

# Russia's Regional Elites in 2010: Twenty Years On

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Over the nearly twenty years that Russia has existed independently with its regional elites,<sup>1</sup> humongous changes have taken place. The direction of the regional development has been different. First there was an upswing that culminated in 1999 (when the regional leaders who were in complete control of the situations in their own regions were even able to challenge the Kremlin), and then the steady decline that continued for the entire “Putin Decade,” sometimes at a crawl, other times tumbling downhill. We are now at the very bottom; therefore, a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the situation has become particularly interesting and important.

The election “hole” of 2009-2010 also turned out to be a turning point for most of the remaining old “heavyweight” regional leaders (Eduard Rossel, Mintimer Shaymiev, Murtaza Rakhimov, etc.), who were replaced by new leaders, thus completing a decade-long renewal process for the regional elites.

As a rule, descriptions of the regional political elites devote most of their attention to the regional heads, who, however, represent only the very tip of the iceberg. Meanwhile, the entire upper echelon of the regional elites has been fundamentally reshaped in recent years, radically altering both relations between the regions and the Center (for the sake of which so much has been undertaken) and the political situation in the regions themselves.

Without attempting to fully explore the subject (which would demand an entirely different scope of study), we shall here identify those aspects of the contemporary state of the regional elite and of the political

logic of its defining processes that, in our opinion, are most important and interesting.

## The Role of the Regionals: from Controlling to Minority Shareholders

If Russia is considered as a giant corporation (which is exactly how the ruling elite sees the country), then the dynamics of the past decade may be described as a reduction or dilution of the “regional portfolio” in “Russia Incorporated” from a controlling to a blocking share with powers that are further diluting further down. Moreover, this portfolio has become fractionalized among regional stockholders.

After 2000, the system of control over Russia’s regions (and inside the regions themselves) changed significantly. During Putin’s first presidential term (2000-2004), these changes were mainly aimed at restoring the federal Center’s earlier role, which it had previously been unable to perform due to its weakness, primarily financial. The pendulum thus began to swing back toward the Center after having gone too far in the direction of the regions. Aside from various purely administrative innovations and organizational changes, the significant financial reinforcement enjoyed by the Center (which in particular extended its ability to make the judiciary independent of regional authorities) and the passage of the Budget Code (sharply strengthening the Center both in form and in fact) played a great part in this.<sup>2</sup> If at the end of the Yeltsin period the regional share of the consolidated budget compared to the federal share was 60:40, then under the Budget Code it was set at 50:50; the current ratio is 40:60 or even 35:65.

Expansion of the Center at the expense of the regions (including both a usurpation of numerous areas of joint control and a reconsideration of the balance of authorities and financial resources) had already begun during Putin’s second term and has continued over his third “Medvedev-Putin” term, as well.

The initial stage began with the Center vying for dominance on the “platforms of interaction”: the Council of the Federation and the associated Government Council and the Council of Legislators, the State Duma (in transition from a mixed to a proportional structure), the federal districts (where regional cooperation associations were squeezed out), and the “power party,” Edinaya Rossia (United Russia).

After weakening the governor and depriving the office of its key support and allies at the regional level (in the form of those very same regional military, police, and national security agencies figures – *siloviki* – who gradually and to an ever greater degree were becoming “interlopers,” with no previous connection to those regions whatsoever, rather than representing the regional establishment), the Center could then deprive the office of its independent legitimacy, shifting in 2005 to the appointment of regional heads. The appointments of governors, which at first were more formal, became indicative of increasingly more radical changes in the composition of the regional elites. At the same time, the Center more and more frequently began to apply the “interloper” model. It cannot be said, however, that the hands of the Center were completely free. It is no coincidence that the Kremlin could only begin the final dismantling of the old heavyweight regional heads (Eduard Rossel, Mintimer Shaymiev, Murtaza Rakhimov and Yury Luzhkov, who had led the *fronda* in the regions since the 1990s) at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010.

Other results during the second stage include centralization of the electoral committees and the entire system of control over elections at various levels with the assistance of judges and law enforcement under federal control, the role of which at the elections has grown significantly.

Another important result of the second stage was the completion of the transition from the model of first establishing control over all the moderators and platforms of interaction between the regions and the Center to the model of exercising control regionally over the main figures in the regional political elites.

## Governing the Regions

The particularities of the new system of governance

We have described the system of command over the regions as a whole and its individual new elements in a number of previous publications.<sup>3</sup> The key features of this system include: unification and depersonification, as well as stricter subordination; general reinforcement of vertical links and weakening of horizontal ones; depolitization, reduction in public openness, and extreme weakening of contacts with society; and sharply intensified rotations with numerous, frequently chaotic changes in individual figures and of entire command blocks.

The old system had not been ideal; however, it had had a number of advantages over the new. It primarily meant relative autonomy for the regions that provided the system as a whole with both flexibility and a great reserve of strength. It is noteworthy that, although the old system had weathered its test of strength by surviving a whole series of political and economic crises, the new system until very recently had existed under “hot-house” conditions. Governance was reduced to the distribution of an increasing stream of financial resources and control elements, while the citizens experienced general satisfaction and on the whole were favorably disposed toward the authorities, as they saw visible growth in their well-being. As soon as the Center attempted to initiate large-scale social and economic reforms at the beginning of Putin’s second term, the decision-making and implementation systems they had erected demonstrated its ineffectiveness. Against the backdrop of rapid improvement in financial well-being at the time, rather than attempting to improve the system of command, the Center decided to cut back on reforms.

The defects of the new system (aside from its super-centralization, as manifested in its inability to solve problems at a level that is as close as possible to the citizenry) include rigid and primitive command schemes and its mechanistic command structure, all of which reduce the flexibility of the system and lower its efficiency and ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Like a conveyer belt, such a system can function relatively well when addressing standard problems, but it can hit a dead end when faced with any deviation from the standard. The absence of any degree of freedom for the individual nodes deprives the system of its own ability to adapt and its resistance to external influences. Inertia is also too great: too much time is spent initially on transmitting signals step by step from the bottom to the very top, where the decisions are made, and the subsequent transmission of the decision downward. Any attempt to straighten the command schemes under such a super-centralized framework would be fraught with a decline in the coordination of actions among the individual elements of the system.

This can all be illustrated with the example of the abandonment of federalism in favor of unitarism. Federalism is a complex and conflict-prone model that assumes difficult coordination between the levels of authority in developing decisions requiring special concerting procedures. Instead of all of this, the model transitioned to one of strict subordination that incorporated first the governors, then the elected heads of local self-government into the vertical. Fiscal federalism was also essentially disassembled, as the regions and municipalities lost their relatively independent financial bases.

### The political geometry of relations between the Center and the Regions

The role of the configuration and relative positions of the power pyramids is important at the federal and regional levels. Before 2000, the pyramid of federal power had been oriented with its broad base toward the regional pyramid, while the regional pyramid faced the federal with its tip (represented by the governor). The governor played the key role as the neck of the hour glass, through which the federal network could communicate with the regional. Practically all contacts between the federal and regional elites were intermediated by the governor, as the chief representative of the interests of regional elites. Now the picture has changed fundamentally, and the federal pyramid has overwhelmed the regional. The pyramids have grown together, and many verticals from the Center

to the regions now bypass the governor altogether. It is currently more of a single unitary pyramid that has to varying degrees incorporated and absorbed the formerly independent regional pyramids.

If the governor had previously been the senior figure in the regional elite, representing it to the Center, he is now more and more frequently the Center's representative who has been deployed to the region. The governor himself has, in essence, become the chief federally appointed bureaucrat. Although only on one occasion has a regional head previously headed another region,<sup>4</sup> and in this sense the analogy between the new procedure of appointing governors and the old Soviet system of appointing secretaries to the regional Communist Party Committees<sup>5</sup> does not quite work yet, a significant portion of key bureaucrats in the regional administrations below the level of governor are like *condottieri* roaming from one region to another.<sup>6</sup>

Recently the influx of "Moscow Blood" has proceeded particularly actively. Entire teams of Muscovites working "in shifts" have appeared in the regions, especially in the political blocks of the regional administration, which probably works to the advantage of the regional elites: in the areas where the influx turns out to be bad, the elite consolidates its efforts against the "interlopers;" where it is good, it joins with them.

Aside from the administrative and bureaucratic pyramid, there are also business and corporate pyramids delegating entire teams of managers to the regions, who also frequently use the "shift" method. Cases of both replacement with managers and a direct overlap of the bureaucratic and business pyramids one over the other are also not infrequent.

In the regions, the shortest path to the highest bureaucratic command positions now runs through Moscow.

### The web of command: hypertrophinated radii and underdeveloped chords

If the system of command contacts is to be described as a web, then under Boris Yeltsin the vertical lines of "Center/Region" communication were

relatively weak, the horizontal lines between regions were very weak, and the horizontal lines within regions were very strong. Under Vladimir Putin, the vertical communication lines were strengthened significantly, including with the intermediate level represented by the federal districts. The numerous lines of vertical communication began to resemble something like multi-strand cables. At the same time, the horizontal contacts, on the contrary, were in many cases weakened and disrupted by these verticals. Overall, the network of command resembled a spider web with hyper-developed radials and underdeveloped concentric contacts. In practice, this means that the shortest path frequently passes through the Center; contacts are often intermediated by the Center, not only between neighboring regions, but also between different federal agencies within a single region.

At one time, collegia of regional branches of the executive federal agencies were set up to coordinate the various federal structures operating within a region, and these were headed by the Chief Federal Inspectors (CFIs). Such coordination, however, has turned out to be not so much institutional as personal. Much of it depends on the personality of the CFI and the degree of his integration into the regional elite. Among the other forms of inter-agency interaction in a number of regions are Security Councils headed by the governors, anti-terrorism committees led by the department heads of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and anti-narcotics committees led by the department heads of the Federal Narcotics Trafficking Control Service.

The regional boundaries remain the bottleneck. They are absolute in nature and are present in all governance grids without exception, both on the whole and within agencies. There are obviously too few stitches between the individual pieces of this quilt. Inter-regional contacts, whether neighboring or far apart, are too weak.

### Verticalization with respect to political parties and non-commercial organizations

The number of federal parties dropped from 37 to eight, or in fact to four represented in the State Duma: United Russia party, Communist

Party of the Russian Federation, Liberal Democratic Party, and A Just Russia party (through financial and other mechanisms), following their re-registration and the passage of a new law on political parties in 2001 that prohibited political parties at the regional level. The remaining political parties were essentially forced out of the political arena through a sharply increased administrative and financial pressure.

Simultaneously, the quasi-verticals of the civil society were incorporated with the Public Chamber at the top, with the delegates at the district level and with the regional Public Chambers (of which there were 50 as of early 2010). The Public Chamber performs the function of the “ministry for civil society” and serves as a foundation for the growth of new structures: Public Observer Commissions for monitoring human rights in places of forced detention (2008) and the system of ombudsmen for children’s rights (2010). The formation and delegation of these bottom-up quasi-civic structures and the top-down allocation of budgetary financial funds “to support non-commercial non-governmental organizations participating in the development of the institutions of civil society,” were brought under administrative control.

### The inclusion of local government into the vertical of command

Municipal reform, the implementation of which has stretched out over long years, started in full measure on January 1, 2009. In contradiction to its stated goals, it made the municipal level much more dependent upon the regional level (and on the state rule overall). With the reform, the state power vertical penetrated the municipal level as well, turning local self-rule essentially into “local state rule.”

With respect to the regional elites, the reform of local self-government has meant a significant weakening of a large group that constitutes this government: the mayors. First, the governors and municipal deputies (two “natural enemies” of the directly elected mayors) began joint efforts to dismantle the institution itself, forcing transition to a Soviet-style mod-



el where a “deputy who has become head of local government is a hired city manager.”

By the beginning of 2010, approximately a third of the more than 24,000 municipal formations in the country had already transitioned to this model. Of these, however, only several dozen are both strong and self-sufficient (principally in the financial sense), mostly the large regional centers. Second, it was precisely these sorts of mayors against whom the hunt began. They were arrested on various charges and removed from their positions (because the changes in the law adopted in 2009 at the initiative of Dmitry Medvedev allowed deputies and governors to remove elected mayors extrajudicially). After a series of significant defeats at the local elections between autumn 2009 and spring 2010 (in Irkutsk, Bratsk, and cities in the Urals), the United Russia party set the course towards the final dismantlement of the institution of elected mayors in all of the important centers. By autumn 2010, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Murmansk, Ulyanovsk, Penza, Vladimir, and Smolensk had switched to the city manager model.

Notably, this resulted not only in diminished regional political diversity and a reduced number of autonomous actors and areas for maneuver, but also in the disappearance of the two most widespread types of conflict among the regional political elites that ensure a normal political life: between the mayor and the governor and between the mayor and deputies.

On the positive side, the reforms of local self-rule are universally conducted elections to agencies of municipal power and the introduction of new managers.

### Top-down and bottom-up dynamics

All systems of government always consist of two components: top-down and bottom-up, which when in balance are essential for the normal functioning of the system. During all of the past years, the top-down flow (“top-down component”) has been increasing. Commands, conditions, schemes, etc., are forced down with the help of the following:

- integration of the governor into the Kremlin's vertical of power;
- horizontal rotation of the regional heads of subdivisions of the federal structures;
- subordination of the super-regional/inter-regional levels to the Center;
- centralization of parties and inclusion of regional parliaments having a United Russia party majority in the party's "vertical of power."

The positive consequences of this were that the previously closed regional elites were opened up like a can of preserves, the autarchy was overcome, and top-down command and unification within reasonable limits were improved; the negative consequences included the disruption of contacts and, hence, a decline in the efficiency of government within a region, excessive measures of unification; and disruption of the balance between direct communication and feed back... The concept of delegation of authority has been turned upside down and can be described as the principle of reverse subsidiary, where a higher level reserves for itself the powers that it wants, passing down only those it doesn't need. With such an approach, the real source of power becomes the federal bureaucracy, rather than the people.

Suppression of initiatives from below and strict regulation of social and political forms will lead to the loss of differentiation and diversity, suppressing the very best and most active and perhaps pulling up the worst, thereby leveling everything at the average.

### Dismantling "fool proof" mechanisms

Beginning in 2000, all the principal mechanisms intended to protect the system from serious management errors have been gradually weakened or eliminated altogether: independent media (2000-2003), the "oligarchs" (2000-2003), the upper (2000-2002) and lower (2000-2004) chambers of the parliament, the governors (2000-2004), and independent non-commercial organizations (since 2005).

One principal aspect of the governor was his role as a filter, diverting or delaying decisions or initiatives from the Center that could be harmful to the region. The governor knew that as the time for the reelection campaign approached, the main criterion both for the Center and for the population would be the region's successes under his leadership. Now, however, even if the governor remains in office, first, he does not have a four-to-five-year reserve of time to prove that he had been right, and second, the effectiveness of his work, as for any bureaucrat, is determined more by his diligence and speed in performing his job rather than by the final result.

A clear example of this would be the monetization reform, first discussed and pushed through in mid-2004. Then, however, the *démarche* of a number of regional heads in Siberia and the Far East frightened the Center and provoked an extremely negative reaction, finally leading to the adoption of the Beslan package, which provided for the transition to the system of appointed governors and caused a sharp decline in their influence on deputies to the State Duma as a result of this transition to the proportional system. The result was that resistance to the inadequately thought through plans for reform was broken, reforms were pushed through the Federal Assembly, the attempts to implement them led to massive social protests in January-February 2005, and the abandonment of reforms led to colossal budgetary expenditures.

The most recent example is the forest fires of 2010 that caused such great damage in the country. One of the main factors causing this was the passage of the Forestry Code in 2006 (in spite of protests from a number of forest regions), which demolished the system of forest protection, as well as the inability of the super-centralized command system to react to the situation expeditiously.

The situation at the regional level can differ fundamentally both in condition and in dynamics. The governor has been weakened as the dominant player, and in a number of places there exists quite an effective system of checks and balances.

### The business component: loss of autonomy

A long time has passed since the days when business could be purely regional and could be seen as a relatively autonomous player. Today businesses have been restructured into large federal groups and holding companies, and they actively participate in forming executive power, particularly at the municipal level. They also delegate their own representatives to the representative power structure. In the larger regions, where there are several large business players, this enhances pluralism and concurrency. When a single player dominates the economy, its monopolistic approach is usually reproduced in the political sphere as well.

There is also the phenomenon of “region-forming” companies: Gazprom in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, Rosneft in the Nenets Autonomous Region, NLMK in Lipetskaya Oblast, Severstal in Vologodskaya Oblast, and EVRAZ in Kemerovskaya Oblast... The monopoly of such companies over the economy frequently results in a monopoly over politics, as well.

The role that the oligarchs played in the 1990s is being shifted towards State corporations and large national companies to an ever greater extent. They are the entities that are ever more frequently being designated by the Kremlin as being responsible for their regions (Ros-tekhnologii in Samarskaya Oblast, and in 2008-2009 also in Irkutskaya Oblast; Bazovy Element in Khakasia and partially Irkutskaya Oblast, and Interros in Krasnoyarsky Krai and Tverskaya Oblast). In light of the accelerating replacement of regional heads and especially of their teams, any such list would quickly become dated. The fact remains, however: more and more frequently corporate management and resources (financial, administrative, etc.) are being relied upon for regional governing, as they are capable of bringing federally significant players to their “own” regions.

## Appointment of Regional Heads

The head of Mariy El, Leonid Markelov, who was appointed by the parliament on the very eve of 2010, became the twenty third governor appointed by Dmitry Medvedev; he was also the last of the remaining elected heads. The first full cycle of replacement of elected heads by appointed ones that had begun in January 2005 was thereby completed in all of the 83 regions.

With the arrival of Medvedev, certain changes began to occur in the system of appointment of regional heads, including the simultaneous replacements of the four heads in Voronezhskaya, Orlovskaya, Pskovskaya Oblasts and the Nenets Autonomous District that took place in February 2009; the reasons for this are not clear. It is possible that it was the Kremlin's reaction to the rising wave of individual protests by the heads, that could have initiated collective action led by former Speaker of the Council of the Federation Yegor Stroyev. This provoked his removal from the position of Orel governor, and the others were removed simultaneously as a warning. In yet another initiative, the right to submit candidates for gubernatorial posts was transferred from the presidential representative to a dominant party. The trick, however, lay in the fact that candidates on behalf of United Russia (the only dominant party there is) may be nominated not by its regional branches, but by the party's leadership at the federal level, with Vladimir Putin as party leader.

The transition in 2009 from nomination of gubernatorial candidates by the presidential representatives to a system of nomination by the dominant party did not make the procedure of selection of personnel for gubernatorial posts any more effective, but it did make it more transparent and public. By the end of 2009, United Russia had nominated 51 candidates in fifteen regions, of which only five cases resulted in appointment before the end of the year: in Sverdlovskaya, Astrakhanskaya, Kurganskaya and Volgogradskaya oblasts and the Republic Mariy El. The number of candidates in the regional rolls varies from three to five. Universally (except in the

Jewish Autonomous Oblast) their numbers include active regional heads (twice out of five appointments). Aside from these, deputy governors and heads of the regional governments are also represented in the rolls in nine of fifteen regions. One new governor (in Volgogradskaya Oblast) came from this category, as did speakers of the regional parliaments (six regions), deputies to the Federal Assembly (five regions), federal government bureaucrats (four regions, including Sverdlovskaya Oblast, where one of them received the governor's post), mayors (two regions), and university principals (two regions).

The dynamics of gubernatorial appointments for all of the years that the new system was in place are presented in Table 1. At first, the Kremlin reappointed sitting governors eagerly, and when seeking their replacements, more often used locals rather than the "interlopers," who had no connection to the local elite clans. Moreover, the number of reappointable heads declined over time. There were two reasons for this: the first task was to have the system take root, and not to replace a particular governor; subsequently, however, it turned out to be much simpler to find an "interloper" than to select a local candidate acceptable to the main clans, not to mention that it can be much easier to control an "interloper" than a local. For this reason, when choosing between loyalty, which was greater in the case of the "interloper," and effectiveness, which was greater in the case of a local, the Kremlin would more and more frequently favor loyalty.

When the crisis began, the Kremlin significantly expanded the use of the "interloper" model in appointing governors (Table 2), as it had done earlier with respect to the "regional generals" as heads of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), prosecutors, judges, and even heads of the federal inspectors. During crises, loyalty to the Center turned out to be significantly more important than incorporation into the regional elites and an ability to communicate with them. Effectiveness at the national level (understood as obedience and subordination) was preferred to effectiveness at the regional level.

NIKOLAY PETROV.  
RUSSIA'S REGIONAL ELITES IN 2010

Table 1. Appointment of regional heads by year, 2005-2010

Year	Number of appointments	Number of reappointed/new heads	Percentage of reappointed heads	1	2	3	4
2005	44	32/12	73.0	2	6	4	9
2006	8	5/3	62.5	1	2	-	-
2007	25	14/11	56.0	3	4	4	13
2008	12	2/10	17.0	2	1	7	60
2009	15	6/9	40.0	1	2	6	40
2005-2009	104	59/45	56.7	9	15	21	20
2010 (January-July)	26	12/14	46.1	6	6	2	8
2005-2010	130	71/59	54.6	15	21	23	17.6

**Note:** 1 – number of representatives of the upper echelon of the regional elites among appointees; 2 – number of other “regionals;” 3 – number of “interlopers;” 4 – percentage of “interlopers.”

Table 2. Appointment of regional heads during the period of intense crisis, 2008-2009

Year	Number of appointments	Number of reappointed/new heads	Percentage of reappointed heads	1	2	3	4
2008 (January-August)	7	2/5	28	1	1	3	43
“Year of Crisis” (September 2009 - August 2009)	15	3/12	33	1	1	10	67
2009 (September-December)	5	3/2	60	1	1	-	-

**Note:** 1 – number of representatives of the upper echelon of the regional elites among appointees; 2 – number of other “regionals;” 3 – number of “interlopers;” 4 – percentage of “interlopers.”

## Rearranging Personnel Through Rotation

If there have been long-term projects steadily being carried out during the entire “Putin decade” in Russia, then the renewal of horizontal rotation of the personnel heading the federal structures in the regions is certainly one of them.

The system of horizontal rotation (continuous replacement of highly placed state officials being transferred from region to region to ensure independence from local interests and loyalty to the Center) had been instituted under Stalin. Then, over the period of stagnation, the system gradually fell into disfavor. During the stormy years of Yeltsin’s reign, there was absolutely no time for it. By the time Putin came to power, of all the federal executives in the regions, only the figure of head of the FSB remained separate and retained autonomy with respect to the regional elites, in part due to the operation of the rotation mechanism. It was therefore specifically from among them that the new presidential representatives (and subsequently the CFIs, upon whom Moscow could rely) were recruited.

The campaign to bring regional law into compliance with federal law, which started at the beginning of the “federal reforms,” turned out to be a convenient means of checking the extent of regional prosecutors’ loyalty to Moscow and replacing those among them who were too closely connected with the local security agencies. In parallel, a process of “up-rooting” senior figures in the regional police began. If they had previously been *crème de la crème* of the regional elites and had made their careers exclusively within their own region, then everything now had begun to change. First, a rule was implemented under which the last step in the career ladder (from deputy to head of the DIA) could be taken only in one of two ways: either through Moscow (or optionally Chechnya or a federal district), or through a different region. Second, horizontal rotation began to be practiced actively, with heads of the DIA transferred to another region following five years of service.



Over the past couple of years, the rotation system has begun to be actively applied with respect to the three figures of the regional Mount Olympus that have continued to belong to local establishments longer than any others: the CFIs, the chairmen of the courts and the governors. No less important is the fact that over time, as the rotation system expanded to include ever newer positions, ever fewer regional components have remained in the regional establishment. Although at first essentially all the ethnic republics were considered to be exempt from rotation mechanics, Moscow gradually, and with a certain amount of caution (trying to select ethnically suitable candidates, even if from outside the republic), began to apply the rotation mechanism to them, as well. Currently only two regions remain where the rotation mechanisms are very weak, if they exist at all: Tatarstan and Moscow.

Using a rotation system when coordination of action between the different verticals is inadequate could lead to the opposite result – weakening rather than strengthening the degree of control over the regions as a consequence of the simultaneous replacement of a number of generals and the arrival in the region of neophytes previously unfamiliar with it.

In the crisis year of 2009, the volume of personnel reassignments grew significantly and differentially.

Taking six of the main “federal generals” as examples (department heads of the FSB and of the Department of Internal Affairs, prosecutor, department head of the Investigative Committee, judge, CFI), it turns out that the rate of their replacement has increased by nearly one and a half times: from 70 positions in 2008 to 98 in 2009. However, considering that there are some 80 regions in the country,<sup>7</sup> the average rate of replacement in 2008 per region of 0.9 per six positions shows that a full replacement cycle for all “federals” would stretch out over seven years. This process accelerated in 2009: 1.2 on the average, with a five-year cycle for full replacement.

The greatest total number of replacements of “federals” by category were the CFIs (nineteen in 2008 and 25 in 2009) and secretaries of the Unit-

ed Russia party (31 in 2008 and twelve in 2009); the least number were heads of the Investigative Committees, which were only introduced in September 2007. Another category with sharp growth in rates of replacement is the department heads of the FSB (twelve in 2008 and 24 in 2009).

The macro-geographic picture is also uneven: the greatest rate of replacement can be seen in the two regions that have attracted the greatest amount of attention from the Center: the Southern District and the Far Eastern District (each with 3.7 replacements per region over two years); the least is the Northwestern District (with 2.1). Moreover, in three districts: the North Western (13/11), Southern (27/20), and Siberian districts (19/16), there were more replacements in 2008; in the Volga (20/21) and Ural districts (8/7), they remained approximately even; while in the Central District (17/22) and especially the Far Eastern District (10/23) significant growth was seen during the crisis year.

## The Regional Political “Mount Olympus”<sup>8</sup>

The main change over recent years has been the decrease in the independence and individuality of the political “Mount Olympus” in various regions, which has been transformed ever more into a projection of the federal security agencies onto the regional base, which in a number of cases, however, can strongly distort the original picture. This is the general rule of thumb; Moscow and a number of the national republics with their political machinery are exceptions.

Real authority in the region continues to be concentrated in the hands of only five to ten persons. If their influence had previously been exercised frequently via informal mechanisms, then now the status hierarchy is much more rigid. On the regional political Mount Olympus there are ever fewer personal positions that are held by individuals and ever more numerous positions *ex officio*. The speaker of the regional parliament and the mayor of the capital more and more frequently perform the role of sen-

ior figures in the core regional political elite. The replaceable portion of the political elite consists of the governors and the teams of *landsknechts*, including some from among the business managers of the companies that brought the governor to power.

Recently, the topiary model for forming regional elites (as when a gardener works long and painstakingly on something that was already growing) has been transformed into a “pyramid of flowers” model (as in a metal case having replaceable flower pots that can simply be brought in and put up wherever is convenient). Moreover, the new model itself, which lacks the foundation of regional roots and must unavoidably rely on constant irrigation from above, especially in light of its prompt implementation, would be more appropriate for a unitary centralized state than for a federal nation. A situation of a deepening economic (and inevitably political) crisis can exacerbate the defects in the adopted model and increase the risk that the inadequately rooted new elite in the region would disengage. The new model has, however, brought about one particular benefit: it has opened the previously closed autarkical regions and established a single field for the elites, for spatial and social intermixing, acceleration of the political dynamic, and circulation of initiatives.

The efforts by the Center to renew the political elite at local levels accelerated the natural course of events, and a generational shift took place in the regions. The nearly universal figures of the Soviet period, who had long retained their positions within the elite, either left completely or faded into the background. The generational shift among business elites occurred earlier, characterized by the trend of recent years toward the replacement of independent owners with managers appointed from outside the borders of the region, together with the integration of regional businesses to become nation-wide or international.

Of all of the representatives of the political and business elites in the regions, the greatest amount of analyst attention has been given to those heads of regions, who due to their high visibility were natural objects of study. In the meantime, although the governors/presidents of republics

continue in the vast majority of cases to remain the most influential figures in the regional establishment, the nature of this influence, its mechanisms, and the entire configuration of the regional political “Mount Olympus” have undergone strong changes in recent years. The following may be cited as the main causal reasons for this: 1) incorporation of the relatively autonomous regional political system into the overall system and gradual transformation of the regional power pyramid into a regional link in the overall federal pyramid (with intensive horizontal rotations at all levels, including regional heads as well to an ever greater extent); 2) altering mechanisms for forming and reproducing the regional links of the political and business elites; their departure from the arena of public politics, and replacement by administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms; 3) overcoming the relatively regional autarchy in the sphere of the economy by major reinforcement of the role of large financial and industrial groups, including national and transnational ones.

A consequence of all these tectonic changes has been the significant structural and personal shifts within the regional administrative and economic elites. As far as the structural changes are concerned, research conducted by the Institute of Situational Analysis and New Technology (ISANT) is helpful in evaluating the significance of the individual positions and the dynamics of recent years. We have studied dozens of the most influential persons in the individual regions based on the results of the 2007 ISANT research (34 regions), comparing them with data from 2003 for the same regions (30) (Table 3) in order to identify these shifts in the body of the regional elite.

A comparison of the findings for 2003 and 2007 reveals several trends.

1. In the regional “Mount Olympus” a depersonification has occurred among the figures, who are aligning ever more frequently along their formal status lines. Characteristically, the figure of the governor, generally

NIKOLAY PETROV.  
RUSSIA'S REGIONAL ELITES IN 2010

Table 3. Degree of influence of the main positions of status within the regional elite (based upon data from ISANT 2003 and 2007 research)

Position	Total points	Average points	Average ranking	Spread of positions	Number of regions	Remarks
<i>Degree of influence by position in the regional elites in 2003</i>						
Regional head	135	4.5	1.43	1-5	30	S. Darkin (Primorsky Krai) was ranked 11th, Khodyrev (Nizhegorodskaya Oblast) was 5th, with seven other heads also not taking first place
Deputy regional head	118	3.8	4.29	2-10	31	
Chairman of the Legislative Assembly	104	3.7	5.4	1-10	28	1st place was taken by S. Shishkin in Irkutskaya Oblast
Deputy of the State Duma	86	3.6	5.25	1-10	24	1st place was taken by A. Aparina in Volgogradskaya Oblast
Region's capital head	84	3.8	4.77	1-9	22	1st place was taken by Yu. Savenko in Kaliningradskaya Oblast
Deputy of the Legislative Assembly	70	3.5	6.8	3-10	20	2nd place was taken by L. Beluga ("PetrozavodskMash") in Karelia
Mayor, District head	63	3.5	6.6	3-9	18	3rd place was taken by the mayors of Vorkuta (Komi), Nakhodka (Primorsky Krai), Pokrov (Vladimirskaya Oblast)
Chief federal inspector	53	3.5	6.87	3-10	15	Most influential (3rd place) in Kemerovskaya and Tula Oblasts

20 YEARS WITHOUT THE BERLIN  
WALL: A BREAKTHROUGH TO FREEDOM

Table 3

Position	Total points	Average points	Average ranking	Spread of positions	Number of regions	Remarks
Senator	46	3.5	6.8	2-10	13	2nd place was taken by V. Zhidkikh (Tomskaya Oblast), 3rd place was taken by N. Kondratenko (Krasnodarsky Krai)
Head of the Department of Internal Affairs/Ministry of Internal Affairs	39	3.5	7.5	4-10	11	Most influential (4th place) in Belgorodskaya Oblast
Head of the FSB Department	32	3.5	6	2-10	9	Most influential were in Kostromskaya Oblast (1st place), in Altaysky Krai and Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (2nd place)
Prosecutor	29	3.6	8	1-10	8	1st place was taken by A. Chadov (Orenburgskaya Oblast)
Head of Electoral Committee	19	3.7	6	4-9	5	Most influential was S. Knyazev (4th place) in Primorsky Krai
Chairman of the Regional court	7	3.6	5	4-6	2	
<i>Degree of influence by position in the regional elites in 2007</i>						
Regional head	303	8.9	1.1	1-3	34	2nd and 3rd places were the Khanty-Mansiysky Autonomous District and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, since their governors were under the rating for Tyumenskaya Oblast

NIKOLAY PETROV.  
RUSSIA'S REGIONAL ELITES IN 2010

Table 3

Position	Total points	Average points	Average ranking	Spread of positions	Number of regions	Remarks
Deputy regional head	264	5.5	6.5	2-10	48	These ended up being more than the number of regions, since some regions had several deputies
Chairman of the Legislative Assembly	195	6.3	3.9	2-9	31	2nd place was in Stavropolsky and Khabarovsk Krai, and Tverskaya and Tomskaya Oblasts
Regional capital head	168	6	5	2-10	28	2nd place was held by mayors of Vladivostok, Omsk, Perm and Yaroslavl
Deputy of the State Duma	74	5.3	6.6	3-10	14	3rd place was taken by V. Vasilev (Ministry of Internal Affairs) in Tverskaya Oblast
Chief federal inspector	53	5.3	6.5	2-9	10	2nd place was taken by S. Kharitonov in Tulsckaya Oblast
Deputy of the Legislative Assembly	53	4.8	7.7	4-10	11	4th place was taken by I. Grinberg (RUSAL) in Irkutskaya Oblast
Head of the administration, of the office of the regional head	52	6.5	4.4	2-8	8	2nd place was taken by V. Lobko in St. Petersburg
Head of Department of Internal Affairs/ Ministry of Internal Affairs	41	4.6	8	5-10	9	5th place was taken by A. Safarov in Tatarstan
Chairman of the city council, Duma	31	5.2	6.7	5-10	6	5th place was taken in Kaliningradskaya and Novosibirskaya Oblasts

20 YEARS WITHOUT THE BERLIN  
WALL: A BREAKTHROUGH TO FREEDOM

Table 3

Position	Total points	Average points	Average ranking	Spread of positions	Number of regions	Remarks
Mayor, District head	28	5.5	8.2	5-10	5	5th place was mayor of Komsomolsk-on-Amur (Khabarovsk Krai)
Presidential representative, deputy presidential representative	24	6	3.7	2-5	4	2nd place was taken by A. Konovalov in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast and A. Datsishin (deputy) in Kaliningradskaya Oblast
Senator	20	5.1	6.3	3-10	4	3rd place was V. Zhidkikh (Tomskaya Oblast)
Head of the FSB Department	20	5	6.8	6-10	4	5th place was taken by O. Khramov in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast
Prosecutor	20	4.9	7.3	4-9	4	4th place was taken by M. Zelepukin in Yaroslavskaya Oblast
Chairman of the regional court	14	4.7	8.3	7-10	3	7th place was in Krasnodarsky Krai
Head of electoral committee	9	4.6	6.5	5-8	2	5th place was taken by S. Knyazev in Primorsky Krai

**Note.** The column “Spread of positions” shows the spread over the top entries of the regional lists.



significantly less independent and influential than previously, is now always at the top.

2. On the whole, the role of executive power has grown notably. A weakening of the role of representative power (particularly regional representatives at the Federal Assembly) has also been taking place against the backdrop of an overall decline in the number and influence of elected figures. At the same time, the figure of speaker has been enhanced. Judicial authority is also becoming significantly less visible.

3. Examination of the levels of power reveals a sharp increase at the federal level (particularly considering that the regional head is now the senior federal bureaucrat, in fact appointed by Moscow). The declining role of the municipal level (except in regional capitals) is also noteworthy.

4. The number of figures of the regional political "Mount Olympus" having roots in the area on the whole has declined, while the number of "interlopers" has increased both among federal appointees (now also including governors) and among key members of the gubernatorial teams. The figure of the speaker of the regional parliament is more and more frequently nominated to perform as a senior in the regional political elite.

According to the ISANT-2007 research on the overall levels of political influence, the regional hierarchy of official positions appears as follows:

- 1) Regional head: 8.5;
- 2) Regional speaker of the Legislative Assembly: 6.2;
- 3) Mayor of the regional capital: 6.1;
- 4) Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church: 5.2;
- 5) Head of the FSB Department: 4.9;
- 6) Chief federal inspector: 4.9;
- 7) Speaker of the Assembly of Deputies in the capital: 4.6;
- 8) Prosecutor: 4.6;
- 9) Head of the DIA: 4.4;
- 10) Chairman of the Oblast Court: 4.2;
- 11) Member of the Council of the Federation: 4.0;

- 12) Representative from big business: 4.0;
- 13) Deputy of the State Duma: 3.9;
- 14) Head of the Municipal Government: 3.8;
- 15) Representative from the research community: 3.8.

The following conclusions can be immediately drawn: the significant lead of the regional heads in the influentiality rating; the abundance of generals from the military and security agencies (who occupy the entire center portion of the list in the following order: FSB department head – chief federal inspector – prosecutor – head of the DIA – judges); the noteworthy position of representative power, with four positions out of fifteen (regional speaker – speaker of the capital – member of the Council of the Federation – deputy of the State Duma) or six out of nineteen (considering the deputy of the regional Legislative Assembly and the deputy of the Municipal Assembly); and the surprisingly high position in the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church (fourth place, immediately after the mayor of the capital and ahead of the FSB department head), which caused some to doubt the accuracy of the evaluations. The representative of big business appears under-estimated, which, however, can partially be explained by their latent presence among the deputies at various levels.

The status hierarchy can change if important individual spheres of activity are considered. In decision-making, the governor's lead over the rest increases (8.6 compared to 6.0 for the speaker). In influencing placement of personnel it is even greater (8.6 for the head compared to 5.5 for the mayor of the capital and the speaker of the Legislative Assembly that follow). In influence over economic processes, the order is once again the regional head (8.2), mayor (6.0), and speaker (5.3), with the representative of big business following in fourth place (5.1). The governor's lead in influence over security agencies is minimal (7.5 with 7.1 for the department head of the FSB, 6.7 for the head of the Police, 6.6 for the prosecutor, 5.3 for judges, 5.0 for the chief federal inspector, 4.7 for the speaker, and 4.5 for the mayor of the capital).

## The Dynamics from 2007 to 2010

Many changes occurred following the last ISANT research study. Above all, the “interloper” model for gubernatorial appointment began to be actively practiced, which significantly weakened the role of the governor in the local elite. The Investigative Committee became an independent player, adding yet another general to the region and somewhat weakening the prosecutor. The decline of the role of the CFI has continued, due both to appropriation of his function as the senior federal official in the region by the appointed governor, and to the weakening of the figures of both the president himself and his presidential representatives. In principle, a decline could also be expected in the role of the speaker of the regional Legislative Assembly, who following the shift to the new system is in effect appointed by the leadership of United Russia party. The center of gravity has begun to shift towards the party vertical headed by the leader of United Russia party. The *siloviki* on the whole became more atomized due to rotation and uprooting. A paradoxical situation arose where each vertical of power could win individually, yet the Center as a whole would lose. The position of mayor of the regional centers continued to weaken (both elected and even more so appointed).

Despite the lack of any broad comparative studies, the above can be illustrated by data for Nizhegorodskaya Oblast for 2010 from results of the regularly conducted expert survey on the most influential figures in politics, which were somewhat similar to the ISANT results for 2007 but uncovered significantly more about the role of the “federals” (it should also be remembered that Nizhny Novgorod is the center of the Volga Federal District.) Of the top ten most influential politicians, only three were “locals”: the governor (# 3), the mayor of the regional center (# 4) and the bishop (# 5). The rest were all “federals”: the presidential representative (# 1), two deputies from United Russia (# 2 and 6), the prosecutor (# 7), the head of the FSB Department (# 8), the head of the Taxation Service (# 9), and the head of the Police (# 10). Correspondingly, the

hierarchy of the *siloviki* figures appears as follows: prosecutors – FSB – tax officials – police.

## Key Replacements in the Regions

In recent years the political and administrative elites have undergone radical changes. It is now more frequently federal/regional than merely regional elites. A significant portion of them are managers from Moscow and other regions. There are between 50 and 70 branches of various federal structures operating in the regions, and the number of federal civil servants there exceeds the number of regional civil servants by approximately two to one.

We shall analyze the situation with the six most influential “federals”: the heads of the FSB, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Office of the Prosecutor, Investigative Committee, chairman of the Court, and chief federal inspector. It is specifically these figures who comprise the core of the team of federal agencies of executive power in the region headed by the deputy presidential representative and CFI.

The transition to the new system, accompanied by the uprooting and intensive rotation of personnel, was uneven both for the various segments of the elite (corporations) and for the regions. As noted above, the Center’s approach to the ethnic republics was most measured and cautious. Specifically for this reason, Table 4 may serve as a good illustration of the picture for the 26 ethnic entities. The strongest regional ties among the categories of “federals” studied were maintained by the chairman of the Court (3.9 points and average term of service of nearly eight years). The term of service of the regional head is just over half of that (four and one half years), although the degree of “rootedness” is the same (3.8). The terms of service for the rest of the bureaucrats are approximately equal (three to four years for each), although the degree of rootedness varies significantly. If the Investigative Committee is left out

as least indicative, since this structure itself appeared recently (in 2007) and has been headed in the regions by the first deputy prosecutors (up to this level the Prosecutorial officials are homegrown), then two extremes become apparent. At one end of the spectrum with the least amount of rootedness in the regions (1.3) are the department heads of the FSB; at the other are the CFIs having a relatively high factor of local rootedness (3.0). Prosecutors (1.8) and senior regional police officers (2.1) occupy the intermediate positions.

Table 4. Length of service and roots of heads and "federals" in ethnic republics in Russia (as of July 2010)

Region	Heads	CFIs	FSB	MIA	Prosecutors	Investigative Committee	Judges
Dagestan	5 (5)	5	1	5 (5)	1 (1)	5	1? * (5)
Ingushetia	2	1	N. d.	1 (1)	2	5	N. d. (1)**
Kabardino-Balkaria	5 (3)	1	3	1	N. d.	N. d.	5
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	2	1	1	1 (1)	1 (1)	5	1
North Ossetia	5 (5)	4	1 (1)	1	1 (1)	1 (1)	5
Chechnya	5	N. d.	1	5	1	N. d.	5

\* A judge has formally been appointed, but as of December 2010 had not yet assumed his duties.

\*\* On October 27, 2010, moved to the Supreme Court of Russia.

**Note.** 1 – "interloper," before appointment not connected to the region; 2 – "semi-interloper" – person from outside, connected to the region only ethnically or by birth; 3 – person from outside, who has taken up roots in the region and worked there for a certain amount of time before appointment; 4 – "insider," representative of the local establishment, who has worked before appointment in another region or does not belong to the core regional elite; 5 – "insider" totally, from the core of the regional elite. The figures in parentheses indicate the degree to which the previous governor or "federal" had roots in the region and are shown only for the regions where replacement occurred in 2009-2010.

There is even greater variation expressed among the regions: between 1.2 and 4 for the points on rootedness and from two to over ten years

20 YEARS WITHOUT THE BERLIN  
WALL: A BREAKTHROUGH TO FREEDOM

of service. Among the leaders in “federal” rootedness is Tatarstan (4.0 and nearly eleven years of service), Dagestan (3.9 and a little over two years), Komi and Udmurtia (3.6 and over five years of service), and Chechnya (3.4 and 3.5 years). The lowest levels of regional rootedness are shown for the government and security elites in the Nenets Autonomous District (1.2 and three and one half years), Ingushetia (1.9 and slightly less than two), Bashkiria (2.1 and under three years), Mariy El (2.2 and a little more than four years), and Khakasia (2.3 and slightly less than two years).

The personnel dynamics intensified with the onset of the crisis, as presented in Table 5, this time for all 83 regions of the country.

Table 5. Replacement of key federal bureaucrats in regions, January 2009- July 2010

Indicator	Governors	Prosecutors	Investigative Committee	MIA	FSB	Judges	CFIs	ER	Total
<i>2009</i>									
Number of replacements	15 (4)	12	9	8	26	10	24	12	132
Regional connection	3.28	1.4		3.9	1.1		2.62		2.5
<i>2010 (January-August)</i>									
Number of replacements	24 (11)	3		10	5		6		48
Regional connection	4.57	1.8		1	1		2.3		2.1

Considering the results for the six main federal “generals” (FSB, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Office of the Prosecutor, Investigative Committee, Courts, and CFIs), the rate of personnel replacement has increased by one and a half times (from 70 in 2008 to 98 in 2009). At the same time, how-

ever, considering that there are about 80 regions in the country, the average replacement rate of about 0.9 for the six positions means that it would take about seven years to complete one full replacement cycle for these six “federals.” The process accelerated in 2009: 1.2 on average for the same positions, or about five years for full replacement.

## Group Portraits 2010

### Governors

Of the 83 active regional heads, 45 can be considered politicians, 31 are bureaucrats, and seven are businessmen. This proportion is continually shifting in favor of the bureaucrats. Of the appointees between 2008 and 2010, bureaucrats comprised over half (eighteen persons), while the number of politicians was half that. Aside from those listed, there are also a number of former military officers among the heads who are working on these positions between their military service and their gubernatorial terms, including former military officers Dmitri Dmitrienko (Murman-skaya Oblast) and Vyacheslav Dudka (Tulskaya Oblast), police officer Igor Slyunyaev (Kostromskaya Oblast), military Prosecutor Leonid Markelov (Komi), and military propagandist Dmitri Mezentsev (Irkutskaya Oblast). Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov holds a special position, having received the rank of general of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2009 while already the head of the republic.

In the past, *siloviki* have been quite numerous among the governors. Now there are only four remaining:<sup>9</sup> Army Colonel General Boris Gromov (Moscow Oblast) and three “locals”: Yunus-Bek Evkurov in Ingushetia (Army colonel, later promoted to general), former local Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs General Aleksandr Berdnikov in the Altay Republic, and Police Colonel Sergey Morozov in Ulyanovskaya Oblast.

Although there were still 28 regional heads of the “Pre-Putin Draft” as of the end of 2009, within several months, as of the beginning of autumn

2010, there were only three of them remaining: Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhaev, Tomsk Governor Viktor Kress and Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov.<sup>10</sup> Also decreasing sharply was the group of erstwhile “red” governors (communists who had at one time defeated “democrats” at the polls, then subsequently suspended their membership in the party or even joined the United Russia party, such as Nikolay Vinogradov in Vladimir and Aman Tuleev in Kemerovo).

During the Soviet period, the appointment of a secretary of the Oblast Committee of the CPSU in a large industrial region to the Central Committee apparatus of the CPSU would reinforce the clan system and strengthen connections between the federal and regional elites. Now, however, no such system of “regional peerage” essentially exists. There are now three representatives of the upper echelons of regional power among the federal ministers: Sergey Sobyenin (Tyumen governor in 2001-2005), Viktor Khristenko (Chelyabinsk deputy governor in 1991-1996), and Yuriy Trutnev (Perm governor in 2000-2004). Another couple of former heads can be found at the deputy minister level, but in their cases this was more a *sine cura* than a step up the career ladder.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the number of federal level managers in gubernatorial posts has recently increased significantly.<sup>12</sup> This includes Aleksandr Misharin in Sverdlovskaya Oblast (deputy minister of transportation in 1998-2002 and 2004-2009), Dmitri Mezentsev in Irkutskaya Oblast (first deputy chairman of the Council of the Federation in 2004-2009, and before that deputy chairman of GosKomPechat in 1996-1999), Aleksey Gordeev in Voronezhskaya Oblast (minister of agriculture in 1999-2009), Aleksandr Kozlov in Orlovskaya Oblast (deputy minister of agriculture in 2004-2009, and before that head of the Department of Regional Relations in the government apparatus in 1992-1998, deputy head of the government apparatus in 2002-2004), Dmitri Dmitrienko in Murmanskaya Oblast (deputy head of the Federal Agency for Sea and Inland Water Transport in 2006-2008, deputy chairman of the State Committee for Fisheries in 2008-2009), Sergey Mitin in Novgorodskaya Oblast (deputy minister of econom-



ics in 1998-2000, deputy minister for industry, science and technology in 2000-2004, deputy minister of agriculture in 2004-2007), Igor Slyunyaev in Kostromskaya Oblast (deputy minister for cooperation with CIS member states in 1998, deputy minister of transportation in 2000-2004), and Aleksandr Karlin in Altaysky Krai (deputy minister of justice in 2000-2004, department head of the State Service Agency in the president's administration in 2004-2005). A special case was Stavropol Governor Valeriy Gaevskiy, who had come to the post from the position of deputy minister for regional development, where he had worked for a couple of months, before that had been deputy presidential representative in the Southern Federal District in 2006-2008, and even earlier had been deputy government representative for Stavropolsky Krai in 1996-2006

A new type of career path is becoming popular: becoming governor after working first as a State Duma deputy or Federation Council member. Superficially this might seem to be a political career move, but in essence differs little from the practice of Soviet times, when appointments were made through Moscow. Before occupying a high post in a region, a bureaucrat or manager would be "examined" and given the opportunity to acquire contacts in Moscow in a position of, say, instructor for the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Such was the case with Nikolay Demin (Bryanskaya Oblast), Vyacheslav Shport (Khabarovskiy Krai), Sergey Antufiev (Smolenskaya Oblast), and Andrey Nelidov (Karelia). A different kind of test can also be used before appointment to governor, when an "interloper" might be briefed and made the representative for the region in the Federal Assembly, as, for example, in the case of Andrey Turchak (Pskovskaya Oblast) or Dmitri Mezentsev (Irkutskaya Oblast). The career path of Arsen Kanokov, head of Kabardino-Balkaria, appears similar, but at one time he had gotten to the State Duma on a mandate sponsored by the Liberal Democratic Party.

A particular category of politicians comes from the business sector, such as Dmitri Zelenin (Tverskaya Oblast since 2003), Oleg Kozhemyako (Korvaysky Autonomous District, 2005-2007, Amurskaya Oblast since 2008), and

Arsen Kanokov again (Kabardino-Balkaria since 2005). Until recently, this category also included some who left the regions in 2010, such as Aleksandr Khloponin (Taymyrsky Autonomous District, 2001-2002, and Krasnoyarsky Krai, 2002-2010) and Georgy Boos (Kaliningradskaya Oblast, 2005-2010).

Recently the model of appointing young technocrats from the business sector as regional heads (after a probationary period of sorts) in a high position in the region has been gaining popularity. Examples of this are Vladimir Yakushev (Tyumenskaya Oblast since 2005), Anatoliy Brovko (Volgogradskaya Oblast since 2010), Vyacheslav Gayzer (Komi since 2010), and Lev Kuznetsov (Krasnoyarsky Krai since 2010).

Another option is “cross pollination,” when the deputy governor of one region is appointed as a governor of another, as for example Valeriy Shantsev (Nizhegorodskaya Oblast since 2005), Mikhail Men (Ivanovskaya Oblast since 2005), and Vyacheslav Nagovitsyn (Buryatia since 2007).

On the whole, it can be said that the shining, even extravagant personality, common to the governors of Yeltsin’s time, has now almost disappeared and has been preserved at best as an artifact – while the vanishing breed of old timers is coming to the end of its political life. Above all, the modern governor is a disciplined bureaucrat who is trying to be not too prominent at the federal level; therefore, the genre of group portraits best fits the gubernatorial corps.

### Gubernatorial Candidates

In autumn 2009, with the transition to the new method of selecting candidates for regional heads, not only did the respective procedures become more transparent, but an entirely new group appeared into the regional elite: gubernatorial candidates. We shall analyze the composition of this group based on the example of its first hundred: the candidates for the post of head in 31 regions, beginning with the very first region where the new method was applied – Sverdlovskaya Oblast (announced in August 2009), and ending with Bashkiria (announced in July 2010). Our sample included 103 candidates overall.

A fifth of the candidates (22 persons) were active governors, fifteen of which were reappointed. In nine cases, there were no incumbents on the rolls: in some places this was the result of early departure by a regional head (Krasnoyarsky Krai, Yakutia, Bashkiria), while in others it was reported that the governor had personally asked the president/United Russia not to consider him as a candidate for another term. Of the remaining 80 candidates, "insiders" (representatives of the current regional elites) comprised slightly more than two thirds: 56 persons, eleven of which became heads. Of 25 "outsiders" (who could be either representatives of the elites of other regions or "federals," particularly from among those who are locals by birth), five ended up becoming heads (again, one third).

The breakdown by status among the candidates is as follows: ten chairmen of the governments of the respective regions, of which two (in Tatarstan and Yakutia) became heads; nine deputy governors, of which also two (in Volgograd and Komi) became heads; and five mayors of regional centers, of which also two (in Birobidzhan and Chelyabinsk) were successful (if, however, the mayors of second cities in the region are included, the result becomes 3:3 due to the contribution of Orsk, whose mayor became the governor of Orenburg.) Incidentally, premiers and deputy governors were also among the pretenders to the top post in other regions, as well, aside from only their own regions (Perm's in Primorye, Kaluga's in Kurskaya Oblast, Tyumen's in the Khanty-Mansiysky Autonomous Region), however, without success. Numerous other regional speakers (seven of them) and fewer CFIs (four; another couple of assistants of presidential representatives in Mariy El and Yakutia could also be included) were also unsuccessful. Both of these were acting more as extras. Another point of interest is the purely status-orientated republican model, which in our sampling was seen in Tatarstan and then again in Kabardino-Balkaria, where the regional "triangle" – head/premier/speaker – was present.

Along with the representatives of the regional establishment among the candidates for the highest regional post, there were also many "federals," some connected to the region and some not. First, there were the

federal parliamentarians: eleven deputies to the State Duma, only one of whom (Natalia Komarova in the Khanty-Mansiysky Autonomous District) managed to achieve success, along with members of the Council of the Federation, of which four were active and one had only just handed over his authority (it was he, Andrey Nelidov in Karelia, who became the head.) It is noteworthy that the majority of Duma members had no connection to the regions to which they had been nominated, but were rather from the high ranks of United Russia, with status, and that the vast majority of those participating in the Oblasts were Duma members, while there were more members of the Council of the Federation in the ethnic republics. Also interesting is the fact that parliamentarians frequently would “group together” and run in pairs, for example in Kurganskaya Oblast, the Khanty-Mansiysky Autonomous District, and Karelia.

The federal government was represented by six candidates at all levels of deputy minister, as a rule originally from the region. They ran mostly in the powerful regions: Chelyabinskaya Oblast (two at once), Primorsky Krai, and Krasnoyarsky Krai. Only one of them became regional head: Aleksandr Misharin in Sverdlovskaya Oblast.

It may be said that it is difficult to make any judgments upon candidates running for governor from the United Russia party (on consultation with the Kremlin), because some of them are just *pro forma*, while others are real candidates. This may be so, although the opinions of experts on who was more and who was less serious a candidate frequently did not coincide with the final election results. In any case, however, the composition of nominees to the highest position in a region reveals how the current and prospective regional elites are perceived in Moscow.

## CFI

The chief federal inspector in a region within the apparatus of the presidential representative in a district is an innovation of the Putin era. Under Yeltsin, there were presidential representatives in the regions who in 1991 (when they were introduced) were seen as being equivalent to the

administration heads, but as a result of individual political dealing between the Kremlin and the respective governors, they gradually ended up deeply in the shadow of the strengthened heads.

Once Putin was named acting president, he also made the presidential representatives acting presidential representatives, and over the next several months in a couple of dozen regions he replaced them with his entrusted people, some of whom were active department heads of the FSB (as a second job). From this draft came, for example, Aleksandr Bespalov, current department head of Gazprom and past chairman of the General Council of the United Russia party.

In May 2000, the system of federal districts headed by the presidential representatives was introduced, with the CFIs staying in the regions. Within a few months, the appointed presidential representatives formed their administrations and appointed the CFIs. There was a great degree of sorting that went on during this process, and only one quarter of the former presidential representatives in the regions were to become CFIs.<sup>13</sup> There were two special cases: Viktor Kazantsev in the Southern Federal District had CFIs who answered for several regions at once, instead of having one for each region; and Leonid Drachevskiy in the Siberian Federal District practiced a system of rotation under which former presidential representatives in certain regions were appointed as CFIs for completely different regions. The first CFI draft of 2000 made quite a strong impression: among them were former department heads of the FSB, Drug Control, and Ministries of Internal Affairs of the respective regions, other managers of federal structures, and directors of administrations of heads and apparatuses of government.

Now, after ten years, only ten from the first CFI draft remain. The majority of the current CFIs are already the second, third, or further shifts.<sup>14</sup> Half of all the present CFIs were appointed in 2008-2010. Among them are also a couple of veterans who have simply been appointed to other regions.

Every fourth or fifth (eighteen) was from the FSB, including eleven who were already appointed under Medvedev. FSB department heads,

however, are no longer appointed; it is rather deputies and section heads.<sup>15</sup> Another nine had military backgrounds (including the Main Intelligence Directorate), three were from the police (including the CFI in St. Petersburg, and from the Main Department for Implementation of Punishment in Sverdlovskaya Oblast), and two were from the Prosecutor's Office. Thus, there were a total of 32 former *siloviki*. This does not appear to be a coincidence, considering the coordination needed for the CFI, above all by the security agencies and law enforcement. It is also no coincidence that the lion's share belongs to the FSB, since personnel work is their field. As one former CFI for Permskaya Oblast said, "we control all the rest, and they control us."<sup>16</sup>

Appointment to the post of CFI is more a political than a career move. Of the federal inspectors, only five have made it to the CFI level. In turn, the CFI is something of an evolutionary offshoot. From this post, the only likely move up would be to deputy presidential representative or to deputy governor.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, this position is not for young talent, but for serious state figures.

If previously the integration of the CFI into the local establishment was valued, then after about the mid-2000s (once control of the Center over local political elites had been reestablished), the post of CFI began to be filled more and more frequently by "outsiders" or even filled through overlapping appointments, introduced by Aleksandr Konovalov in Privolzhsky District, when, for instance, the CFIs in Kirovskaya Oblast and Ulyanovskaya Oblast were simply exchanged for one another. Recently Viktor Ishaev in the Far Eastern Federal District has been actively reshuffling the CFIs. The recent appointment of a new CFI for Perm in April 2009 is telling: it was Aleksey Andreev, former political analyst from Krasnodar, who became deputy in the State Duma, chairman of the regional executive committee of United Russia party, and then made his way to Moscow.<sup>18</sup>

Two of the active CFIs have already changed two regions each, with Viktor Ilyukhin within the Far Eastern Federal District (the Koryaksky Autonomous Region, Yakutia, Kamchatka), and Andrey Rutsinsky from the

Southern Federal District to Uralsky (Karachaevo, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Stavropol, and Tyumen).

The dean of the CFI corps is, without a doubt, Nikolay Shuba, who twenty years ago became Yeltsin's first presidential representative in Altaysky Krai, then worked a certain time in Moscow as deputy head of the Department for Coordination of Presidential Representatives in the president's administration, then again returned to Altay, and since 2002 has held the post of CFI for Moscow Oblast. Although in Altay he had been one of the most scandalous figures in the political establishment, he has rarely been visible in Moscow Oblast.

## Conclusions

Over the past years, the entire upper echelon of the regional elites has been fundamentally rebuilt, both in composition and in structure, as have the relations within the regions and with the Center, radically changing both the overall nature of these ties (for which purpose this has been undertaken), and the political situation in the regions themselves. The latter, which could have important consequences (both positive and negative), is usually underestimated. Moreover, its benefits are seen in routine, everyday life, while its negative aspects are more prone to flare up at critical moments.

Among the positive aspects is the formation of a single elite universe to replace the several dozen individual cell regions affected by mixing and cross-pollination. This will be good not only for the elites themselves, who break into the field of operations from the often small, stagnant backwaters, where they were moreover strictly controlled by a boss who was never replaced. This could also be good for the citizens, and not only due to the rise in the managers' professionalism and the quality of government, but also to the demonopolization and decentralization at the regional level.

The negative aspects include the threat of weakened ties between the citizens and the “top” and the perception of the latter by the local population as an “occupying” power imposed upon them from above – with the potential loss of control over the main corps of the regional elites and over the situations in the regions. The governor, having become a federal bureaucrat incorporated into the power vertical, is now much easier to control from the Center. Simultaneously the governor, part of his team, and the entire group of senior executives representing the various verticals of power in the region lose their connection with the local community. The entire system of command over the region from the Center begins to resemble an automobile in which the driver (trying to make things easier for himself) has made the steering very responsive by loosening the connections between the steering wheel and everything else. The steering wheel now turns easily, but it has lost its connection with the wheels that drive the automobile. That doesn’t matter so much, as long as the road ahead remains straight, but if the need should arise to make a turn, it will become apparent that in incorporating the regional elites into the various power verticals, Moscow has gone too far.

## Notes

- 1 The very concept of “elite” as it applies to contemporary Russia is by no means accepted by everyone. Without getting into a discussion on the extent to which the Russian elites have taken root and are seen as good, the extent that they are seen as “the cream of society” (a role they aspire to) or the extent to which society accepts their role, etc., we will use the functional definition of the concept of “elite” as our point of departure. Thus, membership in the elite is established based on an individual having real power and influence, with no great reliance on their intellect or moral/ethical qualities. Based upon this approach, in the vast majority of cases, membership in the elite is established by having a position in the administrative system. For this reason, the current Russian elite may be called “bosses.” At one time, Petr Kropotkin, a prominent Russian philosopher of the end of the 19th-beginning of the 20th century, sug-



- gested this term for the power elites in general. Here, however, the emphasis will be on the fact that membership in the elite is determined by external factors, i.e. the person's post, which can be given or taken away.
- 2 These include, above all, the changes in the procedures for forming the Council of the Federation and appointing the heads of the regional Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), introducing the post of chief federal inspector, restructuring joint authorities to the advantage of the Center, unification of the electoral and political systems, and installing regional links in the numerous new verticals: anti-terrorism and anti-drug commissions, electoral committees, parties, etc.
  - 3 N. Petrov and D. Slider, "The Regions Under Putin and After," in *After Putin's Russia: past imperfect, future uncertain*, ed. S. K. Wegren and D. R. Herspring, 4th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield Publ.: 2010), PP. 59-82; "Regional Governors under the Dual Power of Medvedev and Putin," *J. of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 26, № 2 (June 2010): PP. 276-305.
  - 4 This was the case of Oleg Kozhemyako, who before becoming head of the Amurskaya Oblast headed the Koryak Autonomous Region, and before that ran for the post of governor of Primorie.
  - 5 G. Derlugian, "Stabilizatsionnaya politsistema v poiskakh dinamizma?" *Otsenka sostoyania i perspektiv politicheskoy sistemy Rossiyskoy Federatsii v 2008 god- nachale 2009 goda*. 1st annual report of the Institute of Social Engineering.
  - 6 Take, for example, Andrey Yarin. In his less than forty years he has managed to work as head of the government of Kabardino-Balkaria for three years (2006-2009), before which he had been the premier of the Ryazanskaya Oblast (2004-2005), first vice premier of Chechnya (2002-2003), and vice governor of Vladimirskaya Oblast (2001-2003); moreover, each time between regional appointments he worked in federal agencies: the Immigration Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Drug Control Agency, and the Office of the presidential representative for the Southern Federal District. Mikhail Babich (same age) in 2000-2003 managed to have been both vice governor of the Moscow and Ivanovskaya Oblasts and head of the government in Chechnya. Then there is Sergey Voronov, the vice governor of Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (1992-1993, 1997), Krasnoyarsky Krai (2002-2003), and Irkutskaya Oblast (2007-2008), and Deputy Mayor of Nizhny Novgorod. Sergey Sokol: vice governor of Krasnoyarsky Krai (2002-2008) and Irkutskaya Oblast (2008-2009), and former candidate for head of the Altay Republic.

- 7 Officially as of July 1, 2010, there were 83 Federation administrative units in the country; however, the number of positions for the federal “generals” is less than that, due to the “doubling up” of the capital’s departments of the FSB (for Moscow and the Moscow Oblast and for St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Oblast) and the State Department of Internal Affairs for St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Oblast. In the past, there have even been cases of chief federal inspectors heading not one, but two or more regions (especially in the Southern Federal District).
- 8 The basis for the present section is the chapter, “Politicheskie i biznes-elity” in the book: *Vlast, biznes, obshchestvo v regionakh: nepravilny treugolnik*, ed. N. Petrov and A. Titkov, Carnegie Moscow Center (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010).
- 9 At the beginning of the Putin presidency the Kremlin relied upon the generals and in every way promoted them as potential heads of the regions. These were the department heads of the FSB: Vladimir Kulakov in Voronezh, Viktor Maslov in Smolensk, and Murat Zyazikov in Ingushetia; police generals such as Alu Alkhanov in Chechnya; and Armed Forces generals such as Vladimir Shamanov in Ulyanovskaya Oblast and Georgiy Shpak in Ryazanskaya Oblast. Later, however, after the Kremlin lost faith in their effectiveness as administrators, many of them were removed and no replacements were appointed.
- 10 In October 2010, former head of the government apparatus Sergei Sobyenin was appointed to replace Yury Luzhkov, removed as mayor of Moscow.
- 11 Alu Alkhanov, former president of Chechnya (2004-2007), is now deputy minister of justice; Aleksandr Chernogorov, former Stavropol governor (1996-2008) is deputy minister of agriculture.
- 12 It is noteworthy that the migration of federal bureaucrats to the regions had taken place in the past as well. For example, Nikolay Fedorov in Chuvashia (1994-2010) had been federal minister of justice (1991-1993); Boris Gromov in the Moscow Oblast (since 2000) had been first deputy minister of internal affairs back in the USSR (1990-1991) and Russian deputy minister of defense (1992-1995); Orenburg Governor Aleksey Chernyshev (1999-2010) had been deputy minister for agriculture in 1993-1994; and St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matvienko (since 2003) had been vice premier in 1998-2003.
- 13 Only nineteen of Yeltsin’s presidential representatives and four of the number appointed by Putin in January 2000 ended up being appointed to new positions as chief federal inspector. See: N. Zubarevich, N. Petrov, and A. Titkov, “Federal Districts–2000,” *Regions of Russia in 1999*, Annual supplement to

- Politicheskyy Almanakh Rossii*, ed. N. Petrov, Carnegie Moscow Center (Moscow: Gendalf, 2001), pp. 173-196.
- 14 Besides the aforementioned Southern Federal District, where the CFIs work under a different principle, most of their replacement was observed in the district capitals, except St. Petersburg and Moscow, where they are not very prominent and are not considered among the most influential of the players (in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast over ten years six inspectors were replaced), as well as in regions of conflict: Primorsky and Permsky Krai, Kaliningradskaya, Kamchatskaya, Ulyanovskaya Oblasts, Yakutia and the Nenetsky Autonomous Region (at four replacements each). Another important factor was the replacement of the presidential representatives. Therefore, in the Central Federal District, where the presidential representative was not replaced, the CFIs have been more stable.
- 15 An exception was Vladimir Kabanov, appointed in 2008 as chief federal inspector for Orlovskaya Oblast, where the entire administrative elite was replaced.
- 16 Interview with CFI for Permskaya Oblast and Komi-Permyatsky Autonomous Region Nikolay Fadeev (2002). See: *Federal Reforms 2000-2003* (Moscow: MONF, 2003), vol. 1, *Federal Districts*, pp. 498-512.
- 17 From the time when the list of gubernatorial candidates was officially published, the chief federal inspectors have already been named several times in this capacity, but every time in order to give real pretenders company. However, in mid-2010 two former CFIs were appointed to high posts simultaneously: Rustem Khamitov, who had held this post in 2000-2002 in Bashkiria, became president of Bashkiria, while Vadim Yakovenko, who had worked in this post in 2006-2008 in Krasnodarsky Krai, became the department head of the Investigative Committee for Moscow.
- 18 Here is what Andreev himself had to say: "The documents were submitted to the personnel reserve for the President's Administration at the end of last year. Geographically I went to the regions of the Volga Federal District. One of the first vacancies that appeared in the District was that of the chief federal inspector in Permsky Krai. Based upon this, they suggested that I consider the possibility of being appointed to that position. After three or four days of consultation and familiarization with the region, I decided to agree." (*Business-class*, April 27, 2009).

