

NDI'S FINAL PRE-ELECTION REPORT ON THE DECEMBER 19, 1999 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

December 19, 1999

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I. INTRODUCTION

On December 19, 1999, the citizens of the Russian Federation will go to the polls to elect the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament. This is the third such election since the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991. In a country burdened by hundreds of years of dictatorship, this is a remarkable achievement. Moreover, the laws governing these elections are basically the same as those that shaped the first post-Communist legislative elections in 1993. While the process of political party formation is far from finished in Russia, voters will be able to choose among established groups with identifiable ideological outlooks.

As in 1995, these elections will in many ways be shaped by the presidential elections, currently scheduled to take place in June 2000. As a result, a key element of the 1999 State Duma campaign is the confrontation between President Yeltsin and the main party running in opposition to him - Fatherland-All Russia.

This pre-election report provides a guide to understanding the Russian parliamentary elections that will take place on December 19, 1999. Overviews of the legislative structure and the political context of these elections are framed by an examination of the political parties competing in the elections. An appendix provides detailed discussion of electoral procedure and campaign restrictions imposed by the election law.

Legislative Framework of the Elections

The Russian constitution was adopted after a violent stand-off between President Yeltsin and the Soviet-era legislature still in office in 1993, and was designed to give the president extensive powers. The constitution established a federal system of government with a bicameral legislature called the Federal Assembly.

The upper house of the Federal Assembly, the Federation Council, seats two representatives from each of Russia's 89 constituent entities (republic, oblast, krai or okrug). Usually these representatives have been the speaker of the provincial legislature and the governor or his equivalent. The Federation Council either approves or rejects legislation debated and passed by the lower house of the Federal Assembly.

The lower house of the Federal Assembly, the State Duma, has 450 members. According to the election law, half of the Duma deputies are elected on a majoritarian basis from single-mandate districts. The other 225 are chosen on a proportional basis from party lists. A party

must garner at least 5 percent of the national vote (with possible exceptions that are explained below) in order for its members to gain any of the 225 seats allocated by party lists. All 450 Duma seats are up for re-election every four years, and it is these seats that will be decided in the December elections. For a more detailed discussion of the single mandate and proportional representation aspects of the electoral system, see the Appendix.

While the basic structure of the electoral system remains as it was in 1995, three-fourths of the articles of the election law itself have been changed. Most of these changes affect how candidates and parties raise and spend money. For a more detailed discussion of electoral procedures and guidelines set forth in the current election law, see the Appendix.

II. THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Campaign

The issue dominating public attention during the campaign has been the struggle between forces loyal to President Yeltsin and those aligned with Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and his ally, former Prime Minister Evgeni Primakov. Luzhkov and Primakov represent *Fatherland*, the political bloc created by Luzhkov, in unification with a loose political association of governors called *All Russia*.

Since last year, Yeltsin and his associates have made attempts to create a political organization that could successfully compete in the upcoming parliamentary elections and support a single candidate for the presidential elections in 2000. In September, this new Kremlin-backed political organization was announced. This group, called the Interregional Association "Unity" - often referred to as *Medved* (Bear) - is made up mostly of governors not associated with Luzhkov's *Fatherland-All Russia*. The governors associated with Unity frequently hold opposing views, and seem to share only their regions' dependence on financial handouts from the national government. However, these governors have significant political assets, including control over regional media and administrative organs.

A unique characteristic of the 1999 parliamentary campaigns is the active participation of these governors and other regional leaders. This involvement stems, to a large extent, from the realization by these leaders that their seats in the Federation Council do not provide sufficient influence on the legislation passed by the Federal Assembly. By taking an active role in the campaign for the lower house of the Federal Assembly, they believe they can shape the outcome of the election and thereby leverage greater influence over the legislative process.

The War in Chechnya

The events of late summer and fall of 1999 in Russia have substantially influenced the Russian political landscape during the current State Duma campaign. In August 1999, President Yeltsin fired Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin and appointed Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the former head of the Federal Security Service (successor to the KGB). By the end of the month, Russia was involved in a bloody confrontation in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan, to oust Chechen invaders. Several weeks later the country was shocked by a number of explosions that caused massive loss of life. Russian authorities attributed the explosions to Chechen terrorists and launched a second war in Chechnya to remove the independence-oriented guerilla forces in that region.

According to opinion polls, the vast majority of Russians see the crisis

in Chechnya as a resolute response to terrorism. This has led to an unprecedented surge in Prime Minister Putin's popularity.

The Role of the Central Election Commission

The CEC has taken an uncharacteristically active role in determining who can and cannot participate in these elections. In 1995 the CEC was willing to allow a large number of parties and blocs on the ballot; this time it has been more active in exercising its right to limit the field. The commission has done this by scrutinizing the registration applications of blocs and candidates, and excluding members from the list for irregularities in their financial statements. In the case of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, the CEC excluded two of the first three names on its party list and thus disqualified the entire party from the elections. Zhirinovskiy subsequently created Zhirinovskiy's Bloc as a means for the LDPR to compete. In early December, though, the court ordered the CEC to register the LDPR. The CEC obliged, but removed Zhirinovskiy from the LDPR list because he was already at the head of the Zhirinovskiy's Bloc list. As a result, there were two Zhirinovskiy organizations on the ballot. In a final twist, on December 8 the Supreme Court's presidium overruled the lower court's ruling and affirmed the CEC's ruling denying the LDPR's registration.

The Role of Civic Organizations in the Campaign

Although civic advocacy is still a relatively new concept in Russia, the parliamentary elections have provided an opportunity for civic groups to bring their interests to the attention of political parties, candidates and the public. Civic organizations have also played a more important role in the election than in the past, through non-partisan voter education, election monitoring and voter turn-out activities. Below are several examples of civic organizations and their election-related activities.

The Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG), one of the longest surviving and best established human rights organizations active in Russia today, is currently implementing a project called "A System of Public Control Over the 1999 Parliamentary Elections," which aims to ensure citizens' electoral rights and restore public faith in democratic procedures. The project will coordinate affiliates in 70 different regions of the Russian Federation. These groups will be comprised of MHG regional chapters and other non-profit organizations. Depending on their resources and areas of expertise, each regional group will be involved in pre-election monitoring activities and voter education. MHG will function as a national coordinator and as a clearinghouse for reporting on election law violations.

The New Perspectives Foundation (NPF) is a non-governmental civic organization that was established in 1995 to promote political activism among Russian youth. NPF is a national organization with over 4,000 members and chapters in 52 regions of Russia, as well as in other nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Its young and active membership is committed to making electoral politics in Russia more accessible and credible. NPF has engaged in independent voter education and mobilization activities, including an August march from Moscow to Novorossiisk to generate interest in the Duma elections.

The Indem Foundation (which stands for Information for Democracy) and the Russian Union of Journalists are carrying out a joint project to gather and disseminate information on campaign violations using an electronic network. The project will establish an information and communication network with the aid of volunteers, non-governmental organizations and mass media representatives. Indem was established in 1990 as an independent political science organization.

Using modern information technologies in social and political studies, Indem conducts studies of public opinion, political forecasting and planning. The Russian Union of Journalists is a professional association of journalists. This federal-level organization coordinates with regional journalists' unions.

III. PARTIES AND ELECTORAL BLOCS

Political Parties and the State Duma

While the basic contours of a stable party system are beginning to emerge in Russia, the process of party consolidation has been slow, and political parties still are quite weak. Political parties are not significant forces in most political institutions, such as the Cabinet of Ministers, the Federation Council or regional administrations and legislatures. The State Duma is the only governing institution in Russia where political parties have considerable leverage. This is a consequence both of the importance of party list proportional representation in the electoral system and the rules of order in the Duma.

The electoral system stipulates that one half of the Duma's 450 seats are distributed through a system of party list voting. The deputies that have received their Duma seats in this way have primary allegiance to their party, and are dependent on being in the party's favor for re-election. For this reason, faction discipline has generally been highest among those deputies elected by virtue of the party list.

Applying standard forms of political classification, such as right and left, or conservative and liberal, even communist and nationalist, to Russia's volatile political environment is often misleading. For example, the communists wear the conservative mantle in Russia, generally opposing radical change and the perceived moral degradation of Russian society. Therefore, when Vladimir Ryzhkov, leader of the centrist Our Home Is Russia (NDR) faction in the Russian legislature, suggests that NDR should become a conservative party, he is trying to move into a niche that is already squarely filled by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF).

Moreover, the difference between communists and nationalists is also becoming less defined. In Russia one must differentiate between the leftist nationalists, such as the Movement in Support of the Army, and the rightist nationalists, such as the Zhirinovskiy group. The primary distinction is the organizations' attitudes toward private entrepreneurship. Within the group of reformers' parties, one must also differentiate on the basis of the intensity of their association (or lack thereof) with President Yeltsin and his administration.

With these caveats, the following is an analysis of the various parties along the political spectrum that are competing in the December parliamentary elections.

The Reformers

Yabloko
Union of Right Forces
Our Home Is Russia (NDR)
Bloc of Andrey Nikolayev and Svyatoslav Fedorov
Social Democrats
Socialist Party of Russia (SPR)

Establishment

Fatherland-All Russia
Interregional Movement "Unity" ("Medved")

Communists

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF)
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Russian People's Union (RPU)
Spiritual Heritage (SH)
Stalinist Bloc: Labor Russia - Officers for the USSR
Communists and Workers of Russia - for the Soviet Union
Party of Peace and Unity

Nationalists

Zhirinovskiy's Bloc
Congress of Russian Communities (CRC) and Yury Boldyrev's
Movement
Movement of Patriotic Forces - Russian Cause

One Issue Parties

All-Russian Socialist Party of People
Russian Socialist Party
Russian Party for the Protection of Women
For Civil Dignity
Conservative Party of Russia
Women of Russia
Peace, Work, May
Party of Pensioners

THE REFORMERS

The division among the reformist groups is between organizations that have been associated with President Yeltsin and those that have been critical of the conception and implementation of reforms by his government.

The only comparatively strong party in the reformers' category is Yabloko. If other reformist parties do not clear the 5 percent threshold, and thus perish, Yabloko will keep the reformist cause alive in the next Russian parliament and in Russian society.

Yabloko

Yabloko calls itself the party of democratic opposition. It stresses its opposition to the way reforms have been conducted in Russia and describes the current regime as corrupt and inept. Its ideological platform attempts to combine concepts of free enterprise and private property with the social democratic ideas of a security net, a strong state and government intervention in the economy.

Yabloko was formed as an electoral bloc on the eve of the December 1993 State Duma elections. Yabloko means "apple" in Russian. Three small parties also joined the bloc: the Republican Party of Russia, the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union. Early on, the party was completely dependent on its leader, Grigory Yavlinsky, but with time it acquired a distinct ideology and a team of leaders.

During the elections to the second State Duma (1995), the federal Yabloko list was headed by Yavlinsky, Vladimir Lukin and Tatiana Yarygina. On December 17, 1995, Yabloko gained over 4.7 million votes (6.89 percent), winning fourth place. Yabloko won 31 proportional system mandates and 14 single seat constituency mandates in the Duma. Yabloko is strongest in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The structure of Yabloko and its activity have undergone some

changes since the organization's founding. It continues to be a parliamentary party oriented towards active participation in the legislature, but it has also developed an extensive regional network and a broader electoral base. Also, the faction's work has become more effective. At the end of August 1999, Sergei Stepashin, the former Prime Minister, allied with Yabloko for the State Duma elections, which seemed to improve Yabloko's positioning.

In other words, Yabloko has become a vibrant political party embracing both social democratic and liberal values, and strongly opposing the current pattern of government. According to Yabloko, the present regime in the country is a "corporate, oligarchic, semi-criminal system" based on former Soviet monopolies. Yabloko's chief goal in the political sphere is to develop civil society, make Russia a civilized state, and create a competitive, socially oriented market economy.

Leaders

Grigory Yavlinsky: State Duma Deputy, Chairman of Yabloko, head of the Yabloko faction, founder and director of the Center for Economic and Political Studies ("EPIcenter"), a Yabloko economic think tank.

Sergei Stepashin: Former minister of internal affairs of Russia, former Prime Minister of Russia (May-August 1999).

Vladimir Lukin: Former Ambassador to the US, State Duma Deputy, Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Foreign Affairs, first Vice Chairman of Yabloko, first deputy head of Yabloko faction in the State Duma.

Viacheslav Igrunov: Former dissident, State Duma Deputy, Vice Chairman of the State Duma Committee for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Vice Chairman of Yabloko for party building, head of Yabloko State Duma campaign.

Union of Right Forces

The Union of Right Forces is a complex coalition of small parties somewhat hesitantly united around Democratic Choice of Russia (DCR), a party headed by two of Russia's lead reformers, Yegor Gaidar and Anatoly Chubais.

The first public step toward forming such a coalition was taken soon after the murder of a prominent leader of the first generation of democrats, State Duma Deputy Galina Starovoitova, in November 1998. In December 1998, the creation of the Right Cause coalition was announced. The idea behind the coalition was to unite right-of-center parties that failed to cross the 5 percent threshold in the 1995 parliamentary elections in the hope that as a united force they could make it into the Duma.

Among the smaller parties were former Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov's Young Russia; what remained of Democratic Russia (led since the murder of Galina Starovoitova by Lev Ponomarev and Andrei Frolov); Irina Khakamada's Common Cause, which has a small but committed group of supporters, mostly in Moscow; the Peasants' Party; the Republican Party of Russia; Russia's Free Democrats; and the Party of Economic Freedom.

In August 1999, former Prime Minister Sergei Kirienko, with his party New Force, joined Right Cause. At about the same time, Samara

Governor Konstantin Titov's Voice of Russia entered the alliance. With the new additions the group took the name Union of Right Forces.

Democratic Choice of Russia

The coalition's main organization, DCR was formed after the October 1993 coup. It intended to get votes from traditional democratic supporters as well as those who had benefitted from post-communist reforms. The party won 15 percent of the vote in the 1993 elections, and had the largest faction in the Duma (because it also won a considerable number of single mandate races).

Until the Russian military intervention in Chechnya, DCR was Yeltsin's most loyal supporter in the Duma. It had hoped to rely on presidential support in the 1995 elections. This expectation was frustrated after Gaidar voiced his opposition to Yeltsin on the issue of Chechnya. Several party leaders, such as Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and party deputy chairman and chief financier Oleg Boiko, left DCR at that time, apparently unwilling to undermine their relationships with Yeltsin. DCR received only 4.6 percent of the vote in 1995, disqualifying it from receiving proportional mandates. DCR's only representation in the current Duma comes from a small group of its single mandate deputies.

Despite its poor showing at the polls in the December 1995 Duma election, DCR still had members in key positions of the government, most notably Anatoly Chubais (at different times Deputy Prime Minister, Head of Presidential Administration and First Deputy Prime Minister) and former Chairman of the Federal Tax Bureau Alexander Pochinok. In the 1996 and 1997 regional elections, DCR's only real success was in the Moscow City Duma race.

Voice of Russia

The Union of Right Forces added an important regional figure to its ranks when Governor of Samara Oblast Konstantin Titov and his small party Voice of Russia joined the coalition. Voice of Russia was formed in the beginning of 1999 and embraces a number of significant regional leaders.

The Union of Right Forces' campaign has focused on the idea that democratic forces are united, and therefore are worth supporting. The coalition's main slogan has been, "Together we will win." The Union of Right Forces has implemented a major door-to-door canvassing campaign. In addition, the Union of Right Forces has attempted to appeal to young voters through a series of concerts featuring popular bands.

The ideologies of the smaller parties in this alliance remain unclear. However, DCR's positions have long been well articulated. DCR combines a concern for human rights and civic freedoms with laissez-faire concepts of a free market economy. (The latter ties it to traditional liberalism in the European sense.)

Leaders

Sergei Kirienko: Leader of New Force, an organization created at the beginning of 1999; former Prime Minister (April-August 1998); former Deputy Minister and Minister for Fuel and Energy; former president of a Nizhny Novgorod bank and oil firm.

Boris Nemtsov: Former Deputy Prime Minister (March 1997 - August 1998); former Governor of Nizhny Novgorod Oblast (December 1995 -

March 1997); Leader and founder of Young Russia Party.

Irina Khakamada: Leader of Common Cause Party; former State Duma Deputy and former Chair of the State Committee for Support and Development of Small and Medium Businesses (1997-1998); former businesswoman.

Our Home Is Russia

Our Home Is Russia (NDR) was born out of an attempt by the Yeltsin administration to replace Democratic Choice of Russia (DCR) with a more manageable organization following DCR's dissent on Russian military involvement in Chechnya. By creating this party, President Yeltsin withdrew support from his initial allies. NDR was formed in April 1995 with then Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as its leader. As a "party" created entirely from above, it has never managed to develop a real regional structure or grass roots support.

NDR attracted nicknames such as "*Nash Dom Gazprom*," ("Our Home is Gazprom") a reference to Chernomyrdin's close ties with the Russian natural gas monopoly. As this name would indicate, NDR was seen as a grouping of not only political but also financial elites, and became the target of many anti-administration attacks. Due to its position as the "party of power," however, many regional leaders pledged loyalty to NDR, mostly with little action to implement that pledge. In the 1995 Duma elections the party won 10.13 percent of the vote, meaning 45 deputies from the party list and 10 more from single mandate districts.

NDR has been left struggling to find its place since Chernomyrdin's dismissal as Prime Minister in April 1998 and his ill-fated attempt at a return in early September of that year. NDR lost many of its key members to the new bloc. In September of 1999, Forward Russia joined NDR, and Boris Fyodorov, who leads that movement, became fourth on the party list.

While NDR has seen many of its powerful members desert and its status slip since Chernomyrdin's dismissal as prime minister, the group still claims to have a large number of regional leaders and still has a major Duma faction. Its parliamentary presence, however, has also shrunk. Despite these significant setbacks and predictions that it would collapse altogether, NDR is running on its own in these elections.

In this campaign, it is likely that NDR will also have access to solid financial support, which may help them cross the 5 percent threshold -- the party's goal. Several governors have not completely abandoned NDR. If they can be convinced to support the movement, its chances will greatly improve.

Leaders

Viktor Chernomyrdin: Former Prime Minister (1993 to 1998); former head of Russian gas monopoly Gazprom; current chairman of Gazprom's board of directors; former Minister for the Gas Industry of the Soviet Union; member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1986-1990).

Vladimir Ryzhkov: Leader of NDR faction in the State Duma; Duma Deputy since 1993; former member of the Russia's Choice party; NDR member since 1995.

Dmitry Ayatskov: Governor of Saratov Oblast.

Boris Fyodorov: Former head of the State Tax Service; former Deputy Prime Minister; former Minister of Finance; leader of the Forward Russia party; former State Duma Deputy; executive director from Russia of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Washington, DC since 1992. Boris Fyodorov is running a concurrent campaign for the governor of Moscow Oblast, the region surrounding the city of Moscow. He is competing with the incumbent Governor Tyazhlov who is close to Moscow's Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

Bloc of Andrei Nikolayev and Svyatoslav Fedorov

This is an election alliance of social democratic orientation. The bloc includes social democratic organizations, among them the Union of People's Power and Labor; the Party of Workers' Self-Government; the Russian Movement for New Socialism (RMNS); and the Socialist Party of Workers (SPW). Despite the comparative prominence of its leaders, the bloc is not expected to clear the 5 percent threshold.

Leaders

Andrei Nikolayev: Head of the Union of People's Power and Labor.

Svyatoslav Fyodorov: Famous eye surgeon and head of the Party of Workers' Self-Government.

Tatyana Maljutina

Social-Democrats

This organization with a social democratic agenda was created on the basis of the Russian Movement for Democratic Reform and the Russian Social Democratic People's Party. Its leader is Gavriil Popov, former perestroika leader, academic economist and the first democratically elected mayor of Moscow. He convened the fourth Congress of the Social Democrats Movement on October 9, 1999.

Mikhail Gorbachev was guest of honor at the congress. The congress decided to create a united social democratic party. The CEC approved the federal list on October 18, 1999. Vasily Popov, Gavriil Popov's son, is among the three leaders at the top of the federal list. Gavriil Popov himself is not on the list. The Social Democrats are unlikely to pass the 5 percent threshold.

Leaders

Vladimir Belyayev

Tatyana Tsyba

Vasily Popov

Socialist Party of Russia (SPR)

The Socialist Party of Russia (SPR), like the Social Democrats, has a left of center, social democratic character. The party was created in March 1996. The predecessors of the Socialist Party of Russia were the movement "Harmony" and the Bloc of Ivan Rybkin, formed on the eve of the 1995 Duma elections. In April 1995, President Yeltsin disclosed that he had given instructions to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the Speaker of the first State Duma Ivan Rybkin to form two political blocs, "right of center" and "left of center" respectively. Ivan Rybkin's bloc failed spectacularly in the 1995 State Duma elections.

Leaders

Ivan Rybkin

Leonid Mayorov

Andrei Belishko

THE ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES

Most organizations represented in this section are very loose alliances of national or regional leaders already holding office.

Fatherland-All Russia

Fatherland-All Russia is a union of two loose alliances. One, Fatherland, is mostly a structure uniting Moscow city authorities with some regional allies. The other, All Russia, is dominated by regional leaders such as the presidents of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and St. Petersburg Governor Vladimir Yakovlev. Governor Yakovlev agreed to lead All Russia and he occupies the third place in the Fatherland-All Russia alliance.

Fatherland-All Russia is, in principle, devoid of ideology. It claims it will maintain stability, avoid extremes, and institute a strong state bureaucracy. Fatherland-All Russia's history has been brief, but since its formation in mid-1999 it has pulled many powerful politicians into its ranks. In doing so it has put itself in direct conflict with the Kremlin.

At the end of August 1999, former Prime Minister (and also former State Security chief, former Foreign Minister, and academician) Evgeni Primakov joined Fatherland-All Russia and was given the top spot on the party list followed by Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov and Governor of St. Petersburg Vladimir Yakovlev. The addition of Primakov, who until recently was the country's most popular politician, strengthened the bloc. In addition to Primakov, the leadership of the Agrarian party and a large majority of its members deserted the Communists in August 1999 in favor of the Fatherland-All Russia bloc.

Fatherland-All Russia calls itself a centrist organization. It has positioned itself in opposition to the Yeltsin administration and its course of economic reform, and it has distanced itself from the Communists. On economic issues, the bloc supports a market economy in principle, but talks of heavy state control, including state ownership. A number of enterprises should remain nationalized and many enterprises that have been privatized should be re-nationalized. Luzhkov also points to his success in Moscow, a city he claims is in relatively good shape compared to the rest of the country.

The tone of Fatherland's campaign is patriotic and, at times, anti-Western. Its stated goal is "the strengthening of Russia's state sovereignty." It calls for the defense of ethnic Russians living in former Soviet states, and the restoration of Russia's dominance in the area around Russia. Mayor Luzhkov has repeatedly called for return of Russian control over the Ukrainian port city of Sevastopol.

Leaders

Yevgeny Primakov: Former Prime Minister (1998-1999); former Foreign Minister; academician, specializing in the Middle East; former deputy chairman of the KGB and head of the First Chief Directorate, which engaged in foreign intelligence; former director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service.

Yuri Luzhkov: Mayor of Moscow since 1992 with a previous career in that city's government. He has built a reputation not only on his supposed management skills and ability to attract investment, but also by his nationalist rhetoric on issues concerning the Russian role on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Vladimir Yakovlev: Governor of St. Petersburg since 1996. Yakovlev

had been Deputy Mayor of the city since 1993. Prior to entering politics he had worked in the construction and housing branches of the Leningrad and St. Petersburg city administration.

Interregional Movement Unity ("Medved")

This is President Yeltsin's bloc for the 1999 State Duma elections. The creation of the bloc was preceded by a joint statement made by 39 governors. The statement expressed dissatisfaction with how the campaign had been conducted thus far. The wording of "the statement of 39" was so vague that both a Communist and a Gaidar supporter signed it. This is why a number of the 39 governors has subsequently distanced themselves from the bloc.

Sergei Shoigu, Minister for Emergency Situations, accepted the invitation on September 24, 1999 from the group of 39 governors to head the new bloc with the official name of Interregional Movement Unity (the acronym for which sounds somewhat like the Russian word for bear, "Medved," which has become the bloc's unofficial nickname). Unity does not have a program or an ideology apart from support for the government of Prime Minister Putin and the appeal to put practical management above politics.

Leaders

Sergei Shoigu: Minister for Emergency situations.

Alexander Karelin: World champion in wrestling; adviser to the Prime Minister

Alexander Gurov: General; former employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

THE COMMUNISTS

One of the dominant political tendencies in Russia is the increasing convergence of communist and nationalist organizations. Accordingly, this section has included some organizations that have sprung out of the Communist Party or that regard the Communist agenda on state property and control as important as their Russian nationalist objective.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF)

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) is the largest political organization in contemporary Russia. It claims more than 600,000 members, and while this figure may be inflated, KPRF membership is widespread. The party is represented at all levels of government; among its supporters there are more than 40 members on the Federation Council (the upper Chamber of the Russian parliament), 159 deputies in the State Duma (the lower Chamber), and a significant number of deputies in regional legislatures.

In August 1991, President Yeltsin banned the Communist Party by decree. Two years later, the Constitutional Court ruled this decree invalid and in February 1993 a "uniting" congress was held which restored the party and elected Gennady Zyganov its chairman. He continues to hold this position.

In the 1993 election the KPRF won 6.7 million votes and formed a Duma faction of 47 deputies. In 1995, the KPRF received 15.4 million votes, winning 99 seats through the party list. Sixty candidates nominated by the party won in single-mandate districts.

In a significant number of regions the KPRF has managed to form its own factions in local legislatures. The KPRF's influence is especially notable in the "red belt" region encircling Moscow.

The KPRF has actively and often successfully sought to bloc privatization, and slow down economic reforms. It has been particularly active in opposing the implementation of the constitutional right of private ownership of land.

The KPRF's leaders reportedly see the 1999 elections as an important but difficult process. They face competition from middle-of-the-road parties that have adopted anti-private property programs. The KPRF hopes to hold onto older voters who are nostalgic about the Communist past and who are dependent on a government pension.

Leaders

Gennady Zyuganov: State Duma Deputy; leader of the parliamentary faction and party chairman; former Central Committee member of the CPSU.

Gennady Seleznev: State Duma Deputy; Speaker of the State Duma.

Valentin Kuptsov: State Duma Deputy; Secretary of the Central Committee of the KPRF, responsible for ideology.

Svetlana Goryacheva: State Duma Deputy, Deputy Chairman of the party, leader of the Communist women's movement.

Movement to Support the Army, Military Industry and Science (DPA)

DPA is a communist and nationalist organization. Its leaders have acquired notoriety in various ways, such as trying to prosecute Mikhail Gorbachev for high treason, and for extreme anti-Semitism. One leader's notable action was the firing of two American professors from the Baltic Technical University in St. Petersburg during the Kosovo crisis.

If elected to the State Duma, DPA intends to strive to abolish the position of president, have heads of the executive in all regions and at all levels appointed by legislatures, nationalize the fuel and energy industries, review the results of "criminal privatization," and reestablish relations with Russia's "traditional allies" -- Libya, Iraq and Cuba.

DPA attracts media attention, mostly because of General Makashov's anti-Semitic invectives. DPA leaders are critical of their former allies in the Communist Party for selling out to the "criminal regime" of President Yeltsin.

Leaders

Viktor Ilyukhin

Albert Makashov

Yury Savelyev

Russian People's Union (RPU)

The Russian People's Union (RPU) is really a one-man party founded by nationalist State Duma Deputy Sergei Baburin.

Sergei Baburin was a People's Deputy of Russia and member of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR in 1990-1993. Since late 1991, he has been the leader of Russian People's Union (RPU). During the

September-October 1993 standoff between President Yeltsin and the parliament he actively worked on the side of the communist majority in the parliament. In December 1993, he was elected State Duma Deputy in a single mandate district, and re-elected in 1995. In the Duma he founded the faction Narodovlastiye (People's Power).

Leaders

Sergei Baburin
Nikolai Leonov
Nikolai Pavlov

Spiritual Heritage (SH)

Spiritual Heritage (SH) is another communist and nationalist organization, until recently a close ally of the KPRF. It is considered to be relatively moderate and its leader, Alexei Podberezkin, is often seen on television. Pyotr Proskurin, a nationalist and leader of the Union of Writers of Russia, is another leader of SH. In a curious twist, SH claims that works of Ivan Ilyin, a conservative emigre philosopher and monarchist, are the basis for its ideology.

Leaders

Alexei Podberezkin
Pyotr Proskurin
Valery Vorotnikov

Stalinist Bloc: Labor Russia - Officers for the USSR

This bloc combines radical communists, followers of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, and Russian nationalists. All are determined to restore the Soviet Union. Victor Anpilov's Labor Russia and Stanislav Terekhov's Union of Officers form the core of the bloc.

The top three leaders on the federal list are Victor Anpilov, Stanislav Terekhov and Evgeni Dzhugashvili, who is Stalin's grandson. The Stalinist Bloc is unlikely to clear the 5 percent threshold.

Leaders

Victor Anpilov: Head of Labor Russia.
Stanislav Terekhov: Head of the Union of Forces.
Evgeni Dzhugashvili: Grandson of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

Communists and Workers of Russia - for the Soviet Union

This bloc is referred to as the Communists of Russia. It is a radical communist organization based on the Russian Communist Labor Party (RKRП). In previous elections it ran together with Victor Anpilov's group and got 4.8 percent of the vote. The bloc has an organizational network and had it remained united with other radical communists, it might have garnered enough votes to secure representation in the State Duma. As it is, its chances are negligible.

Leaders

Viktor Tyulkin
Anatoly Kryuchkov
Vladimir Aseyev

Party of Peace and Unity

This tiny party of communist internationalists (who oppose the Russian nationalism of the KPRF) supports restoration of the USSR. It is mostly known due to its charismatic leader, a Chechen woman named Sazhi Umalatova. As Deputy to the Congress of People's Deputies on December 17, 1990, she demanded the resignation of

President Mikhail Gorbachev. The party of Peace and Unity has existed since 1996. It was registered as an electoral movement on October 10, 1999. The party has virtually no chance of gaining proportional representation seats in the State Duma.

Leaders

Sazhi Umalatova
Viktor Stepanov
Nikolai Antoshkin

NATIONALISTS

Traditionally, Russian nationalists have blended easily with Russian communists, because the primary goal is usually restoration of a Russian-dominated Soviet Union. This chapter lists mostly non-communist nationalists.

Zhirinovskiy's Bloc

The election bloc is built around the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The LDPR claims to be a liberal democratic party. At the same time the LDPR advocates policies of adventurous nationalism. In recent years, the LDPR faction has supported President Yeltsin on a number of issues, sometimes being the only faction in the Duma to do so.

The LDPR submitted a list of candidates that included in the top troika two alleged criminal figures. Evidently unwilling to take up the issue of criminality, the CEC rejected the LDPR's party list on the grounds of false information in candidates' property declarations, including those from the top troika. As a result, the LDPR had to establish a new organization, Zhirinovskiy's Bloc, formally founded by separate legal entities.

The LDPR came to be considered a serious political force after Vladimir Zhirinovskiy placed third out of six candidates, behind Boris Yeltsin and Nikolay Ryzhkov (former Soviet Prime Minister) in the first elections for president of the Russian Federation in 1991. The LDPR was conceived as a kind of a political sect, a projection of the leader. The term "one-man-party," now entrenched in the Russian political vocabulary, is closely tied with the LDPR.

In the 1993 elections the LDPR unexpectedly won 22.9 percent of the vote. The 1995 elections was disappointing for the LDPR. The party won 11.8 percent of the vote, half of its previous strength. Still, the LDPR managed to form a faction of 50 deputies. The presidential elections also proved that the party was losing its appeal. Zhirinovskiy won just 5.87 percent of the vote, placing fifth out of 11 candidates.

The LDPR claims to have about 600,000 members, 85 regional organizations, 187 local units, 1892 municipal units and 2000 electoral headquarters. At the same time, the party's organization is undergoing severe structural problems, and the party's popularity has declined. In the area of foreign policy, Zhirinovskiy wants Russia to reorient from the "imperialistic West" to "friendly powers" in the South, such as Iraq and Libya.

Leaders

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy: State Duma Deputy; chairman of the party (since 1990) and LDPR faction leader; presidential candidate in June 1991 and June 1996.

Oleg Finko: State Duma Deputy; chairman of the Committee on

Information Policy.

Yegor Solomatin: Deputy Chairman of the LDPR for party building.

Congress of Russian Communities (CRC) and Yury Boldyrev's Movement

The Congress of Russian Communities (CRC) is a nationalist bloc. It was created in late 1994. Its leader is Dmitry Rogozin. Until early 1996, Alexander Lebed and Yuri Skokov were also among the leaders of the CRC.

On September 20, 1999, the CRC's convention passed a decision to form an alliance with the Movement of Yury Boldyrev and the Inter-Ethnic Union of Abdalakh Mikitayev. Boldyrev was one of the founders of Yabloko. He left the party in its first year due to personal differences.

The Boldyrev Movement is a small organization that is little known outside of St. Petersburg. In St. Petersburg, however, Boldyrev enjoys considerable popularity for his anti-embezzlement and anti-corruption stands. The alliance's chances for electoral success in 1999 are bleak.

Leaders

Yury Boldyrev

Dmitry Rogozin

Viktor Glukhikh

Movement of Patriotic Forces - Russian Cause

This is a marginal bloc of nationalists and self-proclaimed Christian fundamentalists led by the former chief of President Yeltsin's guard and security service, Alexander Korzhakov.

Leaders

Oleg Ivanov

Yuri Petrov

Mikhail Sidorov

ONE-ISSUE PARTIES

This section presents some very small political organizations which are, nevertheless, on the ballot and either represent a single issue, or were for some reason unable to enter an agreement with a bigger association.

All-Russian Socialist Party of People

This organization was created to lobby for the commercial interests of entrepreneur Anzor Aksentyev-Kikalishvili, who was united with Josef Kobzon, Otary Kvantrishvili and hockey player Pavel Bure in the Association Twenty-First Century. Josef Kobzon has also been a close associate of Moscow Mayor Luzhkov and has been denied a U.S. visa because of his alleged criminal contacts. The party has existed since the spring of 1997. Kikalishvili was also connected with the Lev Yashin Foundation for the Protection of Sportsmen, which was created by Kvantrishvili.

In 1993, Kikalishvili, together with Kvantrishvili and wrestling world champion Alexander Karelin, participated in the creation of the party Sportsmen of Russia. Alexander Karelin is now second on the pro-Kremlin Unity bloc list.

Leaders

Anzori Aksentyev-Kikalishvili
Tatyana Bure
Vladimir Shainsky

Russian Socialist Party

This is another "one-man party" created to promote the name of Vladimir Bryntsalov, the owner of a successful pharmaceutical concern. Among other remedies, the concern produces vodka called "Bryntsalovka." All three individuals at the top of the list have Bryntsalov for their last name.

Leaders

Vladimir Bryntsalov
Igor Bryntsalov
Yury Bryntsalov

Russian Party for the Protection of Women

The party claims to protect the civil rights of women. It competes with Alevina Fedulova's movement Women of Russia.

Leaders

Tatyana Roshchina
Zhanna Makhova
Irina Kremenets

For Civil Dignity

This is a liberal organization focusing on social issues. Its leader, Ella Pamfilova, was a minister in Gaidar's government. It appears to have no chance of clearing the 5 percent threshold.

Leaders

Ella Pamfilova
Alexander Dondukov
Anatoly Shkirko

Conservative Party of Russia

The Conservative Party of Russia is a minuscule organization headed by Lev Ubozhko, a dissident and radical anti-Communist.

Leaders

Lev Ubozhko
Vladimir Burenin
Andrei Tishkov

Women of Russia

Women of Russia is a political organization created in 1993 to participate in parliamentary elections. The basis of the movement is the Union of Women of Russia headed by Alevtina Fedulova, which was created on the basis of the Committee of Soviet Women, the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Russia headed by Tatyana Malyutina and the Union of Women of the Navy.

Leaders

Alevtina Fedulova: Co-chair of the movement "Women of Russia."

Galina Karelova: Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Development.

Nina Veselova: Head of the Moscow Oblast trade union of light and textile industries.

Peace, Work, May

This is a regional social democratic organization from Sverdlovsk Oblast, mainly centered in its capital, Ekaterinburg. About a week prior to election day the organization encountered difficulties and its leader, Alexander Burkov, was taken off the ballot after the Supreme Court disqualified him. The group is an outsider in the 1999 elections.

Leaders

Alexander Burkov
Valery Trushnikov
Alexander Tatarkin

Party of Pensioners

The Party of Pensioners is a one-issue party. It was founded at the end of 1997. Its program claims to protect the social and economic rights of pensioners, who number some 38 million (25 percent of the total population).

Some observers suspect that the Party of Pensioners was founded with the support of the Administration of the President in order to draw out votes that would otherwise go to communist organizations.

Promotion of the party's leader, Sergey Atroshenko, a young businessman from the oil mining Tyumen Oblast, will become a serious part of the electoral campaign.

Leaders

Yakov Ryabov
Anatoly Kontashov
Rimma Markova

IV. CONCLUSION

The upcoming Duma elections will not result in any kind of return to communist rule. Nor is Russia's legislature about to be taken over by nationalist forces.

The reformers of various stripes and labels have begun to consolidate their organizations, expand their regional networks and professionalize their campaigning. Yabloko and the Union of the Right Forces are cooperating in single mandate districts at the national and regional levels. Polls indicate that reformers will improve on their showing in previous Duma elections.

Center stage in these elections is the contest between centrist political organizations. The mudslinging between the Kremlin and the regional elites led by Moscow Mayor Luzhkov and former Prime Minister Primakov, at times vituperative and dirty, cannot disguise the similarities between the contestants. Neither the pro-Kremlin party Unity, nor the Fatherland-All Russia bloc, would dramatically change the current political or economic system. Both have more in common than either would admit.

What is perhaps more noteworthy is that elections, despite their serious shortcomings, have come to be accepted by the Russian public and elites as the only way to acquire power legitimately. Whatever wheeling and dealing takes place in the campaign and on election day, the general acceptance of competitive electoral procedures is a step forward in Russia.

Appendix

Fundamentals of the 1999 State Duma Election Law

As in 1995, 50 percent (225) of 450 seats will be distributed by a system of proportional representation (PR). The other half of the seats will be apportioned on the basis of single-mandate contests in 225 districts throughout Russia. As a result, all voters will cast two ballots - one for the party of their choice and the other for a single-mandate candidate in their district. Candidates may run on both single-mandate and party list tickets. However, if they win in the single-mandate district, they must be removed from the party list.

The election law allows groups to register to compete in the elections in several categories, including electoral associations and electoral blocs. This report generally uses the term "party" instead. However, in reference to individual groups, this report tries to apply the specific term appropriate to that group.

While the basic structure of the elections remains as it was in 1995, three-fourths of the articles of election law itself have been changed. Most of these changes affect how electoral blocs raise and spend money.

Proportional Representation (PR) System

A party or bloc must reach a threshold of at least 5 percent of the popular vote (with some potential exceptions, as explained below) to win seats under the PR system. Votes cast for parties that fail to meet the 5 percent threshold do not figure in the distribution of mandates.

The new law adds a "floating threshold" provision, however, which says that if the group of parties that gets over 5 percent represents less than 50 percent of voter support, the CEC will go back and add parties until the combined votes add up to 50 percent. This provision was added in response to the situation in 1995, where roughly half the votes went to parties that did not pass 5 percent.

Each party runs a list of candidates (up to a maximum of 270). The bulk of the party list must be divided into regional groups. The parties themselves determine the number of regional groups they will field and the boundaries of the respective regions, but the boundaries must be based on Russia's 89 administrative regions or groups of regions. This system is designed to ensure that each party demonstrates broad regional representation.

The list may also include up to 18 names that are not tied to any specific region. Six of these are reserve candidates in case any of the top 12 opt not to serve in the Duma. These 18 names are considered to be the federal representatives of the bloc and are placed at the top of the list. The first three candidates on these party lists will be cited on the ballot with the party's name. If the party crosses the PR threshold, these candidates are first in line to become State Duma deputies. After a party seats its federal representatives, its remaining mandates are distributed to candidates on its regional lists in proportion to the number of votes cast for the party in the respective regions. Thus, the regional groups within a party list compete with one another.

Single-Mandate System

In the single-mandate system, candidates compete in a one-round contest in a particular district in which the candidate with a plurality of votes wins the seat. Because 10 to 15 candidates will be competing on average in each district, a candidate could win with a small percentage of the vote, on average 25 percent.

The size of districts is determined by population; the new law stipulates that the most populous district can be only 10 percent larger than the smallest (excluding remote places, where 15 percent is allowed). This is a change from 1995, when a 15 percent variance was permitted everywhere. The average single-mandate district has a population of about 500,000.

When parties registered with the CEC, they submitted a list of single-mandate candidates along with their party lists. In most cases, the number of single-mandate candidates who actually run will be lower than the registration list indicates. After their names were certified, each of these candidates had to collect a required number of signatures or pay a fee. Some were not successful. Also, the parties themselves are permitted to drop (but not add) names of single-mandate candidates until shortly before election day.

Signature Collection

Parties were required to collect 200,000 signatures, or pay a fee by October 26, 1998, to qualify to place their names on the PR ballot. No more than 14,000 of these signatures were permitted to be from any one region of the Russian Federation. Parties were allowed to begin their official election campaign only after the CEC verified their signatures and completed the registration process.

Candidates running in single-mandate constituencies were required to collect signatures from no less than 1 percent of the population of the district. Most candidates were required to collect approximately 5,000 signatures to qualify for placement on the ballot.

In a change from the 1995 elections, instead of collecting signatures a bloc can be registered by paying a fee equal to 25,000 minimum monthly wages. This works out to 2,087,500 rubles or approximately \$77,400. A candidate can be registered in a similar way by paying a fee equal to 1,000 minimum monthly wages, which is 83,500 rubles or approximately \$3,096. If a bloc gets 3 or more percent of the vote, this fee is returned. A candidate must gain 5 percent of the vote to get money back.

Media Regulations

The CEC has a lengthy list of regulations for state-controlled media regarding the election campaign. Overall, mass media must provide equal conditions for all parties and candidates for campaign statements. Regulations instruct the largest television stations to provide 60 minutes of free prime time air on working days to all parties in equal measure during the official campaign period. These stations are also permitted to sell time to parties. However, the stations are not allowed to sell more time than the amount of free time they make available to all parties. Those stations that are not broadcasting to half or more than half of the Russian Federation must provide 30 minutes during prime time.

Financial Regulations

Officially, parties are allowed to spend up to 250,000 times the monthly minimum wage (RUR 20,875,000 or \$774,008) for each of the national campaigns, while individual candidates are allowed to spend 10,000 times the monthly minimum wage (RUR 835,000 or \$30,960). Individuals cannot donate more than 100 times the monthly minimum and organizations cannot contribute more than 2000 times the monthly minimum wage to the campaign of a candidate. Blocs can receive 150 times the monthly minimum wage from individuals and 20,000 times the monthly minimum wage from organizations.

These limits, are substantially lower in dollar terms than in 1995. The

electoral parties were allowed to spend up to 4.37 billion rubles each (about \$162,031,883) on their national campaigns.

Observers of the Russian political scene express doubt that these spending limitations will be respected.

Voting Procedures

Polling stations will open at 8:00 in the morning. Credentialed observers, members of election commissions, authorized representatives of parties, international observers, and representatives of the mass media are entitled to be present at polling stations throughout the day and during the counting.

Voters must present their passports or some other sort of identification and sign their names on the voters' list. They will receive two ballots, one for the party list vote and one for the single-mandate candidates in their district. Each party list ballot will list the symbols of the 26 registered parties; the parties' names; and the names of the top three individuals on each list. Single-mandate ballots will contain the names and party affiliations, if appropriate, of each competing candidate.

Voters will then proceed to a booth or room that is specially-equipped for secret balloting, where they will mark their ballots. They will be instructed to indicate their choices by making a mark in the boxes corresponding to one party on the party list ballot and one candidate on the single-mandate ballot. The last line on each ballot will present the option of "none of the above." Voters will place their completed forms in a locked ballot box.

Polls will close at 8:00 p.m. All present but still waiting to vote will be entitled to do so. After voting is completed and the polling station is officially closed, the polling station election commission members will count all ballots, subtracting voided and unused ones. They will develop two sets of protocols: one for the single mandate race and one for the party list race. When the counting is finished, they will produce three copies of each of the two protocols. The first copies, along with any complaints filed by observers, will be forwarded to the appropriate territorial election commission. The second copy will be filed with the polling station election commission. The third copy will be available for inspection by candidates, parties, observers, attorneys and the mass media. Territorial election commissions have three days to calculate the results from all polling station election commissions and complete their own sets of protocols, the first copies of which will get forwarded to a district election commission.

The district election commissions will estimate the results of single-mandate ballots in their respective districts. They will forward the first copy of protocols for party list balloting to the Central Election Commission. On the basis of these protocols, the CEC will calculate the results of the party list ballots.

Other Important Provisions

In order for the election to be valid according to the election law, at least 25 percent of registered voters must cast ballots. Most analysts and public opinion polls indicate that turnout will be about 50 percent.

Government officials running for the State Duma may remain in office during the campaign period. They must not, however, use government resources for campaign purposes. This year, successful candidates who are also cabinet ministers must resign from their posts if they wish to serve in the State Duma.

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