unanimously approved a draft law that provides for mandatory testing of Russian language proficiency among migrant children when they are admitted to schools. In case of final approval of the draft law, Article 78 of the Law “On education” will be changed. During the discussions *“Chair of the State Duma V. Volodin expressed his strong displeasure with the remarks received on behalf of the government, even using the expression “putting grit in the bearings”.* In addition, he stated that the deputies’ initiative appeared because the executive branch did not offer anything here. And the parliament, they say, feels responsible for the government, in particular for not fulfilling the relevant instructions of the RF President. Therefore, the speaker **harshly raised the issue of an early second reading before the representative of the Cabinet of Ministers in the State Duma and the Plenipotentiary representative of the President of the Russian Federation, Garri Minkh.** However, he gently but bluntly remarked: the concept of the law is supported, although there are a number of serious comments, so if they can be removed, the presidential administration will continue to support the initiative, if not, then ‘we will continue to work’. However, Volodin did not keep silent in response to this, noting to Minkh that **it was precisely the ‘leadership of the presidential administration’ that supports this; and it is what everyone should proceed from”⁷⁶.**

⁷⁴ In particular, the Federation Council and the State Duma have the right to exercise parliamentary control, including sending parliamentary inquiries to the heads of state and local self-government bodies on issues within the competence of these bodies and officials (Art. 103.1).

⁷⁵ Session of the Council for Strategic Development and National Projects on December 5, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75762>

⁷⁶ Rodin I. The State Duma insists on adopting the law on the protection of schools from migrant children. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-12-10/1_9153_migrants.html?ysclid=m50s580liz301258261

Insert 3

The monitoring of regulatory legal acts (laws, decrees) signed by the RF President in the period from October 20 to December 17, 2024⁷⁷

MEASURES TO SUPPORT SMO PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, TO DEVELOP THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, MEASURES RELATED TO MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZATION OF MARTIAL LAW, INCREASE IN THE ANTI-TERRORIST PROTECTION OF FACILITIES

October 26 – Federal Law 353 “On the suspension of Part 2 of Article 43 of the Law of the Russian Federation ‘On pension provision for persons who have completed military service, service in Internal Affairs Bodies, the State Fire Service, bodies for the control of trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, institutions and bodies of the penal system, the National Guard troops of the Russian Federation, the enforcement authorities of the Russian Federation, and their families’”. From January 1, 2025 the amount of the monetary allowance taken into account when calculating the military pension will be 89.83% (previously it was 89.32%).

November 9 – Federal Law 374 “On the ratification of the comprehensive strategic partnership agreement between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, signed in Pyongyang on June 19, 2024, is ratified.

November 13 – Decree 967 “On lump sum payment to certain categories of persons”. The Government of the Russian Federation has been instructed to determine, depending on the severity of the injury (wounds, contusions), the amount of a lump sum payment (up to 3 million rubles) made to a person who, in accordance with the decree of the President of the Russian Federation, receives a lump sum payment upon injury (wounds, injuries, contusions).

November 14 – Decree 968 “On additional social guarantees for certain categories of persons”. The decree on additional payments to the SMO participants who became disabled after injury. If an injury (wound, contusion) sustained by a person who had previously received a lump sum payment upon receipt of such an injury resulted in disability, then such a person is paid 4 million rubles in a lump sum, taking into account the payment previously made upon receipt of this injury.

November 19 – Decree 991 “On approval of the fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of nuclear deterrence”. Russia’s new nuclear doctrine has been approved. The conditions for the possible use of nuclear weapons have been expanded. This includes aggression using conventional weapons not only against Russia, but also against Belarus, which poses a critical threat to their sovereignty or territorial integrity. The reason may also be the receipt of reliable information about the massive launch (take-off) of means of aerospace attack (strategic and tactical aircraft, cruise missiles, unmanned, hypersonic and other aircraft) and their crossing of the state border of the Russian Federation.

⁷⁷ This insert is a continuation of the monitoring of the most important regulatory legal acts signed by the President of the Russian Federation, which we have been conducting since June 2022. Thus, this monitoring has been ongoing for 19 months, its results have been published in 10 articles (the first issue of the monitoring is presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast, 15(3), 9–41)

November 23 – Federal Law 391 “On amendments to the Federal Law ‘On enforcement proceedings’ and the Federal Law ‘On the specifics of fulfilling obligations under loan agreements (loan agreements) by persons called up for military service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, persons participating in the special military operation, as well as members of their families and on amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation’”. Credit obligations not exceeding 10 million rubles are terminated for citizens who have concluded no earlier than December 1, 2024 a contract for military service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for a period of one year or more to perform the tasks of the special military operation, and (or) their spouses, if a judicial act on debt collection for these obligations has entered into force before the specified date and (or) a corresponding executive document has been submitted for execution.

Citizens participating in the special military operation are exempt from paying the enforcement fee levied in connection with non-fulfillment of the enforcement document in time for its voluntary execution. The period during which previously suspended enforcement proceedings cannot be resumed against citizens who have stopped participating in the SMO is increased from 30 to 180 days.

November 23 – Federal Law 409 “On amendments to Article 15 of the Federal Law ‘On the status of military personnel’ and the Federal Law ‘On the funded mortgage housing system for military personnel’”. The list of military personnel who can receive housing from the state has been expanded. These include contract soldiers who were foreign citizens during a certain period of military service, who served for 20 years or more, or who are subject to dismissal from service when they reach the age limit for service, for health reasons, or in connection with organizational and staff activities with a total duration of military service of 10 years or more.

November 23 – Federal Law 410 “On amendments to the Federal Law on material liability of military personnel”. Volunteers will be held financially liable for damage to military property on the same terms, in the same manner and in the same amounts that are provided for contractors, but taking into account a number of special features. For calculations, instead of the full salary of a monthly salary and a monthly superannuation for a contract employee, 50% of the volunteer’s salary per calendar month is applied. To compensate for damages, 20% of the salary and other payments received by the volunteer will be deducted. The total amount of all deductions from the allowance of volunteers may not exceed 50%.

November 25 – Decree 1003 “On amendments to Presidential Decree 644, dated July 31, 2024 ‘On a one-time monetary payment to military personnel serving under contract in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation’”. A one-time payment of 400 thousand rubles will be received by those mobilized, sent to the National Guard troops, and military personnel serving on conscription in the National Guard troops (with the exception of cadets) who signed a contract from August 1 to December 31, 2024 to participate in their military training for a period of 1 year or more.

November 30 – Federal Law 437 “On amendments to the Federal Law ‘On the status of military personnel’”. Military personnel and citizens discharged from military service who have one or more disabled children must be provided with housing (housing subsidy) out of turn. This also applies to the provision of military-provided housing, rented housing, and dorm rooms.

December 5 – Resolution 303 “On the signing of the treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on security guarantees within the framework of the Union State”.

MEASURES TO PROTECT INFORMATION SECURITY, REGULATE THE ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN AGENTS, AND UPBRING AND EDUCATE THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

October 26 – Federal Law 358 “On amendments to Article 256 of the Federal Law ‘On the procedure for leaving the Russian Federation and entering the Russian Federation’ and the Federal Law ‘On the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation’”. The law excludes the possibility for a foreign citizen to obtain a temporary residence permit or a residence permit in the case of a fictitious marriage.

November 9 – Federal Law 377 “On amendments to Articles 151 and 152 of the Federal Law ‘On the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation’”. Examinations for foreign citizens in the Russian language, the history of Russia and the fundamentals of the legislation of the Russian Federation and the issuance of appropriate certificates are carried out only by state institutions, the list of which is established by the Government of the Russian Federation. The amount of the examination fee is also set by the Government of the Russian Federation.

November 9 – Federal Law 383 “On amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Article 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation”. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation has been amended to classify the organization of illegal migration carried out by an organized group or for the purpose of committing serious or especially serious crimes as particularly serious crimes. For this, imprisonment for a term of 8 to 15 years, a fine of 3 to 5 million rubles and deprivation of the right to engage in certain activities for up to 10 years are provided. In addition, a minimum term of imprisonment of 2 years has been introduced for organizing the illegal entry of foreigners into Russia, their illegal stay or illegal transit through the Russian Federation. A fine of up to 500 thousand rubles will also be imposed. The same acts committed with the help of forged documents or the Internet will be punishable by imprisonment for a term of 5 to 10 years with a fine of up to 1 million rubles and with deprivation of the right to engage in certain activities for up to 7 years.

November 9 – Federal Law 384 “On amendments to Article 63 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation”. An aggravating circumstance is the commission of a crime by a person who is illegally present on the territory of the Russian Federation.

November 9 – Federal Law 385 “On amendments to Article 153 of the Federal Law ‘On information, information technologies and information protection’”. The federal law is aimed at combating illegal migration by blocking information resources containing offers of illegal migration services, as well as information on ways to organize illegal migration (source: official website of the President of the Russian Federation. Note of the State Legal Department).

November 9 – Federal Law 387 “On amendments to Article 104 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation”. Money, valuables and other property obtained as a result of the commission of a mercenary crime related to the organization of illegal migration will be subject to “confiscation, that is, compulsory gratuitous seizure and conversion to state ownership on the basis of a guilty verdict” (Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Art.104.1).

End of Insert 3

November 23 – Federal Law 400 “On amendments to Article 217 of Part Two of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation”. Incomes received by volunteers in the form of payments for reimbursement of medical expenses are exempt from taxation on personal income.

November 23 – Federal Law 401 “On amendments to Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation”. Administrative liability is established for the promotion of non-procreation. The amount of the administrative fine for citizens will range from 50 to 100 thousand rubles, for officials – from 100 to 200 thousand rubles, for legal entities – from 800 thousand to 1 million rubles.

November 23 – Federal Law 402 “On amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation”. Liability has been established for forgery of documents for the organization of illegal migration, their use, transfer or sale. For organizations, the fine is 5–10 million rubles with confiscation of the instruments of commission of the offense, for repeated violations – a fine of 10–60 million rubles with confiscation. The fine for organizations for forgery of an identity document, stamp, seal and letterhead, their use, transfer or sale has been increased from 30–50 thousand rubles to 40–80 thousand rubles; for repeated violations – from 50–100 thousand rubles to 100–200 thousand rubles.

November 23 – Federal Law 411 “On amendments to Articles 10 and 15 of the Federal Law ‘On information, information technologies and information protection’ and certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation”. A ban on propaganda of non-procreation is established.

December 9 – Decree 1047 “On the Council under the President of the Russian Federation for the Implementation of State Demographic and Family Policy”. V. Matvienko was appointed Chair of the Council.

MEASURES TO PROVIDE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO THE GENERAL POPULATION, STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY’S ECONOMY, INCLUDING IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

October 26 – Federal Law 357 “On amendments to the Federal Law ‘On industrial policy in the Russian Federation’”. The possibility of state support for complex construction projects implemented on the territory of foreign countries by industrial entities or Russian industrial support infrastructure organizations has been provided in order to develop Russia’s export potential and promote Russian industrial products to foreign markets.

October 29 – Federal Law 362 “On amendments to Parts One and Two of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation and certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation”. The value added tax rate is set at 10% for taxation of transactions involving the sale of breeding products (materials), as well as the import of such products into the territory of the Russian Federation. The excise tax rates are indexed. Lump-sum compensation payments received by cultural workers under a state program approved by the Government of the Russian Federation are exempt from taxation on personal income. The tourist tax is included in the single tax payment. It is envisaged that from January 1, 2025, an experiment on the establishment of a special tax regime “Automated simplified taxation system” can be carried out in the territories of all constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

October 29 – Federal Law 365 “On amendments to Article 1 of the Federal Law ‘On the minimum wage’”. Starting from January 1, 2025, the minimum wage is set at 22,440 rubles per month (previously it was 19,242 rubles).

Such a situation in the public administration system as a whole can be considered using the example of individual system-wide problems and tasks facing the state.

As an example, we can point out the issue of migration, which, as many experts say, is one of the “threats to national security”, and which leads (in addition to other problems) “to a rapid change in the cultural, linguistic and civilizational unity of our country”⁷⁸.

According to statistics, over the period from 2021 to 2023, the proportion of people with a low level of education among migrants coming to Russia did not decrease, which does not fully correlate with the head of state’s policy on the influx of specialists with a “high level of intelligence and qualifications”:

- ✓ the share of migrants with secondary and incomplete general education in 2021–2023 was 31% of the total number of arrivals in Russia (1 million people);

- ✓ the share of migrants with primary education or no education at all was 1.8% (62 thousand people),

- ✓ the share of migrants who simply do not indicate their level of education was 11% (383 thousand people)⁷⁹.

*“... what we definitely need is **highly qualified specialists**, and here we absolutely need to navigate and orient our migration services in such a way that people with a **high level of intelligence and qualifications** come to us for permanent residence, for work, for residence in general”⁸⁰.*

Statistical data of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation for 8 months of 2024.

“Foreigners have committed **more than 26,000 crimes**, while compared to the same period last year, there has been a 12% **increase in the number of serious crimes** committed by newcomers.

The number of crimes committed by “illegals” has almost tripled: from 2,880 to 8,059.

The number of criminal assaults by migrant workers has increased from 5,868 to 9,708.

The number of crimes committed by newcomers who acquired Russian citizenship less than ten years ago has increased from 7 to 11 thousand.

This year, migrants have committed **73 extremist acts vs 59 crimes a year earlier**⁸¹.

In addition, according to the RF Investigative Committee, there has been an **increase in the number of crimes** committed by foreigners and “illegals” in Russia, including crimes of an extremist nature.

In other words, the dynamics of statistical data, as well as the assessments of many experts, indicate that “**we have not yet developed a meaningful migration policy**”⁸². At least, this is how migration policy was assessed by Vladimir Putin on June 7, 2024 at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum (*Insert 4*).

⁷⁸ K. Malofeev. Speech at the Eighth Congress of Tsargrad (Moscow, October 24, 2024). The problem of migrants in Russia has risen to full height: Either we solve it, or it affects us. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/news/problema-migrantov-v-rossii-vstala-v-polnyj-rost-ili-my-ejo-reshaem-ili-ona-nas_1073067/nsk?ysclid=m4s50vbtii82949111

⁷⁹ Number and migration of the population of the Russian Federation in 2023: Statistical collection. Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/compendium/document/13283>

⁸⁰ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the 9th Agency for Strategic Initiatives forum “Strong Ideas for a New Age” on February 20, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73505>

⁸¹ Ivanov A. ICR reported an almost threefold increase in the number of crimes committed by illegal migrants. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/skr_soobshil_o_pochti_tryohkratnom_roste_chisla_prestuplenij_nelegal_nih_migrantov?ysclid=m241opr9d9277636059

⁸² Vladimir Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74234>

Excerpt from V. Putin’s plenary discussion with S. Karaganov at SPIEF 2024⁸³

S. Karaganov: “Here is another peaceful, important question. As you know, our country is currently engaged in a major discussion about migration issues. Unfortunately, there are also chauvinistic sentiments, which pose a threat to our multiethnic nation.

At the same time, the police department is addressing migration issues. Whether this is positive or negative is debatable. However, their objective is to limit migration. **I believe that we should take a stricter approach to limiting the negative aspects of migration.**

In my opinion, we face not only the task but also an opportunity to start actively seeking and attracting skilled migrants from abroad. Climate migration will begin, value-based migration is starting to occur, and crisis-related migration will also happen, it is already underway.

By the way, we missed the opportunity to welcome a wave of very interesting people from Afghanistan who could have come to our country after they fled theirs due to the actions of the US.

Do we need to modernize our migration policy concept? **I read it some time ago and found it to be amazingly unrealistic and liberal. The police department is allegedly engaged in implementing it.** Perhaps you should establish a government agency to regulate these issues, develop a modern migration policy concept, and attract migrants while also implementing stricter measures to control their influx? **We currently lack such a policy”.**

V. Putin: “**I have no objections. You are right.** However, we should think about allowing interesting people from Afghanistan to come here. Today, many interesting people are coming here from other countries. **But you are certainly right in saying that we have not yet developed a well-thought-out migration policy.** We had a single agency in the past, but it later merged with the Interior Ministry for security reasons. It is worth questioning whether this division is functioning effectively or underperforming. I have discussed this with my colleagues. I have instructed the Government and the Security Council to re-examine this issue as soon as possible.

It is undeniable that there is a problem. We need to attract migrant workers, as this is crucial. With minimal or zero unemployment, a shortage of workers hampers economic growth.

You are also correct in stating that we need individuals with specific skills, education levels, fluency in the Russian language, knowledge of our traditions, and more, rather than just any migrants. Our colleagues from countries that provide the majority of migrants also recognize this. We are discussing how to collaborate and teach these individuals Russian, our traditions and culture and our laws, so that they can feel comfortable in Russia. Most importantly, we want to ensure that local residents do not face any issues in the employment market or their daily lives. **Where do migrants usually settle? In places with active economic life. And what are these places? These are Moscow, the Moscow Region, St Petersburg, and a few cities in Siberia that offer high wages. I wholeheartedly agree with you that there is much work to be done in this area”.**

⁸³ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74234>

Insert 5

Some legislative initiatives and decisions in the field of RF migration policy

Since the beginning of 2024, the RF State Duma has adopted 7 laws in the field of migration control⁸⁴.

October 16, 2024, in the first reading, two draft laws from the migration package were unanimously adopted, according to which criminal liability for organizing illegal migration is increased, and illegal stay in Russia becomes an aggravating circumstance in the commission of any crimes. In addition, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation V. Volodin proposed to exclude healthcare and education from the list of areas where work entitles to a simplified residence permit⁸⁵.

November 9, 2024, the RF President signed a number of laws that amend migration policy:

- ✓ Federal Law 377 “On amendments to Articles 15-1 and 15-2 of the Federal Law ‘On the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation’” (on the prohibition of intermediary organizations from arranging exams for migrants);
- ✓ Federal Law 383 “On amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Article 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation” (on classifying the organization of illegal migration committed by an organized group or for the purpose of committing grave and Especially grave crimes as particularly grave crimes);
- ✓ Federal Law 384 “On amendments to Article 63 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation” (on recognizing as an aggravating circumstance the commission of a crime by a person illegally present in Russia);
- ✓ Federal Law 385 “On amendments to Article 153 of the Federal Law ‘On information, information technologies and information protection’” (on the extrajudicial blocking of websites with illegal services for migrants);
- ✓ Federal Law 387 “On amendments to Article 1041 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation” (on the confiscation of money, valuables and property obtained during the organization of illegal migration);

December 11, 2024, the State Duma has amended the current law on education, which introduces a procedure for the access of foreign children to Russian schools. The same law declares the right of anyone who is legally located on the territory of the Russian Federation to receive education on the same principles as citizens of the country. The admission mechanism will be two-way: the visitor first confirms that they and their family are in the Russian Federation legally, and then potential students will have to confirm their compliance with the established requirements for the required level of proficiency in Russian.

January 1, 2025, the decree of Governor G. Nikitin banning the involvement of foreign specialists in 37 types of activities, including in the field of healthcare and education, comes into force in the Nizhny Novgorod Region. Guest workers are allowed to stay only in low-skilled jobs in industries that require a large amount of manual labor. Tver Region Governor I. Rudnya also closed 82 types of activities for migrant workers, 52 of them completely. These are, for example, energy sectors for housing and communal services, water transport, entertainment and tourism, veterinary medicine, as well as the IT and media spheres⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ Veretennikova K. And let no one leave unpunished. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7232760?ysclid=m2egb6pr13295480662>

⁸⁵ Ibidem.

⁸⁶ Garmonenko D. Nizhny Novgorod region prohibits migrants from treating and teaching. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-12-04/1_9149_migrants.html?ysclid=m4qs3iwjxw476378524

Migration policy in Russia, as S. Karaganov, moderator of the discussion with the President, noted, “**is amazingly unrealistic and liberal**”⁸⁷, or, as some experts believe, it is “waltzing”. On the one hand, decisions are being made, and quite actively (*Insert 5*).

“When discussing migration issues in Russia, two positions collide. The first one assumes that the country faces serious demographic, economic and social challenges.... The second one is a policy based on the Russian Orthodox cultural core. The influx of people of other ethnicities is, of course, blurring it. **Our migration policy, to put it mildly, waltzes between these alternative approaches**”⁸⁸.

On the other hand, there are still conditions under which there is active lobbying for the importation of migrants, and at the highest level.

Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov: “**Migrants are a necessity. The fact is that we have a very tense demographic situation. We live in the largest country in the world, but our population is not large... In order for us to develop dynamically, to implement all development plans, of course, we need labor force. We welcome them**”⁸⁹.

For example, back in 2022, Interior Minister V. Kolokoltsev said that “there are 16 departments that are interested in migrant labor”⁹⁰; and in 2024, K. Kabanov directly stated that “**the ‘subversive’ activities of migration lobbyists** represented mostly by construction oligarchs, ethno-oligarchs – owners of the largest markets, various services, marketplaces, housing and communal services dealers and some heads of regions, are going on quite successfully”⁹¹.

K. Kabanov, Chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Committee, member of the HRC: “**As soon as Russia started talking about a tougher migration regulation regime, business reacted immediately.** The lobbyists’ opposition has been intense. We have literally adopted a number of laws with great difficulty and with great effort...

‘The Golden Billion’, **those of its representatives who live in Russia, are in favor of migrants. The elite in Russia has, in fact, already revealed its cards... They believe that it makes no difference who will inhabit Russia. We have such people in power who de facto say the following: ‘We are at the top, we are part of the golden billion’, and who is at the bottom makes no difference to us. Whether there are more Russians or someone else there, we don’t care**”⁹².

⁸⁷ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74234>

⁸⁸ Rubnikov M., Pogodina A. “It would be better if we did not see them”. Will Russia be able to do without migrants? Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2024/09/18/19763059.shtml?updated>

⁸⁹ The Kremlin explained why migrants are welcome in Russia. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/society/22/11/2024/674021a29a794777c6755257>

⁹⁰ Gorevoy R. Gaster-roof. Available at: <https://versia.ru/rabochej-sile-iz-srednej-azii-pokrovitelstvuyut-16-vedomstv?ysclid=m2efacjvfq302434325>

⁹¹ The “subversive” activities of migration lobbyists in Russia are quite unsuccessful. Available at: <https://newdaynews.ru/authors/831404.html?ysclid=m2ef6nua79393811603> (K. Kabanov – Member of the Presidential Council for Human Rights, Head of the National Anti-Corruption Committee).

⁹² The Golden Billion favors migrants. The elite in Russia has revealed its cards: “We are at the top, who is at the bottom makes no difference to us”. Available at: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/zolotoj-milliard-za-migrantov-jelita-v-rossii-raskryla-karty-my-verhushka-kto-vnizu-bez-raznicy_1046577

According to experts, “the lobbyists for the flow of migrant workers are well known. They represent the construction business and the housing and communal services sector... For example, some real estate objects are built using cheap migrant labor and then sold for quite a lot of money, as a result, we are talking about simply off-scale profits. **There are those who profit from this situation, which means that there will be those who lobby for the preservation of this state of affairs**”⁹³.

Thus, the time that has come after the beginning of the SMO requires the public administration system (in all branches and at all levels) to take clear, fast and coordinated actions in implementing a systematic and comprehensive process of elite renewal, which has actually been going on for a very long time.

At the same time, quite objectively, realizing that the historical scale of changes for Russia and for the whole world, which began in February 2022, cannot but meet fierce resistance from the West, which means there is always a risk, the President expressed **only a hope, but not confidence**, that “Russia will never again return to the path it followed until 2022”.

We should note that this is not the first time that Vladimir Putin has expressed regret over his untimely and belated adoption of some of the most important and fateful decisions for the country; this concerns only the beginning of the SMO (which he talked about during the “direct line” on December 19, 2024), but also, for example, the reunification

“As for 2014, in hindsight, we’re all smart, of course, but we assumed that maybe we could come to an agreement, and Lugansk and Donetsk, somehow within the framework of the Minsk agreements, which you probably know about, would still be able to reunite with Ukraine. **We were sincerely striving for this. But we didn’t fully feel the mood of the people, it was impossible to fully understand what was going on there. But now it has probably become obvious that this reunion should have happened sooner. Maybe there would not have been so many casualties among civilians, there would not have been so many dead children due to shelling, and so on**”⁹⁴.

of Russia with Donbass (which he talked about on November 25, 2022 at a meeting with mothers of military personnel).

However, today, at the end of almost three years of the special military operation, Vladimir Putin’s “revolutionary” words that Russia should not return to the path it followed until 2022 indicate that the President understands the seriousness of the situation and the fact that Russia simply has nowhere to retreat: **“To achieve a strategic defeat of Russia, defeat on the battlefield... is impossible by definition, it will never happen**⁹⁵**... because with the loss of sovereignty, we lose our statehood... without sovereignty, Russia cannot exist as an independent country**⁹⁶.

⁹³ Bregov A. Who makes money on the flow of migrants to Russia. Available at: <https://politika.sevastopol.su/news/kto-delaet-dengi-na-potoke-migrantov-v-rossiju/?ysclid=m4s346d8o464929280> (Opinion of A. Zubets, Doctor of Sciences (Economics), director of the Institute of Socio-Economic Research at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation).

⁹⁴ Vladimir Putin’s meeting with mothers of military personnel on November 25, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69935>

⁹⁵ Vladimir Putin’s interview to Tucker Carlson on February 9, 2024 Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411>

⁹⁶ “Direct line” with Vladimir Putin on December 19, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/75909>

And if there is this understanding and if there is a public recognition of this understanding, then there must be appropriate actions aimed at the renewal of the elites, especially considering that there is a request for this from society.

Historian and writer S. Pereslegin notes that with the beginning of the SMO, a “consensus appeared in Russian society according to which **the war should lead to the transformation of the elite**”, and there is also a consensus according to which “**one of the risks of war is the absence of such a transformation**”⁹⁷.

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⁹⁷ Pereslegin S. The political system in its dynamics seems to be moving toward the Oprichnina. Available at: <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/583372>