

EDITORIAL

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Vladimir Putin's 25 Years of Presidential Terms: “Warrior”, “Ruler”, “Creator”



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Abstract. October 7, 2024, Minchenko Consulting Communication Group published a report entitled “The dynamics of Vladimir Putin’s image: From a “Warrior” to a “Ruler-Creator”, dedicated to analyzing the activities of the head of state over the past 25 years. The experts identify three images (“Warrior”, “Ruler”, “Creator”), which at different stages of Russian history were typical for the public figure of Vladimir Putin. Moreover, the consistent transformation of these images was determined mainly by two factors – the nature of the challenges facing the country and those facing the President personally, as well as the needs and expectations of the broad strata of Russian society. In the context of the general idea proposed by the specialists of Minchenko Consulting, we express our own point of view on the processes taking place in the country and in the dynamics of Vladimir Putin’s image throughout his presidential terms. We show the key role of the civilizational confrontation between Russia and the West in the transformation of the image of the President as an exponent of public expectations. We pay considerable

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attention to the analysis of the internal changes taking place in the country, following the results of three years of the special military operation. We present expert assessments characterizing the historical reasons for the special military operation, as well as Russia's prospects in the emerging multipolar world. The paper also presents data from the current round of the monitoring of managerial decisions adopted by the President and the Government of the Russian Federation; we have been conducting the monitoring for more than two and a half years. Our contribution consists in an in-depth analysis of events and processes taking place in the country, which is presented in a historical context, based on expert assessments from a wide range of specialists in different fields of knowledge (economists, political scientists, sociologists, historians, etc.), as well as on the data of our own sociological surveys conducted in the monitoring mode, current reports in the media, own long-term experience in studying the effectiveness of public administration.

Key words: President, elites, special military operation, public opinion, civilizational conflict.

October 7, 2024, Minchenko Consulting Communication Group published a report on the transformation of the image of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin for the entire period of his political activity¹. According to experts, "changing a politician's public image is not just about changing their own self-image. **This is a change in the dominant attitudes in public communication regarding a particular political figure**"². Or, in other words, a reflection in the image of a politician of the expectations and hopes of the majority of the population; in this case an image is understood as "a holistic and sustainably reproducible impression of the politician, their motives, methods of action and possible results of activity"³.

The image of Vladimir Putin has changed in many ways in the 25 years since his first inauguration (May 7, 2000). Having started as a "Warrior" defending Russian statehood from complete destruction as a result of the actions of Boris Yeltsin's "team", the Chechen conflict, terrorist attacks, the economic and demographic crisis, etc., today Vladimir Putin represents a completely different image – a man who "forms a new world

"The public image of a politician who has been in power for more than one term **inevitably transforms** during their time in office: under the influence of external circumstances or as a result of personal choice, in order to achieve political goals, or it simply expresses a change in the emotional background....

Putin began his presidency in the archetypal image of a "Warrior", over the years becoming a full-fledged "Ruler" who makes changes to the world order in real time, creating a new world order in the role of a "Creator".

A "Warrior" is a single-minded and active fighter who strives, on the one hand, to defeat enemies, and on the other, to protect friends/people/voters (p. 5).

A "Ruler" creates order out of chaos and supports it, organizes processes, and builds hierarchy (p. 22).

A "Creator" is a person who creates a new world order in which Russia will have a completely new role, and creates new rules of the game within the country and a new elite (p. 18).

order with new rules and a new place of the country in it"⁴.

¹ Dynamics of Vladimir Putin's image: From a Warrior to a Ruler-Creator: Report. Minchenko Consulting. October 2024. 23 p. Available at: https://minchenko.ru/news/news_235.html

² Ibidem. P. 4.
³ Ibidem. P. 2.
⁴ Ibidem. P. 18.

And this transformation is an outcome of a complex interweaving of external and internal factors that can only be analyzed in a single historical context.

Of course, the special military operation became a major factor that influenced both the image of Vladimir Putin and the expectations and needs of the population reflected in it. We recall that the forced decision to launch the SMO was made by the RF President on February 24, 2022, after the NATO countries ignored Russia's official demands to ensure national security guarantees in January 2022⁵. The SMO has been going on for three years now, and during this period (as Vladimir Putin himself noted), he “almost stopped laughing and is now honing his skills in identifying key issues and concentrating his attention and energy on solving them”⁶.

However, the SMO is only part of the “big path” toward transforming the image of the President and the image of Russia. The beginning of this path should be sought not even from the moment when Vladimir Putin's first inauguration took place (May 7, 2000), but much earlier – starting in the 1980s, when the first prerequisites for the collapse of the USSR were created, and even from the mid-1950s, when the country's ruling elites under Nikita Khrushchev's government and in the

absence of Joseph Stalin's “iron hand”, for the first time truly, without fear of consequences, began to acquire professional, financial, personal, family “connections” in the West...

“Stalin once said that after his death, a lot of garbage would be piled upon his grave, but the wind of history would disperse it. **Everything turned out as the leader had foreseen. Less than a few years later, Nikita Khrushchev, one of the main ‘Stakhanovites of terror’ of the 1930s** (it was on his request to increase quotas for executions that Stalin wrote: ‘Calm down, fool’) **began to pour mud on the leader.** Khrushchev was not the first in this regard: Trotsky began systematically throwing mud (though interspersed with real criticism) at Stalin, but a not too bright Khrushchev, a former Trotskyist, was content with mud-throwing alone. Then Khrushchev was joined by ‘scavengers’ – the most zealous representatives of the ‘Sixtiers’, not to mention the dissidents who sang ‘to other people's voices’ and ‘rode’ on other people's waves: they were part of Western anti-Soviet propaganda”⁷.

“From Khrushchev, there is a direct line to Gorbachev and Yeltsin, that is, to the betrayal of national and class interests”⁸.

⁵ December 17, 2021, the Russian side officially presented requirements to the U.S. and NATO countries to provide legal guarantees of national security (they are published on the official website of the Russian Foreign Ministry: https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1790809/), including the requirements to exclude further NATO expansion to the east and the accession of Ukraine to the alliance; to refuse any NATO military activities in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia, Central Asia; not to establish military bases in post-Soviet countries, etc. However, January 26, 2022, U.S. Secretary of State A. Blinken stated that “the U.S. will not abandon the open door policy in NATO”, and NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg said, “We cannot compromise on the principles on which our security has been based for decades”. It was only after diplomatic steps taken by Russia to avoid conflict were ignored that Putin was forced to announce the start of the SMO (February 24, 2022).

⁶ “Results of the year” with Vladimir Putin. December 19, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/75909>

⁷ Fursov A. Stalin and the wind of history. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/stalin-i-veter-istorii-2013-02-06-000000?ysc_lid=m7a2od2u1w372301822

⁸ Fursov A. XX Congress of the CPSU – a milestone on the path of national betrayal. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/8447>

It was during Khrushchev's time, as head of VCIOM V. Fedorov writes, that "the roots of the collapse of the USSR were found... **First of all, it is the nomenklatura itself**, which simply wants to live without fear of a dictator. This desire is reasonable; however, solving their small philistine tasks, the bureaucracy unwittingly jams the management system"⁹.

S. Naryshkin: "**We need to fully wake up from the liberal "stupor" of the 1990s** and return to the roots. We have our own way. Russia is an original country, a civilization with a thousand-year history that should not be forgotten, much less betrayed"¹⁰.

S. Kurginyan: "**The liberal fog has put into people's heads the idea that it is possible to end an entire historical period, to create a "black hole" in place of 70 years of Soviet history**"¹¹.

E. Ivanov: "The one who does not respect his history is vicious... The Soviet government brought up aristocratic spirit in the people of labor. It turns out that if you can't erase all this, then you can sweep it under the rug, cover it up. Therefore, opponents constantly weave an anti-Soviet, and therefore an anti-patriotic basis into the canvas of the positive. **Moreover, the defamation is intensifying... The liberal fog has not yet lifted**"¹².

The process of "internal fermentation" of the Soviet elites (as we noted in one of our previous papers¹³), coinciding with the openly proclaimed ambitions of the Collective West for world domination, it eventually led to the destruction of the Soviet Union. **But more importantly, the collapse of the USSR plunged Russia into a "liberal fog" (as experts call it) for almost 35 years.**

And there are people who are personally responsible for this "largest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century"¹⁴ (*Insert 1*). As noted by RAS Corresponding Member Zh.T. Toshchenko, the betrayal committed by them in the late 1980s and early 1990s has "**no statute of limitations**"¹⁵; "everyone who participated in the destruction of the Soviet Union **has their own measure of responsibility for this sweeping tragedy**"¹⁶.

"The man-made nature of our tragedy and its consequences should already be clear to everyone today. After all, if you think about it, **the current military operation in Ukraine is the forced result of the treacherous actions of the very "fifth column" aimed at eliminating the Soviet power. That is why there is no statute of limitations for crimes committed by M. Gorbachev, B. Yeltsin, A.N. Yakovlev and others like them**"¹⁷.

⁹ Fedorov V.V. Review of G. Derlugian's book "How the World Works". Sketches on macrosociological topics (2013). Fedorov V.V. Uma palata. VCIOM, 2023. P. 24.

¹⁰ Naryshkin urged to finally wake up from the liberal stupefaction of the 1990s. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20231207/rossiya-1914337076.html?ysclid=m6kh5av27e263110085>

¹¹ Kurginyan S. The Russian cauldron has boiled over, what explosions are planned in Russia? Available at: <https://eot.su/node/24020>

¹² Ivanov E. Do not lose vigilance! Available at: <https://yarkprf.ru/%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B1%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C/>

¹³ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2023). The system of oligarchic capitalism in Russia is inconsistent with the achievement of the goals of the special military operation. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 16(4), 9–37.

¹⁴ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on April 25, 2005. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/36354>

¹⁵ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Abyss of betrayal – Alexander Yakovlev. *Pravda*, 91(31294), August 19–22.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

Some personal characteristics of representatives of the ruling elites responsible for the destruction of the USSR (source: a series of interviews by Pravda newspaper political commentator V. Kozhemyako with RAS corresponding member Zh.T. Toshchenko):

1. **“All of them are characterized by extreme moral, moral impurity, or more precisely, absolute immorality... the feeling of patriotism is unknown to most of these people”¹⁸.**

2. **“An irrepressible, unlimited, and even pathological desire for power became the meaning of life for them... they reached a fantastic scale of their capital without investing a single ruble in production, in the creation of material and spiritual values! They simply robbed the people, appropriating the enormous wealth they had created during the Soviet era”¹⁹.**

3. **“It is more important for them to be visible and make a favorable impression. And as a rule, they like themselves very much, often even admire themselves... However, obsession with form to the detriment of content, and even more so increased complacency, not supported by weighty deeds, is clearly flawed.... Blatant incompetence and absolute inability to do the job assigned – that’s what it is”²⁰.**

4. **“...a lot of random and completely unsuitable people rose to the top of power. Such, if I may say so, was Yeltsin’s personnel policy, this mixture of arbitrary fantasies and absurd decisions”²¹.**

Zh.T. Toshchenko writes: “The late Soviet elite did not consider sovereignty an absolute value... objectively speaking, it served the interests not of its native country, but of a completely different state – the “city upon a hill”, as the United States calls itself...”²² This is clearly demonstrated by the personal characteristics (*Insert 1*) and public statements of its representatives, for example, the first President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin.

Excerpts from Russian President Boris Yeltsin’s Address to U.S. Congress on June 17, 1992²³:

1. **“Citizens of Russia upheld their freedom and did not allow the continuation of the 75 years of nightmare. From this high rostrum I want to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to President Bush and to the American people for their invaluable moral support for the just cause of the people of Russia”.**

2. **“We realize our great responsibility for the success of our changes, not only toward the people of Russia, but also toward the citizens of America and of the entire world. Today the freedom of America is being upheld in Russia”.**

3. **“Dear members of the Congress! Every person bears the stamp of their time. There is no exception for anyone – neither for an ordinary citizen nor for the President. Much has been experienced, much has been rethought. And now I would like to end my speech with the words from a song by Irving Berlin, an American composer of Russian origin: “God bless America!”**

¹⁸ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Insidious knife in the back of state security. *Pravda*, 106(31309), September 23–26.

¹⁹ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2021). Disguises of werewolves. *Pravda*, 93(31153). August 27–30.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). The Nemtsov outdid Khlestakov himself. *Pravda*, 132(31335), November 25–28.

²² Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Insidious knife in the back of state security. *Pravda*, 106(31309), September 23–26.

²³ Full text of Yeltsin’s Address to U.S. Congress on June 17, 1992. Available at: <https://proza.ru/2024/03/19/1226?ysclid=m6khxsqq2m355394926>

*Insert 1***Personal characteristics of representatives of the ruling elites responsible for the destruction of the USSR**

(source: a series of interviews of V. Kozhemyako, political observer of *Pravda*, with RAS Corresponding Member Zh. T. Toshchenko)

M. Gorbachev²⁴:

1. *"As a result of Gorbachev's activities, the USSR was transformed from an active subject of foreign policy into a pathetic object that was being manipulated from the outside.*
2. *In Gorbachev's version, the idea of human responsibility to society and the need for civil and personal duties was completely overlooked. As a result, an atmosphere of moral nihilism began to form, the triumph of extreme forms of individualism, which subsequently led to a wave of arbitrariness in post-Soviet Russia.*
3. *Before us is a man who, by the will of accidental circumstances, ascended to the top of power, but showed extreme poverty of thought alongside exorbitant ambition and a feeling of his own infallibility... his low cultural level, unscrupulousness, and primitivism of thought led to the fact that he betrayed the ideals to which he swore in his youth and which he seemed to serve."*

N. Yakovlev²⁵:

1. *"Rebirth, mutation, cynicism, hypocrisy, adaptability — this is not a complete list of his characteristics...*
2. *There were and still are serious reasons to consider him a 'mole', that is, an enemy agent...*
3. *His duality is undeniable, and it has only grown over time.*
4. *Disguised in a respectable costume of an intellectual. This is exactly what he wanted to look like in the eyes of the liberal pro-Western part of the Russian intelligentsia. Meanwhile, he drew his 'wisdom' from the stagnation of concepts promoted by the whole host of anti-Soviets and anti-Communists from different countries against the USSR...*
5. *Whether his relations with the enemy special services were somehow shaped or not, the main thing is absolutely clear: the entire Canadian decade was for him a time of intense preparation for the destruction of the hated USSR...*
6. *Yakovlev will speak out later: 'I was talking about the 'renewal of socialism', but I knew what was going on'. He didn't just know, he directed it'".*

B. Berezovsky²⁶:

1. *"His arrogance knew no bounds, and hardly anyone could surpass him in this...*
2. *He stole on a gigantic scale. And he didn't just steal, but often also demonstrated his impunity, which gave rise to calling this specific phenomenon the 'Berezovshchina'! De facto, this adventurer found himself at the helm of making many important decisions that were maturing at the very top. At first, however, his influence was behind the scenes, as is typical of the 'gray cardinal'. But soon enough, he officially holds influential positions in power — first in the Security Council, and then in the leadership of the CIS...*
3. *He considered each person from the point of view of profitability or disadvantage for the capital he created. Today, for example, he needs Kadannikov from VAZ and Korzhakov, Yeltsin's chief security guard, and he is getting closer to personal friendship with them. And tomorrow they become unnecessary, even burdensome in some ways, and Berezovsky discards them as waste material. If someone becomes an obstacle in his business, they may lose their life".*

²⁴ Toshchenko Zh. T. (2021). Political nothingness. *Pravda*, 69(31129), July 2–5.

²⁵ Toshchenko Zh. T. (2022). Abyss of betrayal — Alexander Yakovlev. *Pravda*, 91(31294), August 19–22.

²⁶ Toshchenko Zh. T. (2022). Berezovsky's Diaboliad. *Pravda*, 64(31267), June 17–20.

Continuation of Insert 1

<p>A. Kozyrev²⁷:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Kozyrev is “the most shameful foreign minister in the country’s history”²⁸.</i> 2. <i>“Since his first steps in a high position, he proved himself to be an impeccable follower and conductor of American politics. The main focus in everything was on the United States. It is the main light and idol for the Russian minister. It was not just obsequiousness that caught the eye, but a real obsequiousness to the Americans. If when communicating with other Western colleagues, Kozyrev said the word ‘Yes, sir’ then with American colleagues – ‘Yes, sir’. He really wanted not only to make friends, but also to become related to the United States...”</i> 3. <i>The person of certain views makes it clear to everyone that he does not identify himself with either the history or the future, nor with the problems and achievements of Russia, that is, with anything that worries and interests its true citizens. Here is the collaborator Kozyrev, who was entrusted with the foreign policy of ‘this country’.</i> 4. <i>His large-scale meanness all the time alternates with small-scale meanness, and his large-scale self-serving behavior is accompanied by the penny-pinching of a pickpocket. As they say, he didn’t shy away from anything, and he doesn’t shy away from anything, he’s ready to do anything for the sake of profit”.</i> 	<p>A. Sobchak²⁹:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“He brought only his experience of emotional demagoguery to real management.... He behaved shamefully. But this allowed him to take a prominent place in the growing pseudo-democratic wave.... Sobchak was naturally driven by a desire for publicity, a desire to present himself as effectively as possible in any case and situation, so as not to miss the chance to make a favorable impression. He was constantly looking for an opportunity to show off in connection with any rumored causes....</i> 2. <i>I do not have detailed information about how much Mr Sobchak enriched himself while working in Saint Petersburg government, and hardly anyone else besides his family has such information in full. But even from the information that has penetrated the media, it is clear that he was constantly concerned about this....</i> 3. <i>Arrogance and conceit, the ability to distort or lie without blushing, disrespect for the interlocutor and their opinion if it differs from his own, confidence in his messianic destiny and the absolute correctness of his policy, and finally, the complete conviction that there are no means that would not justify their goal – this is the true characteristics of poseurs, which Sobchak worthily represents”.</i> 	<p>B. Yeltsin³⁰:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“Like Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin betrayed the cause he served, rising to high party and government posts. He betrayed the cause and then sided with those for whom our Homeland was an ‘evil empire’.</i> 2. <i>I call his favorite methods of leadership ostentatious reprisals under the guise of ‘integrity’. In fact, it was not integrity, but the unbridled capriciousness of a boss intoxicated with power. He ruthlessly and ‘colorfully’, just to show off, dealt with those leaders of cities and districts whom he did not like for some reason.</i> 3. <i>A confirmed careerist Yeltsin went out of his way to please Gorbachev, who turned out to be his boss.</i> 4. <i>Mr Yeltsin started rising to power precisely with the help of calculated hypocrisy, portraying a true democrat and patriot.</i> 5. <i>All his, if I may say so, opposition activities were essentially reduced to spurring the process of the collapse of the country, which Gorbachev unleashed.</i> 6. <i>Lies permeated his entire ascent and subsequent reign. After all, Yeltsin and his entourage did not say that they intended to put the country on the rails of capitalism, completely rejecting socialist achievements, experience and prospects. There was an incredible deception of the people in terms of casuistry and scale”.</i>
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²⁷ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). This Kozyrev played other people’s trump cards. *Pravda*, 40(31243), April 15–18.

²⁸ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Do many remember who Burbulis was? *Pravda*, 28(31231), March 18–21.

²⁹ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2021). Sobchak is a narcissistic blabbermouth and poser. *Pravda*, 114(31174), October 15–18.

³⁰ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2021). He became a murderer of his country. *Pravda*, 108(31168), October 1–4.

<p>G. Burbulis³¹:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "As for Gennady Burbulis, it seems that long before the Belovezha collusion, the idea of liquidating the USSR was maturing in his head... he was among those who persistently advised Yeltsin to get rid of the USSR, not to consider questions about its preservation, improvement or transformation..." 2. His career path very clearly shows how during the troubled period of the breakdown of Soviet life there emerged all kinds of adventurers, seekers of fame and money, who did not have a penny of real, business value. But they all came forward, impudently claimed something, and many obtained desirable positions.... 3. He revels in himself! He calls his activities heroic, especially in the fall of 1991. They say that the country was on the verge of famine, and he, Burbulis, was saving it... However, no matter how heroically he portrayed himself, soon enough it became clear to almost everyone in his entourage, including Yeltsin, that fuss was not a sign of skillful management". 	<p>E. Gaidar³²:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The main direction of economic reforms was determined by the 'shock therapy' proposed by Gaidar and Chubais. Its essence is the lightning-fast implementation of fundamental transformations in the economy according to the principles of market fundamentalism, the destruction in a short time of all elements of the former socialist industrial relations, the rejection of Soviet labor values and moral principles. Their attitude is to act quickly, decisively and absolutely ruthlessly to achieve their own goals... At the same time, the people were considered only as an object of ideological and political influence, an obedient 'gray mass'. 2. The direct robbery of the people in the form of 'price holidays' was complemented by the devaluation of the savings of the population, the 'pulverization' of deposits in Sberbank, where people's long-term monetary savings were stored ... something happened that could not help but happen. The main problem for the people from this 'reform' was that the Russian liberals 'surrendered' the domestic market to Western competitors. 3. Under Gaidar, our country was constantly in the position of a supplicant, with an outstretched hand ... The blow of the so-called market reforms significantly exceeded our losses during the Great Patriotic War. And the consequences have not been overcome so far". 	<p>B. Nemtsov³³:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "He took on various jobs in his positions, but he didn't succeed, he didn't finish anything. However, he was able to make a lot of noise — in fact, with his claims to importance. He remained, to sum up his life, an empty flower, a narcissist who finds satisfaction in admiring himself.. 2. The abundance of endeavors, which were promoted in all sorts of ways in countless interviews and articles, exceeded all possible boundaries.... And with the 'fruits' it was much worse. The bottom line is this: all these 'initiatives' and attempts to implement them were dominated by comrades in the fight against the former regime. They were very good at criticizing him, but they couldn't do anything useful. And therefore, the proclaimed initiatives failed one after another, without achieving at least some useful results. 3. Nemtsov really liked when he was called Mr Yeltsin's favorite: they say, it was Yeltsin who identified him as the first candidate for the main place in the country's leadership". 	<p>O. Kalugin³⁴:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "His cunning, dexterity, and the art of mimicry were outstanding. In the most sensitive situations, he was able to build an alibi for himself, regardless of the fact that he sometimes scuppered other, innocent people. He didn't stop even when someone's life had to be taken away for the sake of his own well-being.... 2. There is reason to believe that it was then [1958–1959] that their connection with the American special services arose. And although not everything can be confirmed with documents, an analysis of those circumstances, as well as the subsequent behavior of Yakovlev and Kalugin, highlights the true background of their actions... 3. He always spoke out taking into account what is beneficial or unprofitable for him now. He was keeping his mercantile interest firmly in mind; this is inherent in all these werewolves. They were actually being sold, and the money was carefully calculated".
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³¹ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Do many remember who Burbulis was? *Pravda*, 28(31231), March 18–21.

³² Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). "Shock therapist" Gaidar acted firmly and mercilessly. *Pravda*, 20(31223), February 25–28.

³³ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). The Nemtsov outdid Khlestakov himself. *Pravda*, 132(31335), November 25–28.

³⁴ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2022). Insidious knife in the back of state security. *Pravda*, 106(31309), September 23–26.

1. **“...we did offer every option to our Western partners, as I used to call them, we thought we were one of them, we wanted to be in the family of so-called civilized nations.**

I reached out to NATO suggesting that we look into that possibility, but we were quickly shown the door; they didn't even bother to consider it”³⁵.

2. **“I have said this publicly to both our allies and partners. There was a moment when I simply suggested: perhaps we should also join NATO? But no, NATO does not need a country like ours”³⁶.**

3. **“...I've said it publicly, I can reiterate. At a meeting here in the Kremlin with the outgoing President Bill Clinton, right here in the next room, I said to him, I asked him, ‘Bill, do you think if Russia asked to join NATO, do you think it would happen?’ Suddenly he said: ‘You know, it's interesting, I think yes’. But in the evening, when we had dinner, he said, ‘You know, I've talked to my team, no-no, it's not possible now... I asked the question, ‘Is it possible or not?’ And the answer I got was no... If he had said yes, the process of rapprochement would have commenced, and eventually it might have happened if we had seen some sincere desire on the part of our partners. But it didn't happen”³⁷.**

We should note that Vladimir Putin at the beginning of his first presidency repeatedly made attempts to “integrate” Russia into the family of so-called civilizational peoples. He has spoken about this publicly more than once. This is also evidenced by the fact that, in principle, he was able to lead the country in conditions of a completely liberal state and the total superiority of pro-Western elites in the public administration system.

As experts have noted, **“if in our recent history one is to look for a period of truly serious and persistent efforts to fit Russia into a Western-centric model, it is the early years of Putin's presidency”³⁸.**

“At the end of 1999, the Russian Federation was a weak country in crisis, which, as it seemed to many at the time, was facing the second and final phase of its disintegration. The first phase took place in 1991, when 15 countries, including the Russian Federation, emerged instead of a large historical Russia... This country, governed by a coalition of oligarchs and a confused, weak bureaucracy, had no coherent foreign policy – and could not have... What Boris Yeltsin handed to Putin was a weak Russia that had lost not only almost all of its positions in the world, but also, even more terrifyingly, respect”³⁹.

³⁵ Vladimir Putin's meeting with war correspondents on June 13, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/71391/videos>

³⁶ Vladimir Putin's speech at the Valdai International Discussion Club meeting on October 5, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/72444>

³⁷ Vladimir Putin's interview to Tucker Carlson on February 9, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411>

³⁸ Lukyanov F. Why was Putin disappointed in the Western way for the Russian Federation: An interview to the newspaper *Argumenty i fakty*. Available at: https://dzen.ru/a/Y_d-SiCGcVQwnb5p?ysclid=m702szl12q812452364

³⁹ Akopov V. (2017). Vladimir Putin's world order. In: Russian Federal publication “Gross Domestic Product (GDP)”. No. 102. P. 36. Available at: <https://xn--b1aa3b.xn--p1ai/magazine/vvp102.html?EID=28911>

At the same time, it is also necessary to understand the general situation (in the country, in the government) in which Vladimir Putin began his presidential activity. It was a time of active struggle against the "semibankirschina"⁴⁰ and the ongoing Chechen war, the cessation of which was **the primary**

condition for the preservation of Russian statehood and the main thing that the President focused on.

However, "starting as a Western-oriented politician, the President gradually became disillusioned with this path for Russia"⁴². Rather, he was not just "disappointed", but he realized that **the West needs Russia only in the form of a colony** (in particular, this was openly stated by U.S. President B. Clinton, voicing the strategy of U.S. foreign policy toward Russia).

Vladimir Putin: "In 2000, after I was elected President, I will always remember what I faced: I will remember the price we paid for destroying the den of terrorism in the North Caucasus, which the West almost openly supported at the time... after the situation had stabilized, when the main terrorist gangs had been defeated, including thanks to the bravery of the Chechen people, we decided not to turn back, not to play the offended, but to move forward, to build relations even with those who actually acted against us, to establish and develop relations with all who wanted them, based on mutual benefit and respect for one another. **We thought it was in everyone's interest...**"⁴¹

Vladimir Putin (2022): "The West managed to grab hold of Russia's wealth only in the late 20th century, when the state had been destroyed. They called us friends and partners, **but they treated us like a colony**"⁴³.

"The so-called West, with its colonial habits and its habit of fomenting national conflicts around the world, seeks not only to restrain our development; **instead of Russia, they need a dependent, fading, dying space where they can do anything**"⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ "Semibankirschina – seven oligarchs whom the team of former President Boris Yeltsin 'relied on':

1. Vladimir Potanin (ONEXIM Bank),
2. Vladimir Gusinsky (Bridge Bank),
3. Mikhail Khodorkovsky* (MENATEP),
4. Pyotr Aven (Alfa-Bank),
5. Mikhail Fridman (Alfa-Bank),
6. Alexander Smolensky (Capital Savings Bank, since 1997 – SBS-Agro),
7. Boris Berezovsky (United Bank).

A number of media outlets also included Vladimir Vinogradov (Inkombank) and Vitaly Malkin (Russian Credit) in the semibankirschina (source: <https://ria.ru/20111108/483944714.html>).

According to B. Berezovsky (as follows from his interview with the Financial Times on November 1, 1996), these seven people "controlled more than 50% of the Russian economy and jointly influenced the adoption of the most important domestic political decisions in Russia".

February 28, 2000, at a meeting with trusted officials, Vladimir Putin announced that "all participants in the game, both on the political stage of the country and in the economy, should be placed on absolutely equal terms so that no one could gain any advantages by approaching power from the left or the right". After that, the most notorious representatives of the semibankirschina were either arrested or forced to leave the country.

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

⁴¹ Putin. Valdai 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/69695>

⁴² Lukyanov F. Why was Putin disappointed in the Western way for the Russian Federation: An interview to the newspaper *Argumenty i fakty*. Available at: https://dzen.ru/a/Y_d-SiCGcVQwnb5p?ysclid=m702szl12q812452364

⁴³ Vladimir Putin's speech at the ceremony for signing the treaties on the accession of the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republic, the Zaporozhye Region and the Kherson Region to the Russian Federation, September 30, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/speeches/69465>

⁴⁴ Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on February 29, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73585>

**Excerpt from a speech by U.S. President Bill Clinton at a secret meeting
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 24, 1995⁴⁵:**

“Over the past ten years, our policy toward the USSR and its allies has convincingly proved the correctness of our course towards eliminating one of the strongest powers in the world, as well as the strongest military bloc. **Using the blunders of Soviet diplomacy, the extreme arrogance of Gorbachev and his entourage, including those who openly took a pro-American position,** we achieved what President Truman was going to do to the Soviets with the atomic bomb. However, with one significant difference – **we received a raw material appendage, and not a state destroyed by an atom**”.

“Granted, **we have spent many billions of dollars on this,** and we are already close to what Russians call self-sufficiency. **In four years, we and our allies have received fifteen billion dollars worth of various strategic raw materials, hundreds of tons of silver, gold, precious stones, etc. For non-existent projects, over twenty thousand tons of aluminum, two thousand tons of cesium, beryllium, strontium, etc.** have been transferred to us for negligible amounts. Many of our military and businessmen did not believe in the success of the upcoming operations. And in vain. **By shaking the ideological foundations of the USSR, we managed to bloodlessly bring out of the war for world domination a state that is America’s main competitor...**”

“In the next decade, the following problems will have to be solved: **the dismemberment of Russia into small states through inter-regional wars,** similar to those organized in Yugoslavia; **the final collapse of the Russian military-industrial complex and the army; the establishment of regimes in the republics that broke away from Russia, which we need**”.

The West will not tolerate a strong, sovereign Russia and will do everything to preserve its “vassal” position. And, in fact, all stages of Vladimir Putin’s presidential activity represented **a single process of strengthening the national sovereignty of the country after he realized this fact.**

“The West has overlooked the main thing – the Russian president has decided to turn away from the West **by virtue of his own ideas,** to turn Russia away from the West **conceptually and ideologically**”⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Karaulov A.* Bill Clinton’s report on how the U.S. plundered Russia’s resources in the 1990s. Available at: https://ruskline.ru/video/2019/aprel/20/doklad_billa_klintona_o_tom_kak_ssha_razvorovyvali_resursy_rossii_v_90h/

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

⁴⁶ Remchukov K. What we will have after the talks between Trump and Putin. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-02-02/1_9183_negotiation.html

**KEY CHALLENGES FACING VLADIMIR PUTIN
AT ALL STAGES OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL TERMS⁴⁷:**

"During Vladimir Putin's first premiership and first presidency (1999–2004), the main challenge for him was the preservation of the Russian state and the formation of a capable centralized administrative apparatus in opposition to supporters of the oligarchic model and terrorist attacks. At the same time, in foreign policy, the Russian elites tried to implement a strategy of joining a recognized club of world powers **on their own terms**".

"Putin's second presidential term (2004–2008) was a period of intra-elite consolidation, the greatest economic success and at the same time **increasing tension in relations with the West** against the background of a series of 'color revolutions' around the perimeter of the country, the expansion of NATO to the East, which **led first to a public crisis in relations (2007 Munich Speech), and then and to the Russian-Georgian war (2008)**".

"The power tandem of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev (2008–2012) became a time of searching for a new model of the country's development and its role in the global world order. Among other things, options were being explored for a 'reset' of relations with the Collective West, including the United States, combined with modernization aimed at further integration into the global market, or the sovereignization of the political and economic system. A combination of factors prompted the choice of the second option and the return to the presidency of Vladimir Putin as its author. **These include the global financial crisis, a series of coups in the East under the general brand of the Arab Spring, the violent overthrow of the regime in Libya and the chaos that followed in that country.** Putin's team was convinced of the correctness of the decision they had made because then the mass unrest in Russia in 2011–2012 followed, which caused the **deepest distrust of Putin's team in the Western-oriented part of the Russian elite**".

"Nevertheless, Putin began his third presidential term (2012–2018) not with foreign policy activity, but with a large-scale social reversal, expressed in the so-called May decrees. **However, the 2014 Euromaidan forced them to focus on responding to a full-scale external challenge**".

"By the beginning of Putin's fourth term (2018–2024), when it seemed that the unfavorable foreign policy environment had stabilized, the challenge of updating the system and a certain voter fatigue became key. And the 2024 campaign took place in a **hot phase of conflict with the West and its proxies**".

Vladimir Putin's fifth presidential term (2024 – present): "In his speeches delivered to the public, to the elite, Vladimir Putin adheres to the organic non-verbal image of a "Warrior Ruler", showing that he does not so much intend to destroy the existing system of international relations, as to modernize it and make it more fair...

In domestic politics, every year Vladimir Putin acquires completely new features of the archetypal image of a "**Creator**" – a person who creates a new world order in which Russia will have a completely new role, and creates new rules of the game within the country and a new elite.... It was the actions of Russia and its leader that exposed the contradictions that had accumulated over the years in the old world order".

⁴⁷ Dynamics of Vladimir Putin's image: From a Warrior to a Ruler-Creator: Report. Minchenko Consulting. October 2024. P. 3.

The above excerpts from the Minchenko Consulting report allow us to say that the challenges and threats to national security that Vladimir Putin had to face throughout his presidential terms were numerous. They emerged **consistently, systematically and were of a complex nature**, manifesting themselves not only in the international political arena, but also inside the country through the activities of the “fifth” and “sixth” columns closely linked to the West (organizationally, financially, ideologically)⁴⁸. Moreover, many (if not most) of these challenges were created by the hands of the West itself, quite logically following its officially stated strategic goal in foreign policy – to contain Russia’s development⁴⁹.

The West’s unwillingness to build relations with Russia as a full-fledged sovereign partner, and the ability to see it only as a colony that has resigned itself to this geopolitical status, has predetermined the nature of relations between the two countries over the past 25 years. In this historical context, it is quite understandable why the SMO, which was originally launched as a means to “*protect people, first of all, to protect Russia itself from those*

threats that are emerging on the territories adjacent to us that had been our own throughout the history”⁵⁰, has ultimately become a mechanism and a tool for comprehensive transformation of the country: without internal changes it is impossible to get out of the “liberal fog”. Therefore, in the internal life of our country against the background of the SMO certain changes are taking place in very important and key areas: legislation, value orientations, education of the younger generations, etc.

“What are we fighting for? Is it only for the lands that were torn away from the Russian world and the humiliated brothers? Of course, not only for that. **The front of the SMO, while it is operating, generates a second front within Russia, the front of self-purification. And this battle, no less important for our fate, is taking place in the depths of Russia, in its capitals...**

The main result of the SMO, the main task within Russia, is the renewal of the elites, moving away from cronyism to its service class people type”⁵¹.

⁴⁸ “The ‘fifth’ column is ‘radical anti-state figures; a number of media and hotel figures who have the status of foreign agents. The ‘sixth’ column is ‘liberals and Westerners who occupy a high position in the state – in the hierarchy, government, economy. They are no better than the fifth column. They also consider Russia a periphery of Western civilization, also despise the people and the state, are as cynical about Russian history and can’t wait to return to the blessed 1990s” (Source: Dugin A. The sixth column in power is not comparable to the Russian future. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/21721?ysclid=m7068c70fp389721203>).

⁴⁹ Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) – a U.S. federal law imposing additional sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia. The law was approved by the 115th U.S. Congress, by a 98 to 2 vote in U.S. Senate, and signed into law on August 2, 2017 by U.S. President D. Trump.

⁵⁰ V. Putin. Meeting with students as part of a visit to the Lomonosov cluster of the MSU Innovation Science and Technology Center “Vorobyovy Gory”, January 25, 2023. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1460034/2023-01-25/putin-nazval-tceliu-svo-zashchitu-rossii-i-grazhdan-strany>

⁵¹ Averyanov A. What we are fighting for. To the 10th anniversary of the Russian Spring. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/25702?ysclid=lx4fa2xie1532116915>

The size of the country's territory and population are changing. Russia's area with the new territories⁵² within their boundaries from February 2022 increased by 108 thousand square kilometers⁵³; "the projected population in the new constituent entities of Russia as of January 1, 2024 was determined to be 3,227,429 people"⁵⁴. These data were published in the draft budget of the Federal Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund for 2024 and for the planning period of 2025 and 2026⁵⁵.

Russian legislation is changing. The changes affect the very foundation of the Russian state and society: language, culture, system of values, quality of younger generations, foundations of Russia's position in the international arena, and so on⁵⁶.

Moreover, the format of this paper does not allow us to provide information on all the regular, daily management decisions aimed at supporting SMO participants and their families; socio-economic support of the general population (primarily families with children); fighting against foreign agents; strengthening the Russian economy under sanctions and many other important areas (we have been monitoring them since June 2022, i.e. more than two years already)⁵⁷; Insert 2 shows the data from the next round for the period December 18, 2024 through February 13, 2025).

⁵² Federal constitutional laws on the admission to the Russian Federation and the formation of new constituent entities within the Russian Federation – the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, Zaporozhye Region, Kherson Region – were signed by the President of the Russian Federation on October 5, 2022.

⁵³ Shaipova M. One for all: Russia admitted new territories. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1403643/maria-shaipova/odna-dlia-vsekh-rossiia-priniala-novye-territorii>

⁵⁴ The authorities for the first time named the number of Russians in the new regions. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/29/09/2023/6516e5449a79477c35e5f12d?ysclid=m6qh805sid422551338>

⁵⁵ Legislative support system. Draft Law 4448556-8 "On the budget of the Federal Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund for 2024 and for the planning period of 2025 and 2026". Available at: <https://sozd.duma.gov.ru/bill/448556-8>

⁵⁶ See, for example:

- ✓ Federal Law 255, dated July 14, 2022 "On control over the activities of persons under foreign influence",
- ✓ Presidential Decree 809, dated November 9, 2022 "On approval of the principles of state policy for preserving and strengthening traditional Russian spiritual and moral values",
- ✓ Presidential Decree 229, dated March 31, 2023 "On approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation",
- ✓ Presidential Decree 314, dated May 8, 2024 "On approval of the fundamentals of state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of historical education", etc.

⁵⁷ 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.

Insert 2

The monitoring of regulatory legal acts (laws, decrees) signed by the RF President in the period from December 18, 2024 to February 13, 2025⁵⁸

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

December 26 – Federal Law “On Amendments to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation”. Amendments have been made to the Labor Code, providing for the extension of labor guarantees established for members of the SMO to employees sent to serve in the Rosgvardiya under mobilization.

December 28 – Federal Law “On Amendments to Article 331 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation”. Criminal liability is provided for the commission of crimes against military service by citizens staying in volunteer formations.

December 28 – Federal Law 510 “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation”. Criminal liability is established for assisting the enemy in activities deliberately directed against the security of the Russian Federation, the jurisdiction of a criminal case on such a crime is determined, and confiscation of property obtained as a result of the commission of this crime is provided. The concepts of “enemy” and “defecting to the enemy’s side” are being clarified, as well as the grounds for exemption from criminal liability for committing a number of crimes against the foundations of the constitutional order and the security of the state.

December 28 – Federal Law 514 “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation”. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation has been amended to increase penalties in the form of imprisonment for involving minors in crimes or antisocial acts. Increased responsibility is provided for such acts in cases where they are committed using information and telecommunication networks, in relation to two or more minors, or in relation to a person under the age of 14.

February 13 – Federal Law 8 “On Amendments to Article 1 of the Federal Law ‘On Suspension of the Second Part of Article 43 of the Law of the Russian Federation, ‘On Pension Provision for Persons who have Served in 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 the Bodies of the Penal Enforcement System, the Troops of the National Guard of the Russian Federation, the Bodies of Compulsory Execution of the Russian Federation, and Their Families’”. It is established that the amount of monetary allowance taken into account when calculating the pensions of persons who have served in the military, service in the 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 enforcement system, the troops of the National Guard of Russia, enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation, and their families Starting from January 1, 2025, it amounts to 93.59 percent of the amount of the specified monetary allowance. This change will make it possible to increase the pension amount for these individuals by 9.5% from January 1, 2025 (relative to the pension amount as of January 1, 2024).

⁵⁸ 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 (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).

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

December 27 – Decree 1120 “Issues of the Interdepartmental Commission on Historical Education”. A new Regulation on the Interdepartmental Commission for Historical Education has been approved. The Interdepartmental Commission on Historical Education is a coordinating and advisory body under the President, formed in order to coordinate the work of subjects of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of historical education aimed at the implementation of this policy. The tasks of the interdepartmental commission and its powers have been adjusted. The composition of the Interdepartmental Commission on Historical Education and the composition of its presidium have been approved.

December 28 – Federal Law 520 “On Amendments to the Federal Law on Control over the Activities of Persons under Foreign Influence”. A special procedure is being introduced for foreign agents to receive funds from the alienation and leasing of real estate and vehicles, remuneration and other payments in connection with the alienation or use of the exclusive right to a result of intellectual activity or a means of individualization, as well as income in the form of interest on deposits (account balances) in banks, income from equity participation in organizations. A foreign agent has the right to receive these incomes only by crediting them to a special ruble account, which is opened with an authorized bank and the regime of which is established by a decision of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. A foreign agent is obliged to inform their counterparties about the availability of this status for obligations providing for the payment of these incomes. Information about the details of a special ruble account is included in the register of foreign agents and posted on the official website of the authorized body.

December 28 – Federal Law 501 “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation”. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation has been amended to strengthen criminal liability for involving minors in committing crimes or antisocial acts (alcohol and intoxicating substances, vagrancy and begging) committed: – using the Internet; – in relation to two or more minors; – in relation to a person under the age of 14. We are talking about the criminal liability of adults.

December 28 – Federal Law 506 “On the Russian Academy of Sciences, Reorganization of State Academies of Sciences and Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. The role of the Board of Trustees in the RAS management system is consolidated. The Board of Trustees of the Russian Academy of Sciences will consider issues related to the promotion of the most important scientific achievements and the use of the results of strategically significant scientific research ... the Board of Trustees of the Russian Academy of Sciences also includes organizational issues related to the activities of the Academy. The Board of Trustees of the Russian Academy of Sciences is headed by the President of the Russian Federation, who forms the composition of the Board, taking into account the proposals of the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

December 28 – Federal Law 517 “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. Foreigners will no longer be able to obtain the status of a native speaker of the Russian language and related preferences (previously, having confirmed this status, they could apply for a residence permit (residence permit) and citizenship of the Russian Federation).

For persons with relatives in a direct ascending line who were born or permanently resided in the territory belonging to the Russian Empire or the USSR (within the border of the Russian Federation), a simplified procedure for issuing a residence permit is provided. The deadlines for obtaining a residence permit by qualified specialists have been adjusted. They can only apply for a residence permit, and simplified citizenship is not provided for them.

Persons who voluntarily renounce Russian citizenship will be able to stay in Russia for 90 days. They can obtain a residence permit in a simplified manner. Those who have lost their citizenship due to submitting forged, forged or invalid documents, as well as because they knowingly provided false information on the basis of which citizenship was obtained, will have to leave the country within 15 days. The possibility of obtaining a residence permit for such people is not provided. In addition, foreign citizens or stateless persons whose information is included in the register of controlled entities will not be able to register as individual entrepreneurs.

December 28 – Federal Law 550 “On Amendments to the Federal Law on Youth Policy in the Russian Federation”. The list of main directions of youth policy has been supplemented by such areas as “formation of youth based on traditional Russian spiritual and moral values”, “preservation and strengthening of traditional family values and family lifestyle among youth”, “patriotic and spiritual and moral education of youth”, etc.

December 28 – Decree 1124 “On Approval of the Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation”. The new strategy takes into account the peculiarities of the current political situation. The list of basic concepts of the Strategy is supplemented by “xenophobia” and “Russophobia”. The definition of “financing extremist activities” is included, indicated by both internal and external extremist threats. One of the main sources of threats of extremism for Russia is the widespread spread of the idea of neo-Nazism, which originates from the territory of Ukraine. Among the internal extremist threats, there is also an “unfavorable situation with illegal activities of migrants. It provides for the possibility of involving ‘civil society institutions, including socially oriented non-profit organizations and individuals’ in countering extremism”.

January 16 – Decree 26 “On the Development of Infrastructure to Support Non-Profit Organizations”. In order to develop the infrastructure for supporting non-profit organizations, autonomous non-profit organizations “School of Management of Non-Profit Organizations of the Presidential Grants Foundation” and “Center for the Development of Digital Services of the Presidential Grants Foundation” are being created.

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

December 26 – Federal Law 486 “On Amendments to the Urban Planning Code of the Russian Federation and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. The federal law is aimed at improving the mechanism of integrated territorial development and legal regulation of other urban planning relations. It is envisaged that the implementation of projects for the integrated development of territories should be carried out simultaneously with the development of their social infrastructure. The requirements for the content of standards for urban planning design, construction control, and integrated territorial development are being clarified.

December 26 – Federal Law 494 “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. According to the federal law, certain temporary measures aimed at ensuring the stability of the Russian economy in the face of external sanctions pressure are transferred to the permanent category. In particular, the opportunity to exchange private land plots for state or municipal ones in order to implement large-scale investment projects or accommodate social infrastructure facilities has become indefinite. The regions are allowed to establish cases of preparation of draft general plans of settlements, municipal and urban districts, draft amendments to these plans without holding public discussions or public hearings.

In addition, during the period of the SMO, new forms (elements) of the mechanism of renewal of the ruling elites at all levels of government began to be created. We are talking about the "Time of Heroes" program, which trains new personnel for the system of governance, and the activities of law enforcement agencies (under the leadership of A.R. Belousov, A.V. Bortnikov, A.I. Bastrykin, I.V. Krasnov, etc.) aimed at ousting corrupt officials from the "old" elite, nationalization of large economic assets⁵⁹ and legal assessment of the criminal actions of the elites of the 1990s⁶⁰.

First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration S. Kiriyenko noted: "The program [Time of Heroes] is really working", as evidenced by the growth in the number of applications from participants.

S. Kiriyenko: "People with experience and awards became convinced that the program **really works**, and began to actively apply for participation. The share of the Heroes of Russia relative to those who applied in the first wave of registration **increased by 53.5%** and amounted to 51 people, the share of holders of four Orders of Courage increased **18-fold**, three Orders of Courage – **9-fold**, two Orders of Courage – **47-fold...**"⁶¹

"The total number of applications for the program amounted to **more than 65.5 thousand** ... previously, **22 appointments** were made from among the participants of the first stream of training in the program. Among them: Presidential Plenipotentiary in the Ural Federal District A. Zhoga, head of the Tambov Region E. Pervyshov, head of the Movement of the First A. Orlov, and senator of the Russian Federation A. Kondratiev. A number of other program participants are preparing to move to new jobs. Head of the "Time of Heroes" program M. Kostyuk was appointed acting Governor of the Jewish Autonomous Region"⁶².

⁵⁹ Some examples 2024–2025 (source: Which private companies the prosecutor's office demanded to be handed over to the state. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/business/29/03/2024/64e3a6769a7947634c7c9f53?ysclid=m-70bl305ji348791285>):

- ✓ January 15 – lawsuit by the Prosecutor General's Office to forfeit the shares of the car dealer Rolf to the state (January 15, 2024);
- ✓ March 28 – lawsuit by the Prosecutor General's Office to forfeit the shares of pasta producer Makfa JSC to the state;
- ✓ July 3, 2024 – recognition of the business as an extremist association and seizure of assets of vodka brands "Moskovskaya" and "Stolichnaya" in favor of the state;
- ✓ February 19, 2024 – return of the Ivanovo Heavy Machine-Tool Plant to state ownership;
- ✓ February 7, 2024 – lawsuit filed by the Prosecutor General's Office to transfer ownership of JSC Serov Ferroalloy Plant, JSC Chelyabinsk Electrometallurgical Plant and JSC Kuznetsk Ferroalloys to the state;
- ✓ April 5, 2024 – transfer of Ariant Group assets (including Kuban-Vino, the largest wine producer in Russia) into state ownership;
- ✓ November 12 – nationalization of the Moscow Hotel building, including the five-star Four Seasons Hotel Moscow, the Modny Sezon shopping gallery and a complex of apartments located in the building;
- ✓ November 25 – nationalization of business centers and shopping complexes associated with ex-banker Khotin (27 properties with an area of over 1.5 million square meters, including shopping centers Gorbushkin Dvor, Filion, etc.);
- ✓ January 29, 2025 – the Prosecutor General's Office filed a lawsuit with the Arbitration Court of the Tambov Region against MCD Technologies, a Luxembourg-registered company (the essence of the supervisory agency's claims is not disclosed);
- ✓ January 29, 2025 – a lawsuit filed by the Prosecutor General's Office against Domodedovo Group companies and legal entities related to the airport (the lawsuit was filed after a prosecutor's audit of the privatization of a number of facilities at the airport).

⁶⁰ It is about the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation on October 31, 2024 to remove the statute of limitations on real estate acquired with proceeds of corruption, which, according to lawyers, "gives the right to legalized confiscation of large assets obtained in the 1990s".

⁶¹ Time of Heroes. February 4, 2025. Available at: <https://xn--b1aachba0csne6n.xn--p1ai/news/tpost/gxo1eps891-sredi-uchastnikov-otbora-na-programmu-vr?ysclid=m6t35woxp111493411> (S. Kiriyenko. February 4, 2025. Meeting of the Public Council of the "Time of Heroes" program).

⁶² Ibidem.

Vladimir Putin: “This year [2024], more than three hundred of our comrades-in-arms, veterans of the special military operation, have already received the support of voters in various elections across the country. People trust such candidates, count on their integrity, honesty, professionalism... **the meaning of this request from society is to increase the requirements for the quality and effectiveness of work at all levels of government**, so that municipalities, regional teams, and federal structures include people **for whom a sense of duty and service to society and the country come first...**

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”⁶³.

In addition, on the initiative of the President announced on December 14, 2024 at the 22nd Congress of the All-Russian political party “United

Russia”, programs similar to the “Time of Heroes” are being actively created in all regions of the country.

As experts note, “after Putin’s publicly expressed wish to promote the system of personnel selection from front-line soldiers, a competition began in the regions. In December 2024 no less than two dozen projects appeared, in January the race continued, and in February it should apparently come to a close... Moreover, regional authorities have already begun to create special positions for graduates of their schools for the ‘new elite’”⁶⁴.

However, we should emphasize that so far this mechanism is only at the very beginning, and the tangible results in the form of real renewal of managerial personnel in the country are still quite far away. **In fact, 22 appointments to managerial positions of the first graduates of the “Time of Heroes” program are “a drop in the ocean” against the background of about 759 thousand (according to the data for 2022) managers at all levels of public administration (Tab. 1). And how many years it will take to actually launch a process of elite change in the country is still unknown...**

Table 1. Number of employees in government bodies and local self-government bodies of Russia (end of year), thousand people

Government body	2000	2022	2022 to 2000, %
Federal state bodies at the federal level	38.8	54.2	139.7
State bodies of constituent entities of the Russian Federation	192.8	251.5	130.4
Local self-government bodies and election commissions of municipalities	448.0	453.3	101.2
Total in state government bodies (without territorial subdivisions of federal government bodies in constituent entities of the Russian Federation) and local self-government bodies	679.6	759.0	111.7
Source: Number of employees of state bodies and local self-government bodies by branch of government and level of administration. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Chisl_vetv_vlasti.xls			

⁶³ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the 22nd Congress of the All-Russian political party United Russia, December 14, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75881>

⁶⁴ Garmonenko D. “The time of heroes” has come in almost all regions. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-02-17/3_9194_regions.html?ysclid=m7bg810c18450274323

A brief overview of Russia's withdrawal from the Bologna education system

The Bologna higher education system has been operating in Russia since 2003. However, according to experts, **"over the 20 years of the Bologna process, the goals set by the Bologna process have not been achieved in Russia:** "Russia has not achieved success in terms of automatic unconditional recognition of Russian diplomas and increasing the competitiveness of universities. It is also difficult to enter the international labor market with a Russian diploma... The previously inherent fundamentality of higher education in Russia has been largely lost..."⁶⁵.

In May 2022, the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education has announced its intention to withdraw from the Bologna process and give priority to creating its own education system. V. Falkov, Head of the Ministry said: "The Bologna system should be left behind. The future belongs to our own unique education system, which should be based on the interests of the national economy and the maximum space of opportunities for each student".

A specific political initiative to abolish the Bologna education system came from the President of the Russian Federation. On February 21, 2023, in his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, he proposed returning to the traditional basic training of specialists with higher education in our country.

May 12, 2023 Presidential Decree 343 "On certain issues of improving the higher education system" introduced pilot projects for the transition to a three-stage higher education system (participants in the pilot project were the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, MAI, MISIS, Moscow State University of Economics, St. Petersburg Mining University and Tomsk State University).

According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, the following new levels of education will be introduced in Russia:

- ✓ basic higher education with a period of study from 4 to 6 years (replacing bachelor's and specialty degrees);
- ✓ specialized higher education, including master's degree, residency, and internship programs (duration of study from 1 to 3 years);
- ✓ professional – a new level of education, which includes postgraduate studies.

January 7, 2025, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education announced that "the transition of all Russian universities to the updated higher education system is planned from September 1, 2026. By the specified date, the Ministry will prepare and approve the relevant regulatory legal acts"⁶⁶.

V. Falkov, head of the RF Ministry of Science and Higher Education, noted that "among the principles of work that will be incorporated into the new model is the strengthening of fundamental principles and high-quality practice orientation"⁶⁷. V. Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, pointed out that abandoning the bachelor's degree and switching to a new higher education system is **"the right step toward improving the quality of education"**⁶⁸.

Experts' opinion: "The essence of the Bologna system was unification, that is, all the countries that joined it created a single educational space with the same criteria. In simple words, students who received higher education in Russia could leave for Europe, and their diploma did not lose its value. Thus, graduates of Russian universities could find jobs in Western companies... **Now it will be more difficult to study at universities in Western Europe and the USA**, and it will be difficult to verify a Russian specialist's diploma in Western countries... Among the advantages of the new system, it is worth noting **the focus on the formation of practical skills among students** (especially digital in the light of the development of artificial intelligence systems), more flexible and more responsive to the needs of the modern labor market"⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Tkach N. Moving away from the Bologna system: What will be the new higher school? Available at: https://rapsnews.ru/incident_publication/20230614/308997727.html

⁶⁶ Higher education institutions will switch to a renewed education system in 2026. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20250107/obrazovanie-1992703583.html>

⁶⁷ Girlin A. "Basic higher education" instead of bachelor's degree: How education will change in Russia. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2025/01/07/20347658.shtml>

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

⁶⁹ Beloborodov A. From September 1, 2026 Russia will abandon the Bologna system of higher education: What possible risks there may be. Available at: <https://www.parents.ru/article/s-1-sentyabrya-2026-goda-v-rossii-otkazhuitsya-ot-bolonskoi-sistemy-vysshego-obrazovaniya-chem-eto-grozit-obyasnyact-ekspert/>

Insert 4

Some of the recent decisions made in the field of education

- ✓ According to Federal Law 328-FZ dated **August 8, 2024**, from **March 1, 2025**, an additional list of documentation approved by the Ministry of Education will be introduced for education workers. According to Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko, the law “is aimed at reducing the paper burden. The number of documents will decrease from 48 to 5”⁷⁰.
- ✓ **February 11, 2025**, the State Duma received a bill banning the retraining of teachers in commercial structures. Teachers will be denied the opportunity to purchase new diplomas at low cost.
- ✓ **February 18, 2025**, as part of the discussion of the education development strategy, the deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation unanimously adopted a resolution containing the following proposals⁷¹:
 - the need to develop a set of measures to create a balanced educational and educational burden on students;
 - consolidation of the key role of the teacher in the educational process, digital and distance formats exclusively as auxiliary;
 - creation of favorable conditions for the teacher’s work, including due to a commensurate documentation and educational load;
 - raising the prestige of the teaching profession;
 - development of mechanisms to protect teachers from physical and psychological influences, including on the Internet;
 - the possibility of transferring schools from the municipal to the regional level;
 - formation of a new personnel training system based on the real demand of the market, special attention should be paid to the training of engineers, medical and teaching staff;
 - provision of a new format of primary vocational education, providing training of qualified workers;
 - free training in all working professions;
 - creation of guarantees for the employment of graduates in the acquired profession and specialty;
 - retraining of teaching staff and professional development exclusively in state and municipal organizations.
- ✓ In **March 2025**, the first draft of the Education Strategy until 2030, which has been developed since August 2024, is due to appear.

⁷⁰ Volodin urged not to hide the reality in the education sector. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-02-11/3_9190_reality.html?ysclid=m7ee97i9cz870294915; Unified standards, retraining of teachers, updated USE. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/education/2025-02-12/8_9191_school.html?ysclid=m7ee97i9cz870086303

⁷¹ The State Duma adopted a resolution on the results of the “government hour” devoted to the elaboration of the Strategy for the Development of Education in Russia. Available at: <http://duma.gov.ru/news/60932/>

During the period of the SMO, tangible changes in the system of education and upbringing of the younger generations of Russians finally began to take place. The emergence of the All-Russian Public-State Movement of Children and Youth "Movement of the First"⁷² (July 2022), introduction in Russian schools of a cycle of extracurricular classes "Talking about Important Things" (from September 1, 2022), a unified history textbook (from September 1, 2023), Presidential Decree 314 of May 8, 2024 "On approval of the fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of historical education"⁷³ (which, as A. Dugin noted, was "a radical breakthrough in our historical science and historical education, which until recently had been dominated by Westernism"⁷⁴), abandonment of the Bologna system of education in higher education institutions (from September 1, 2026; *Insert 3*)⁷⁵ and many other decisions taken by the State Duma, the RF Government and the head of state (*Insert 4*) – all this was done in the context of the SMO, and all this will certainly change Russian society toward strengthening national identity based on a deep knowledge of national history and understanding of the real civilizational meanings of geopolitical relations rather than formal, artificially introduced "rules".

In the context of the SMO important changes are taking place in the public consciousness of the majority of citizens. This is evidenced by the results of multi-year monitoring studies, including for the last 3 years:

1. In 2022–2024 there was a steady positive trend in the share of people who believe that the head of state is successfully handling challenging issues in the country (*Insert 5.1; Tab. 2*), such as:

- ✓ strengthening international positions (5 p.p. growth, from 47 to 52% in 2022–2024);
- ✓ imposing order (9 p.p. growth, from 41 to 50%);
- ✓ protecting democracy (12 p.p. growth, from 33 to 45%);
- ✓ economic recovery, growth of citizens' welfare (13 p.p. growth, from 26 to 39%).

In 2024, their proportion reached the maximum value for the entire period of measurement, starting from 2000, which indicates the growing support of the majority of the population not only for foreign, but also for the internal policy of the President. As we said at the very beginning of the paper (referring to the data from Minchenko Consulting), the image of Putin as a "Creator" is not only "his own perceptions of himself", **but also "a reflection of the expectations and hopes of the majority of the population"**⁷⁶.

Table 2. Proportion of people who consider the RF President's actions to address key problems of the country as successful, % of respondents

Key problem	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-)
Strengthening Russia's international positions	46.6	52.4	+5
Imposing order in the country	40.7	49.7	+9
Protecting democracy, strengthening citizens' freedoms	33.3	44.9	+12
Economic recovery, growth of citizens' welfare	26.0	39.0	+13
TOTAL number of positive / negative changes			4/0
Wording of the question: "How successfully, in your opinion, does the President of the Russian Federation cope with the problems...?"; the question has been asked since 2000.			

⁷² Federal Law 261-FZ "On the Russian Movement of Children and Youth", dated July 14, 2022.

⁷³ <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73986>

⁷⁴ Dugin A. Public enlightenment by Russian history. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/prosveshenie_obshestva_russkoj_istoriej?ysclid=lx2yh660gu546017827

⁷⁵ Higher education institutions will switch to a renewed education system in 2026. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20250107/obrazovanie-1992703583.html>

⁷⁶ Dynamics of Vladimir Putin's image: From a Warrior to a Ruler-Creator: Report. Minchenko Consulting. October 2024. 23 p. Available at: https://minchenko.ru/news/news_235.html

2. During the period of the SMO (2022–2024), the share of those who believe that modern Russian society is organized fairly (*Insert 5.2; Tab. 3*) has for the first time acquired a stable trend. In 2024, their share was **the highest for the period from 2015 to 2024 (28%)**.

Of course, we should note that the share of those who hold the opposite point of view is still much larger (51%), but over the three years of the SMO it has decreased (by 9 p.p., from 60% in 2021 to 51% in 2024), while the e of proportion of those who believe that modern Russian

society is sooner fair has increased (by 11 p.p., from 17 to 28%).

3. Since 2022, **for the first time in the measurement period (since 2011)**, the dynamics of growth in the share of those who note that Russian society is becoming “more united”, that there is more “agreement” rather than “disunity” has acquired a stable trend (*Insert 5.3; Tab. 4*). Over the last three years (2022–2024), the proportion of those who share this opinion has increased by 10 p.p. (from 27 to 37%), while the proportion of those who hold the opposite viewpoint decreased by 6 p.p. (from 43 to 37%).

Table 3. Proportion of those who believe that modern Russian society is organized fairly, % of respondents

Population group	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex			
Men	16.1	27.5	+11
Women	18.0	27.7	+10
Age			
Under 30	17.1	28.1	+11
30–55	16.8	27.4	+11
Over 55	17.5	27.7	+10
Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	12.6	22.6	+10
Secondary vocational	19.4	30.0	+11
Higher	18.9	30.1	+11
Income group			
Bottom 20%	20.2	23.1	+3
Middle 60%	15.5	27.0	+12
Top 20%	19.7	33.8	+14
Region	17.1	27.6	+11
TOTAL number of positive / negative changes in all groups			13 / 0
Wording of the question: “How would you assess the current state of Russian society: is it organized rather fairly or unfairly?”; the question has been asked since 2015.			

Table 4. Proportion of those who believe that there is more agreement and cohesion than disagreement and disunity in the modern Russian society, % of respondents

Population group	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex			
Men	26.7	34.7	+8
Women	26.9	38.1	+11
Age			
Under 30	25.7	34.9	+9
30–55	27.5	35.4	+8
Over 55	26.4	38.7	+12
Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	20.5	32.9	+12
Secondary vocational	29.9	38.8	+9
Higher	29.9	38.0	+8
Income group			
Bottom 20%	19.9	33.3	+13
Middle 60%	24.1	37.6	+14
Top 20%	34.8	38.6	+4
Region	26.8	36.6	+10
TOTAL number of positive / negative changes in all groups			14 / 0
Wording of the question: “In your opinion, what prevails today: agreement and cohesion or disagreement and disunity in our country?”; the question has been asked since 2015.			

4. In 2022–2024 (also for the first time over the entire period of measurements conducted by VoIRC RAS from 1998 to the present), the trend toward a decrease in the share of people noting the relevance in Russian society of such problems as stratification of the population into rich and poor and social insecurity of citizens has become stable (Insert 5.4: Tab. 5). The latter, by the way, in 2024 showed the

minimum value for the whole period from 1998 to 2024 (16%). In general, in 2022–2024, the share of people noting the urgency of the problem of stratification of the population into the poor and the rich in Russia decreased by 6 p.p. (from 32% in 2021 to 26% in 2024); the proportion of those noting the urgency of the problem of social insecurity of citizens decreased by 7 p.p. (from 22 to 15%).

Table 5. Proportion of those who consider the problem of population stratification into the poor and the rich and the problem of social insecurity of citizens as most urgent issues, % of respondents

Stratification of the population into "poor" and "rich"

Population group	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex			
Men	31.4	24.7	-7
Women	32.3	26.2	-6
Age			
Under 30	28.9	27.8	-1
30–55	31.2	23.0	-8
Over 55	34.0	27.8	-6
Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	33.9	25.6	-8
Secondary vocational	30.6	24.5	-6
Higher	31.5	26.7	-5
Income group			
Bottom 20%	31.3	23.3	-8
Middle 60%	30.9	24.2	-7
Top 20%	31.0	28.7	-2
Region	31.9	25.5	-6
TOTAL number of positive / negative changes in all groups			10 / 0

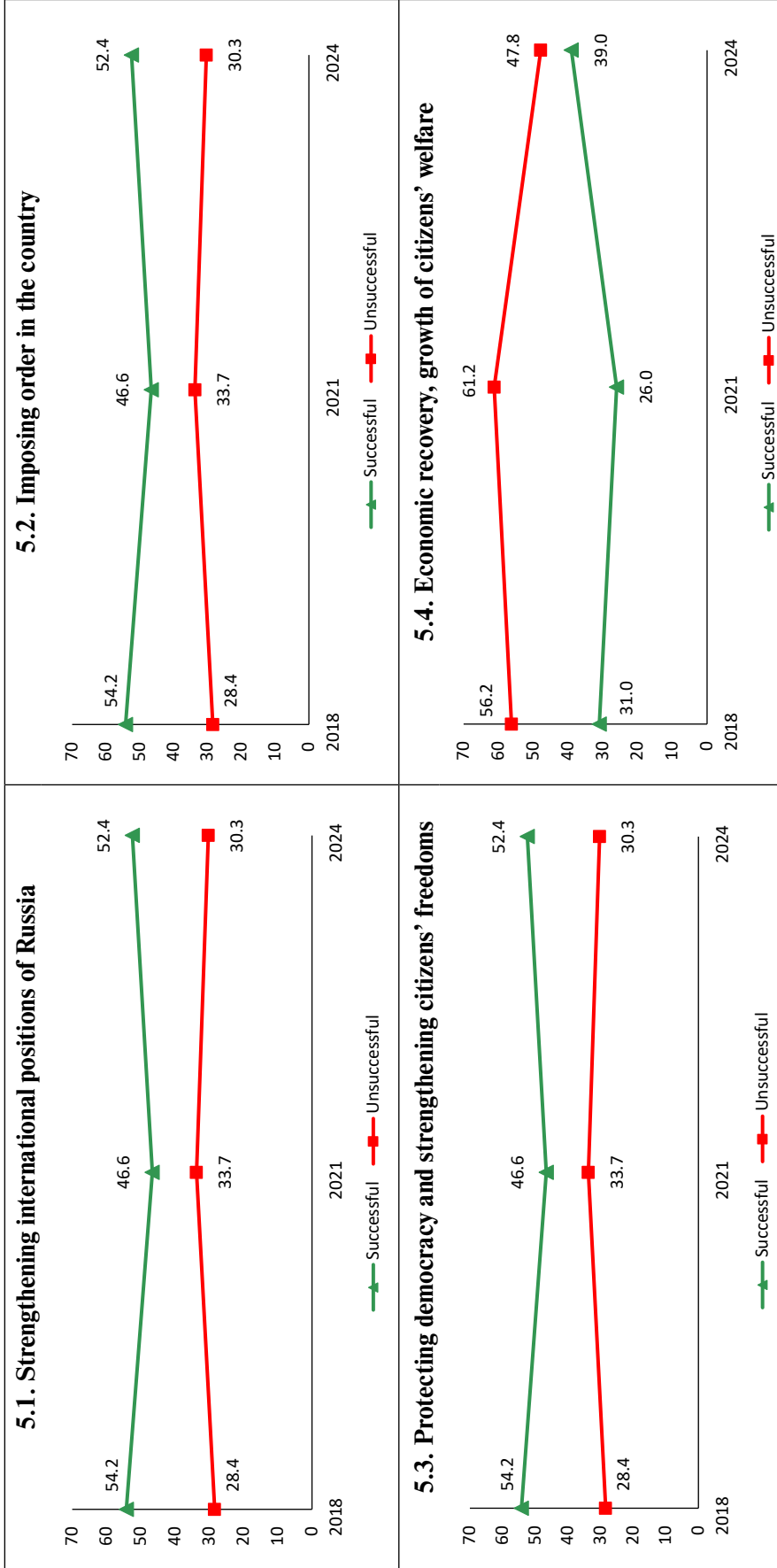
Social insecurity

Population group	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex			
Men	21.5	15.2	-6
Women	22.8	15.9	-7
Age			
Under 30	22.0	13.2	-9
30–55	23.9	15.0	-9
Over 55	20.3	17.2	-3
Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	21.7	15.9	-6
Secondary vocational	22.2	14.6	-8
Higher	22.9	16.4	-7
Income group			
Bottom 20%	17.5	13.4	-4
Middle 60%	22.7	15.9	-7
Top 20%	25.5	16.1	-9
Region	22.3	15.6	-7
TOTAL number of positive / negative changes in all groups			13 / 0

Wording of the question: "What problems of modern life do you consider the most acute for the country as a whole?"; the question has been asked since 1999.

Insert 5.1

Dynamics of the assessment of the success of the Russian President's solution of the country's key problems, % of respondents



Wording of the question: “How successfully, in your opinion, does the President of the Russian Federation cope with the problems...?; the question has been asked since 2000.

Following the results of the three years of the SMO, the share of people who consider the President's actions aimed at solving the country's key problems to be successful reached **the highest value for the entire measurement period (since 2000)**:

- ✓ strengthening international positions (52%);
- ✓ imposing order in the country (50%);
- ✓ protecting democracy (45%);
- ✓ economic recovery, growth of citizens' welfare (39%).

Insert 5.2

Assessment of whether society is fair or unfair by various socio-demographic groups, % of respondents

Population group	Fair			Unfair			Dynamics (+/-), 2024 to 2021	
	2018	2021	2024	2018	2021	2024		
	<i>Sex</i>							
Men	14.3	16.1	27.5	59.7	62.3	51.9	-10	
Women	14.0	18.0	27.7	61.6	58.5	50.3	-8	
	<i>Age</i>							
Under 30	14.8	17.1	28.1	55.5	59.6	51.4	-8	
30–55	13.3	16.8	27.4	62.2	61.2	50.7	-11	
Over 55	14.9	17.5	27.7	61.2	59.3	51.2	-8	
	<i>Education</i>							
Secondary and incomplete secondary	10.0	12.6	22.6	63.7	61.3	55.0	-6	
Secondary vocational	15.7	19.4	30.0	58.5	58.1	48.9	-9	
Higher	16.5	18.9	30.1	60.5	62.1	49.4	-13	
	<i>Income group</i>							
Bottom 20%	10.3	20.2	23.1	56.5	51.0	52.7	+2	
Middle 60%	14.0	15.5	27.0	62.5	63.5	53.2	-10	
Top 20%	21.5	19.7	33.8	58.4	61.4	44.7	-17	
Region	14.2	17.1	27.6	60.7	60.2	51.0	-9	
	TOTAL							
number of positive / negative changes in all groups							number of positive / negative changes in all groups	13 / 0

Wording of the question: "How would you assess the current state of Russian society: is it organized rather fairly or unfairly?"; the question has been asked since 2015.

The share of people who note the fairness of the structure of modern Russian society, over the period from 2021 to 2024 increased by 10–14 p.p. in all major socio-demographic groups (except for the most "vulnerable" category – 20% of the least well-off, where, however, no negative changes are noted: 20–23%).

Insert 5.3

Assessment of the degree of agreement and cohesion in modern Russian society in different socio-demographic groups, % of respondents

Population group	More agreement and cohesion			Dynamics (+/-), 2024 to 2021
	2018	2021	2024	
	Sex			
Men	26.6	26,7	34.7	+8
Women	22.8	26,9	38.1	+11
	Age			
Under 30	25.3	25,7	34.9	+9
30–55	24.7	27,5	35.4	+8
Over 55	24.0	26,4	38.7	+12
	Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	15.7	20,5	32.9	+12
Secondary vocational	25.3	29,9	38.8	+9
Higher	32.9	29,9	38.0	+8
	Income group			
Bottom 20%	18.4	19,9	33.3	+13
Middle 60%	23.6	24,1	37.6	+14
Top 20%	29.5	34,8	38.6	+4
Region	24.5	26,8	36.6	+10
	TOTAL			
	number of positive / negative changes in all groups			14 / 0

Population group	More disagreement and disunity			Dynamics (+/-), 2024 to 2021
	2018	2021	2024	
	Sex			
Men	42.2	44.3	39.6	-5
Women	45.2	41.6	35.1	-7
	Age			
Under 30	41.5	39.4	33.0	-6
30–55	43.9	43.6	39.6	-4
Over 55	45.0	43.2	35.6	-8
	Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	47.5	42.9	34.3	-9
Secondary vocational	42.9	39.9	39.0	-1
Higher	41.3	46.4	38.0	-8
	Income group			
Bottom 20%	46.7	49.8	30.5	-19
Middle 60%	44.2	44.1	37.3	-7
Top 20%	39.5	46.8	42.1	-5
Region	43.9	42.8	37.1	-6
	TOTAL			
	number of positive / negative changes in all groups			13 / 0

Wording of the question: “In your opinion, what prevails today: agreement and cohesion or disagreement and disunity in our country?”; the question has been asked since 2011.

In 2021–2024, the share of those who believe that Russian society is cohesive increased in **all major socio-demographic groups**, especially among people over 55 (by 12 p.p., from 26 to 38%); low- and middle-income groups (by 13–14 p.p., from 20 to 33% and from 24 to 38%, respectively), as well as among people with secondary and incomplete secondary education (by 12 p.p., from 21 to 33%).

Insert 5.4

Assessment of the relevance of the problems of inequality and social vulnerability in different socio-demographic groups, % of respondents

Population group	Stratification of the population into "poor" and "rich"			Social insecurity of citizens			
	2018	2021	2024	2018	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-), 2024 to 2021
Men	36.5	31.4	24.7	20.1	21.5	15.2	-6
Women	35.4	32.3	26.2	19.6	22.8	15.9	-7
Under 30	34.7	28.9	27.8	20.1	22.0	13.2	-9
30–55	34.3	31.2	23.0	20.6	23.9	15.0	-9
Over 55	38.6	34.0	27.8	18.8	20.3	17.2	-3
Secondary and incomplete secondary	35.4	33.9	25.6	18.6	21.7	15.9	-6
Secondary vocational	36.2	30.6	24.5	19.5	22.2	14.6	-8
Higher	35.8	31.5	26.7	21.7	22.9	16.4	-7
Bottom 20%	33.9	31.3	23.3	16.3	17.5	13.4	-4
Middle 60%	37.1	30.9	24.2	18.7	22.7	15.9	-7
Top 20%	34.4	31.0	28.7	25.9	25.5	16.1	-9
Region	35.9	31.9	25.5	19.9	22.3	15.6	-7
TOTAL				number of positive / negative changes in all groups			13 / 0

Population group	Stratification of the population into "poor" and "rich"			Social insecurity of citizens			
	2018	2021	2024	2018	2021	2024	Dynamics (+/-), 2024 to 2021
Men	36.5	31.4	24.7	20.1	21.5	15.2	-6
Women	35.4	32.3	26.2	19.6	22.8	15.9	-7
Under 30	34.7	28.9	27.8	20.1	22.0	13.2	-9
30–55	34.3	31.2	23.0	20.6	23.9	15.0	-9
Over 55	38.6	34.0	27.8	18.8	20.3	17.2	-3
Secondary and incomplete secondary	35.4	33.9	25.6	18.6	21.7	15.9	-6
Secondary vocational	36.2	30.6	24.5	19.5	22.2	14.6	-8
Higher	35.8	31.5	26.7	21.7	22.9	16.4	-7
Bottom 20%	33.9	31.3	23.3	16.3	17.5	13.4	-4
Middle 60%	37.1	30.9	24.2	18.7	22.7	15.9	-7
Top 20%	34.4	31.0	28.7	25.9	25.5	16.1	-9
Region	35.9	31.9	25.5	19.9	22.3	15.6	-7
TOTAL				number of positive / negative changes in all groups			10 / 0

Wording of the question: "What problems of modern life do you consider the most acute for the country as a whole?"; the question has been asked since 1999.

In the context of the main socio-demographic groups, positive changes are also observed in all of them. The share of people noting the relevance of the problems of inequality and social vulnerability of citizens has decreased by about 5–9 p.p. over the three years of the SMO.

Significant changes in the assessment of the problem of inequality are not observed only among representatives of the younger age category (up to 30 years old; 28%) and 20% of high-income (according to self-assessments) strata (29–31%). Also stable are the assessments of people over 55 years of age regarding the relevance of the problem of social insecurity of citizens (17–20%).

T. Voevodina: “Has a new life begun? **It seems to me that a new life is being built, but somehow very cautiously.** Maybe it is necessary, or maybe the leadership does not have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and where certain actions may lead to”⁷⁷.

S. Mikheev: “Eyewashing, imitation, self-interest, as well as the work of foreign intelligence agencies, which somewhere planted disinformation, somewhere had embedded agents and formed an opinion that was convenient for them, somewhere tried to cover up objective information with biased information. Is there a problem with the system here? Absolutely. **Are there changes now...? According to some signs, there are movements, but there is no complete and deep change of the situation. A lot of things have been realized, some things have been changed, including personnel, they have become better at protecting their information, but many diseases still remain.** For example, the desire to always report a beautiful picture to the boss. Say whatever you want, but don't upset the boss. This is rather strange... **It reminds me of a disease or an extremely ingrained wrong tradition**”⁷⁸.

Thus, the data presented in Inserts 5.1–5.4 suggest that the special military operation has a “serious impact on very many areas of life in Russia”⁷⁹. At the same time, we agree with the assessments of analysts who say that “**the construction of a new life is somehow very cautious and tentative**”; “**there is no complete deep change in the situation**” (at least not yet).

Indeed, on the external contour, the prospects for our country are still quite vague, which (judging by the assessments of many experts) concerns both the peaceful settlement of the conflict between Russia and the West and the further “post-war” world order. Even after the beginning of some movement⁸⁰ in the direction of organizing a personal meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, experts note that this “does not mean at all that the Ukrainian problem will be successfully solved soon. The presidents did not discuss the topic of sanctions, recognition of Crimea and four new Russian territories. **There was just a feeling of movement**”⁸¹.

⁷⁷ Voevodina T. “And everything came true and did not come true...”. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/i_vsyo_sbilos_i_ne_sbilos_?ysclid=m71hdjlcud558094712

⁷⁸ Mikheev S. The Soviet period was replaced by the green sickness. Available at: https://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2024/12/28/sovetskii_period_smenilsya_blednoi_nemowyu

⁷⁹ Mostyaev Y.N. (Candidate of Sciences (History), Associate Professor of the Department of General History and International Relations, Yesenin Ryazan State University). Special military operation: Impact on Russia and the world. Available at: <https://ruspolitics.site/wp-content/uploads/2023/02.03.2023-ACROP.pdf?ysclid=m706nc10gz974799613>

⁸⁰ On February 12 and 15, 2025, at the initiative of the U.S. side, the first (since the beginning of the conflict) official telephone conversations between the heads of state of Russia and the United States took place.

On February 18, official talks between delegations from Moscow and Washington took place in Saudi Arabia for the first time since 2021. The Russian delegation was represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov, and head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) K. Dmitriev. The parties discussed the restoration of the whole range of bilateral relations, but, as experts note, “as for the Ukrainian settlement itself, it is too early to talk about any progress” (source: Samuna L., Kostina A. Face-to-face time: What will be discussed at the first meeting of the Russian and U.S. delegations. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1840645/leonid-samuna-anastasiia-kostina/ochnoe-vremya-chto-obsudyat-na-pervoj-vstreche-delegacij-rf-i-ssha>).

⁸¹ Does Putin and Trump's conversation mean peace is near (Editorial). Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2025-02-13/2_9192_red.html

1. *S. Karaganov*: "The Trump administration currently has no serious reason to negotiate with us on the terms that we have set. War is economically beneficial to the United States..."⁸²

2. *K. Remchukov*: "Remaining on the basis of realism, it is impossible to count on achieving long-term and solid peace..."⁸³

3. *R. Ishchenko*: "Until now, the majority of the Russian population naively believes that when the SMO is over, there will be a victorious peace like after the Great Patriotic War. In fact, with the end of the SMO, Russia will only get rid of the need to fight and, if it succeeds, it will be able to return the confrontation with the West to a political, informational and economic format"⁸⁴.

4. *S. Belyaeva*: "Our country is getting rid of excessive dependence on the West, but experts warn that this trend should not turn into a new unilateral dependence on another serious player (China). Russia in its current state is significantly inferior in terms of overall power to both the United States and China"⁸⁵.

A. Svetlov: "It seems that the overwhelming number of decision-makers at the state and upper corporate levels of administration... are living in a permanent and growing 'crisis of complexity', when, trying to react to changes in the old logic they are accustomed to, they are constantly faced with the fact that the time it takes them to analyze and make a decision is comparable to the time when the situation changes so much that the developed solution loses its relevance. It is a situation of gradually increasing catastrophe for them. And as what they perceive as a catastrophe increases, these people will lose their adequacy"⁸⁶.

K. Shakhnazarov: "Russian culture is occupied, they have tightly occupied pop and theater positions and will continue to parasitize. Three years of the SMO have not changed anything"⁸⁷.

But, more importantly, it is too early to talk about any drastic results in terms of "dispelling the liberal fog" inside Russia. There are still many people in our own public administration system

(and those in the highest positions) who have not adapted to the ongoing transformations and dream of "getting everything back to how it was before 2022" (*Insert 6*).

⁸² Karaganov S. Breaking the back of Europe: What Russia's policy toward the West should be. Available at: <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/sloamat-hrebet-evrope-karaganov/?ysclid=m7eei5152u371336419>

⁸³ Remchukov K. What we will have after the talks between Trump and Putin. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-02-02/1_9183_negotiation.html

⁸⁴ Ishchenko R. Geopolitical results of the SMO. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/geopoliticheskie_rezul_tati_svo

⁸⁵ Belyaeva S. Race for leadership. Available at: <https://poisknews.ru/releases/gonka-za-liderstvom/>

⁸⁶ Svetlov A. Historical alternative. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/istoricheskaya_al_ternativa

⁸⁷ Shakhnazarov K. Three years of the SMO did not change anything. Russian culture is occupied. Available at: <https://argumenti.ru/society/2025/01/934231>

Examples of inconsistency of actions of ruling elites with the goals of strengthening national sovereignty

“At the beginning of autumn, when the Central Bank raised the rate and the interest on deposits rose substantially, the explanations and talk that the measures were necessary in order to sterilize the money supply were hilarious...**The current monetary leadership without prompting and clear instructions does not know how to do this, it is not surprising that the Central Bank’s policy turned out to be predictably ineffective and illogical.** The fight against ‘statistical inflation’ started in the summer of 2024, when the surge of late 2023 – early 2024 was exhausted, **cannot be explained within the framework of rational logic.**

The assurances voiced on behalf of the Central Bank, seemingly anonymous, that the deposit freeze is absurd, lack the phrases like ‘so far’, ‘at the moment’, etc... At the current moment the chances are slim: 10–15%, **but as the situation worsens, and the Central Bank is trying hard to make it worse, the probability will increase. Without a change in monetary policy, the situation will spiral out of control, all the ‘permissible’ tools are being tried, but they will not bring results**”⁸⁸.

December 15, 2024 An environmental disaster has occurred in the Kerch Strait due to the rupture of the hulls of two Volgoneft-class oil tankers.

In an interview to the newspaper *Poisk*, RAS Academician V. Babeshko, head of the Research Center for Forecasting and Prevention of Geological and Man-Made Disasters at KubSU, said the following:

“The losses from the Kerch Strait accident are enormous, and a significant part of them is due to disregard for science, our proposals and ideas. As it became obvious, there was considerable confusion at various levels of Rosneft’s management in this emergency situation... At one time, our cooperation with Priazovneft was quite fruitful. We have developed a way to determine what caused the pollution of seawater, to differentiate its sources such as mud volcanoes or offshore oil production...”

*Perhaps the current situation will prompt the management of Rosneft to return to the previously rejected proposals of Kuban State University on the use of the latest mathematical methods obtained only in Russia to create operational high-precision models of the spread and deposition of pollutants in water areas. Moreover, not only in the Black and Azov seas, but also in other areas where both oil transportation routes and oil production sources may be located. Reliable information on the daily atlas of sedimentation and advancement of the oil mass from the December accident (taking into account the transformations of pollutants) would be a good help for developing an optimal strategy for the elimination of the accident and assessing the prospects for self-purification of the sea”*⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ Shkolnikov A. Temperature in the central hospital. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/temperatura_po_tcentral_noj_nitce

⁸⁹ Gromov G. Predictable trouble. Available at: <https://poisknews.ru/releases/predskazuemaya-beda/>

December 20, 2024 – meeting of the State Council dedicated to providing support to families. Here is an excerpt from a speech by Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Yá. Lantratova:

*"A toy is an image that a child grows up with... our popular player who distributes these toys is Mattel, which operates in the United States. **The biggest selling market is Russia.** So, Mattel has created the country's first transgender Barbie doll toy. In 2022, Mattel transferred a million dollars to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and in 2023 it transferred 100 percent of the line of sales of new toys to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine. That is, they sell us alien values, and then they fight against us with this money. And such threats come to children through clothing, music, and other areas"⁹⁰.*

December 27, 2024 – excerpts from an interview with the Chairman of the Council for Children's Books of the Writers' Union of Russia N. Nilov to the newspaper Zavtra:

*"We wanted to understand how a modern children's book works, what happens to it, and what it conveys to young readers. We managed to study 930 books from 186 publishers. Having started by studying the design, circulation and authors, we moved on to the content – **and were horrified, because 62.8% of the children's books we studied turned out to be destructive. With our work, we have shown a front that has so far gone unnoticed. It turned out that on this front there is no protection, no barrier, no one is resisting...***

Through research, we have established that there are five recurring destructive themes. It is important to understand that all of them can be intertwined:

- ✓ the first theme is **betrayal...**;
- ✓ the second theme that can be traced in children's books today: man is an **animal, a humanoid beast...**;
- ✓ the third theme is changing social roles, including the rejection of the 'traditional gender roles' of man and woman...;
- ✓ the fourth theme is **deviance from the norm.** Society has norms, we have to look after ourselves, look a certain way, behave, socialize. Is it necessary to argue with this? But from the books it follows that this is wrong, because you don't have to conform to anything, you just have to be what you want to be...;
- ✓ and finally, the concluding theme, the fifth one – **indifference to the future...** To live, to be friends, to socialize, to meet, to solve some tasks and problems, to strive for something, to achieve something – all this is nonsense, it is not important...

There is a broad and purposeful work on reforming children. It is very important to realize that, in particular, a children's book is a clearly working system of introducing meanings. And all these destructive meanings are introduced through children's literature non-stop, they do not change in any way. No way! These meanings were quietly replicated even before the special military operation, and since 2022 everything has only intensified"⁹¹.

⁹⁰ State Council Meeting on December 20, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75918>

⁹¹ Dubianskaya M. Be vigilant! Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/bud_te_bditel_ni51

January 12, 2025, the newspaper *Zavtra* published an article about V. Yakemenko⁹² (later, on January 31, this story was aired in N. Mikhalkov's program 'Besogon TV'⁹³).

B. Yakemenko is the former head of the Department for Relations with Public Organizations of the Internal Policy Department of the Russian Presidential Administration (2000), founder and leader of the youth movements "Coming Together" and "Nashi" (2000–2013), co-organizer of the annual All-Russian Youth Forum "Seliger" (2005–2014), head of the State Committee for Youth Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh; 2007–2012). Today he lives in Bavaria, where he bought an old house with a mill and a pond with a total area of 50 hectares for 16 million euro.

Excerpts from an interview with V. Yakemenko:

- ✓ *"When I was building the Nashi movement, I was a naive guy from Lubertsy who had seen nothing in his life but drugs and gangsters".*
- ✓ *"It seemed to me that all people were just like me. Well, at the very least, they pretend to be. Crooks. They're just like me. They're just crooks. When scientists came to us and said, 'Do you realize that science is done for the sake of science?', I, as a representative of the government with a budget and the right to distribute, said, 'Keep whistling. You're going to tell us this now so as to get money from us and not do a damn thing'. Because I considered them to be about as much of a crook as I was myself".*
- ✓ *"If I had not realized acutely in my time that I was an absolute degenerate, and a degenerate working in the government, working in the Kremlin, I would never in my life have been able to understand the little that I have understood to date".*
- ✓ *"To me, there is no Russia. To me, there are 140 million people, internally, in my opinion, extremely desperate, lonely and completely without any idea what to hold on to in their ordinary lives".*
- ✓ *"I felt really good. But it was always this — will they or won't they give me a bag of money? — it was poisoning my existence. I was poisoned by the idea that they might not give it to me, and that I had superiors who might not be happy with me.*

⁹² Ivanov A. Yakemenko, who headed youth policy, made a "hell of a lot of money" from it. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/rukovodivshij_molodyozhnoj_politikoj_yakemenko_zarabotal_na_etom_adskoe_kolichestvo_deneg

⁹³ Besogon TV. What threatens the dictatorship of profane? Episode aired January 31, 2025. Available at: <https://besogontv.ru/videos/chem-grozit-diktatura-profanov/>

✓ *[What have you been living on since you left politics?] "I've put aside a hell of a lot of money. Gold. Not diamonds, gold. I sell it from time to time. Saw off a chunk of it and live".*

✓ *[So today what you did back then you don't believe in, you think it doesn't make sense] "Well it does make sense! I made a lot of money. You're talking to me now largely because I had this history behind me. I built myself a house, and not just one house. No, why? It was quite a meaningful endeavor".*

✓ *"I don't believe in any country".*

✓ *"Humanity is 100 smart people and the rest are Pavlov's dogs".*

✓ *"I never read a book until I was kicked out of government".*

✓ *"It's all about making money".*

Experts' comments:

A. Dugin: *"How could the Kremlin... rely for so long on such cynical globalist thieves? Who, I wonder, got them at all, dressed them up and elevated them to the heights of power...? This is a direct humiliation of the President, the people and all those who gave their lives for our Victory in Freedom. Cynical and cold. Not random. In fact, this is the voice of the Russian elite until 2022. Frankly and monstrously".*

A. Dvoyney, SMO veteran, lecturer at Omsk State Technical University: *"... it is a horror, a real horror to me that work with young people is still carried out in our country according to the 'canons' that our dear Vasily Yakemenko proposed at the time... Until now, patriotic work in universities is supervised by Rosmolodezh, which calls it the Patriotic Track".*

End of Insert 6

February 4, 2025, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) hosted a round table entitled “Foreign labor on the labor market in the Russian Federation: Balancing the interests of business, society and the state” with the participation of representatives of the leadership of the All-Russian Public Organization “Delovaya Rossiya” and the All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium Enterprises “Opora Rossi”. The event discussed “issues of attracting foreign labor to the Russian labor market in the context of personnel shortage”⁹⁴. The proposed measures include the following:

- ✓ abolishing regional restrictions on the recruitment of migrants;
- ✓ allowing migrants to work under a patent in different regions of the country;
- ✓ allowing migrants to study Russian on the territory of Russia with the creation of appropriate conditions for “effective adaptation”;
- ✓ cancelling the expulsion of illegal immigrants at the request of a company, etc.

K. Malofeev, Chairman of the Board of Directors of “Tsargrad” Group of Companies, noted: “*Russian business enthusiasts represented by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Delovaya Rossiya, and Opora Rossii have proposed liberalizing migration legislation... business associations want not only to bring even more migrant workers to Russia, but also to take over some government functions. This can only lead to chaos and increased corruption*”⁹⁵.

February 18, 2025, the press service of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reported that “in 2024, the number of decisions on the initiation of criminal cases of crimes related to the implementation of national projects **doubled**. Almost half of them are in the field of demography; 678 criminal cases against 842 defendants have been transferred to the courts, which is also almost twice as many as in 2023”⁹⁶. We should note that earlier (on October 29, 2024), at an operational meeting on the investigation of crimes in the field of the implementation of national projects, Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation A. Bastrykin announced that “the investigative bodies of the Investigative Committee of Russia have transferred almost one and a half thousand criminal cases against **1,800 defendants to the courts in 5 years**”⁹⁷.

⁹⁴ Foreign labor force on the labor market in the Russian Federation: Balance of interests of business, society and the state. RSPP Press Release. February 4, 2025. Available at: <https://rspp.ru/events/news/inostrannaya-rabochaya-sila-na-rynke-truda-v-rf-balans-interesov-biznesa-obshchestva-i-gosudarstva-67a1ba6b2a11b/>

⁹⁵ Ivanov A. Major business lobbyists put forward proposals to liberalize migration legislation. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/krupnejshie_biznes-lobbisti_vidvinuli_predlozheniya_po_liberalizacii_migratsionnogo_zakonodatelstva

⁹⁶ In the Russian Federation, the number of cases in the implementation of national projects in 2024 has doubled. Available at: <https://kass.ru/proisshestiya/23172575?ysclid=m7a14f0c3f41569284>

⁹⁷ The Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation held an operational meeting on the investigation of crimes in the sphere of national project implementation. Available at: <https://sledcom.ru/news/item/1925289/>

Thus, the development of the situation at the current moment so far arouses very cautious optimism both on the external political track (in terms of reaching stable agreements with the American side, ending hostilities in the SMO zone and establishing new rules of the world order that suit all key participants in the conflict) and on the domestic political arena (in terms of ridding the public consciousness, primarily the elite groups, of the "liberal fog" of previous decades).

The dominance of liberal dogmas in Russia's ruling elites suggests that Russia (as S. Karaganov emphasizes) is still "not self-determined"⁹⁸, **and it will be extremely difficult to occupy and (most importantly) maintain a worthy place in the new multipolar world if Russia possesses superiority only in the field of weapons, and lacks a clear idea, ideology, and is "inferior in overall power to both the United States and China"**⁹⁹...

Nevertheless, the very fact that in the first three years of the SMO, Russia withstood complex (economic, political, military, informational) pressure from the countries of the entire NATO bloc, did not succumb to numerous provocations from the "Kiev regime" and did not allow the world to "slide" into the chaos of a nuclear conflict is **the unconditional merit of the head of state and, perhaps, the main result that can be summed up after three years of his career.**

In conclusion, we note that during 25 years in office as President, Vladimir Putin has gone from the image of a "Warrior" defending the country from Chechen separatists and "a hidden, veiled intervention aimed at subordinating it [Russia] to

the interests of other countries"¹⁰⁰ to the image of a "Creator", without whom (and therefore without Russia's participation) it is difficult to imagine the formation of new rules of the current world order and almost impossible to imagine the functioning of the internal system of public administration.

According to experts, "the President considers his activities in the historical context", and therefore the next six years will be a very "important period" for him...

"Putin's foreign policy... was changing – as he himself was changing, as Russia itself was changing. It did not wobble from side to side, did not twitch in search of short-term benefits or forever lost, but evolved from weak to strong, from inexperienced to experienced, from ordinary to wise"¹⁰¹.

"The President of the Russian Federation considers his state **activity in the historical context**, and this time is quite long... **The next six years are an important period for him**"¹⁰².

What will the current political cycle (2024–2030) bring with it? The goals and objectives for the future are defined by the Presidential Decree "On the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and for the future up to 2036"¹⁰³. Vladimir Putin has profound experience in managing such a huge and complex country as Russia; there is a close-knit team of the RF Government headed by Mikhail Mishustin, the

⁹⁸ Karaganov S. Speech in the program "Yalta 2.0. Big History". ORT. Episode aired on February 9, 2025. Available at: <https://www.1tv.ru/shows/bolshaya-istoriya/vypuski/yalta-2-0-bolshaya-istoriya-vypusk-ot-09-02-2025?ysclid=m71mll57h8356457652>

⁹⁹ Belyaeva S. Race for leadership. Available at: <https://poisknews.ru/releases/gonka-za-liderstvom/>

¹⁰⁰ Vladimir Putin's speech at the Valdai International Discussion Club meeting on November 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75521>

¹⁰¹ Dynamics of Vladimir Putin's image: From a Warrior to a Ruler-Creator: Report. Minchenko Consulting. October 2024. P. 4. Available at: https://minchenko.ru/news/news_235.html

¹⁰² How to ensure the sustainability of the system in Russia. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2024-05-08/100_08052024_red.html

¹⁰³ On national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and in the perspective up to 2036: Decree 309, dated May 7, 2024. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73986>

“power bloc” under the leadership of A.R. Belousov, the State Duma under the chairmanship of V.V. Volodin. All of them have already proven themselves in practice during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the three years since the start of the special military operation.

Together, they have a lot to rebuild in the country and at the same time correct the mistakes made in the previous decades of the “liberal fog”. And to do this, first of all, we have to decide “what do we want? Who do we want to be in the future world and, consequently, what will the world be like for us?”

**“We need to understand what we want.
And in order to understand what we want, we
must define ourselves.**

Until the end.

We haven’t fully determined who we are yet.

We don’t have a state idea, a state ideology...

**“We need to understand who we want to be
in the future world and, accordingly, what the
world will be like for us”¹⁰⁴.**

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¹⁰⁴ Karaganov S. Speech in the program “Yalta 2.0. Big History”. ORT. Episode aired on February 9, 2025. Available at: <https://www.1tv.ru/shows/bolshaya-istoriya/vypuski/yalta-2-0-bolshaya-istoriya-vypusk-ot-09-02-2025?ysclid=m71ml57h8356457652>