

PROGRESSISTS OF UNITED RUSSIA — A BREAKTHROUGH IN POWER CONTROL

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Forceful enterprise exists only when the owners of the means of enforcement are independent and have the opportunity to make decisions based on their own corporate interests. The term 'siloviki' stresses the key point — the usage of force — and rejects things such as the protection of order, law, security, justice, and everything that is connected to the public functions of a state.

We know the ideology of 'force-men' from Viktor Cherkosov's publications, among others. They consider themselves to be the saviors of Russia, who prevented it from falling apart and being sold out by oligarchs. They see the main problem in the fact that 'warriors' became 'traders'. Instead of just receiving payment for protection, they got a share in the business and started to serve their own business interests, not the common interest. Cherkosov intuitively grasped the idea of evolution in forceful enterprise, i.e. from the rise of payment for protection to its capitalization.

He did not mention the key point — maybe deliberately — which holds that **the stable conversion of force resources requires political dominance.**

For a 'force corporation', its path to dominance matches its nature — through hidden enforcement, manipulation of information and the building of facades all combined. Now the main facade is the legal system (the law) and the various formal procedures that serve corporate interests. One should see the difference between rule *of* law (when the law guarantees civil rights) and rule *by* law (when the law is the main tool for repression); in English this difference is revealed by the use of different prepositions. In politics, the first step to weakening the force factor is an independent judicial system. It may sound cynical, but there is no significant public movement for rights and justice in Russia, so a stronger independent judicial system will help bring about a stalemate where no clique inside the system can easily send a rival to prison with the help of the court. In this case a window of opportunity opens for new judicial reform.

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As opposed to the party, which is eager to seize power through public mobilization of supporters inside the groups whose interests it represents, a 'corporation' (and force-men are the most influential corpo-

ration of today) cannot follow this path. **Objectively, parties and party policy are competitors for a force corporation and force control, but, in practice, in order for that to be the case the parties themselves should be in a situation of political competition in the field of public politics.** The experience of Latin America and Southeast Asia shows that monopolistic ruling parties tend to become the means to reconcile the interests of the military, the civil bureaucracy and major proprietors rather than independent political powers.

If one of the major income sources for a force corporation in Russia is an informal tax of enterprising profits then the re-transformation of a force corporation to a state service is unlikely, unless the business proprietors are represented politically. So far, I do not think that the enterprising class trusts United Russia. Instability in proprietary rights prevents proprietors from becoming involved in political activity. **Full-scale political competition can be quickly established by the organizational separation of the progressive wing from the conservative one in United Russia, and on this**

basis by forming a new party that already has resources and is led by the current President. Then we could expect business owners and the middle class to awaken politically — and the problem of unproductive load in business could potentially be solved. ■

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