

# Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics

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The development of the Russian federal system has been marked by conflict, co-optation, and consensus. Emerging from the generally unitary Russian republic within a formally federal but largely unitary Soviet Union, post-Soviet Russia began its development as a federal system with little experience and few institutional structures salvageable from the earlier system. The patchwork Soviet-era constitution adapted to the newly independent political system was insufficiently clear to structure adequately political interactions across levels of society. The construction of a functioning federal system also began with the regime already at a disadvantage: In struggling for power with former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Russian president Boris Yeltsin advised all of Russia's regions to take as much sovereignty as they could swallow. Ultimately, although this recommendation helped Yeltsin win Russia's independence, it hampered the future development of federalism, for the regions had become mindful of their autonomy and willing to ignore central laws and edicts.

The most independent category of regions in Russia under the Soviets and after are the republics, which have historical basis in Lenin's nationalities policy that was instrumental in the formation of the Soviet Union. Built on a legacy of advantage that was perhaps more *de jure* than *de facto*, the republics have been more independence minded. During his tenure as post-Soviet Russia's leader, Yeltsin worked to re-establish central authority, however. This process followed four basic stages. First, the 1992 Federation Treaty between Russia's regions and the central government stopped centrifugal forces that threatened the disintegration of the state and established Russia's republics as virtual state entities. Second, the 1993 Russian constitution began the process of re-integrating an inchoate political system following the president's victory over the Soviet-era legislature, the Supreme Soviet. The constitution eliminated almost all privileges allocated to the

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republics, with the exception of rights to write a constitution and maintain a local state language in addition to Russian.

Third, the Yeltsin government returned some of the *de jure* powers it had taken away in the constitution. In some ways, Yeltsin recognized that new constitutional strictures could not be enforced, and instead threatened a resumption of centrifugal forces. Through a series of bilateral agreements signed with more than half of the Russian regions from 1994 to 1998, *de facto* powers held by a number of regions were selectively enshrined in law beyond constitutional guidelines. This third period was typical of Russia's tentative movement (two steps forward, one step backward) toward a more centralized, albeit still federal, political system. The bargaining process between the center and the regions favored certain republics early. Following the economic crash of 1998, still a *de jure* federation with strong central powers, Russia had *de facto* moved dramatically in the direction of a confederation, with a number of strong regions and a weak center.

Fourth, in spring 2000, newly elected president Vladimir Putin began a push for political centralization. Putin formed seven federal districts guided by presidential representatives, reconfigured the selection processes for deputies to the upper house of parliament (the Federation Council), and strove to enhance the institution of local self-government nationwide. Putin's administration also has worked to bring regional laws and constitutions in accord with the Russian constitution and federal laws.<sup>1</sup> This last initiative has been bolstered by fiscal reform designed to raise the center's control of regionally collected revenue. To varying degrees, all of these reforms were designed to reduce the strength of regional executives. These acts and reforms guide my analysis in this article.

More specifically, I examine how new political institutions and a more aggressive federal government have influenced Russia's twenty-one ethnic republics,<sup>2</sup> which have frequently possessed certain advantages leading to asymmetry in Russian federalism.<sup>3</sup> I explore the position of republics in the Putin era in light of claims by Jeffrey Kahn and Alfred Stepan that these regions held significant advantages during Yeltsin's tenure. Ultimately, this article shows that these advantages have declined, with Putin's reforms significantly undermining the autonomy of the republics. In spring 2001, elites in several republics who were concerned that the federal government was working to undermine the republics' special position raised questions about the long-term viability of non-Russian populations as separate and distinct nationalities. Nevertheless, the policies have been neither consistently nor equally applied to the regions, whether republic or not. In looking specifically at the effect of reforms on one class of regions, the continuing *ad hoc* nature of post-Soviet Russian politics is evident, showing variability in center-periphery relations, both within and across regional categories. As a result, reform effects on non-republics cannot be ignored in this analysis, as the ramifications of federal reforms are widespread.

While federal goals *vis-à-vis* the ethnic regions have not been well-publicized, in summer 2001 Aleksandr Blokhin, then Russian minister for federation affairs, nationalities, and migration policy, recommended that ethnic groups that were not currently a majority in a defined territory lose their territorial status.<sup>4</sup> Potentially

threatening seventeen of twenty-one republics with extinction,<sup>5</sup> the effects of a reform like this would be widespread, both enhancing and challenging Russia's unity. Putin's policies have not been so draconian, however. In fact, in a sign that Blokhin did not speak for central authorities, his long-ineffective ministry was liquidated in October 2001.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, central authorities have focused as much on bringing Russia's most powerful donor regions (those contributing more tax revenues than they receive in federal revenue transfers) in line with federal policy as they have on targeting the republics. Although including republics like Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, donor regions also include oblast' areas such as Sverdlovsk and Perm.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, given the historical significance of ethnic identity, understanding how contemporary reforms affect ethnically defined regions helps observers better predict the future evolution of Russia's political system. Overall, Putin's reforms appear to be focused on bringing Russia's eighty-nine regions into what Alfred Stepan termed socioeconomic and constitutional symmetry.<sup>8</sup> If so, this is a clear challenge to the republics. At a minimum, these reforms will limit all regional independence, whether republic or not. At a maximum, they will undermine federalism in Russia, returning the political structure to something resembling its hierarchical and centralized past.

I organize this article around several sections. First, I briefly examine federalism theory and look at recent assessments of Russia's federal system. Second, I use Matthew Hyde's rubric to discuss briefly Putin's reforms.<sup>9</sup> Third, I describe the apparent and potential effects of the reforms on the ethnic republics. I employ Hyde's rubric and my spring 2001 fieldwork in the four ethnic republics of Mordoviia, Mariel, Komi, and Udmurtiia, which represent the Finno-Ugric language group. While not a definitive picture of Russia's federal reforms vis-à-vis the republics, interviews with ethnic and political elites within these four regions provide valuable context and texture to this analysis. Finally, I end by looking at the future for Russian federalism, both in terms of the republics and more generally for Russia. Identifying the outcome of Putin's federal reforms is like trying to hit a moving target. I examine the situation through early 2003, although I understand that there are undoubtedly numerous events to come.

### **The Organizing Principles of Federalism**

Federalism is a form of government that distributes authority among diverse bodies over an otherwise unified territory. Rule is divided between regional and national government to encourage self-rule within the regions and shared rule across the entire state. According to Daniel Elazar:

Federalism has to do with the constitutional diffusion of power so that the constituting elements in a federal arrangement share in the common policy making and administration by right, while the activities of the common government are conducted in such a way as to maintain their respective integrities.<sup>10</sup>

Normally associated with democratic regimes, such as the United States, Switzerland, and Canada, federalism balances national and regional power. In dividing responsibilities across levels, popular attention is divided between the

two levels of government. "Federalism encourages competition between orders of government for popular support";<sup>11</sup> a population can grow to identify with both the nation-state and the region.

The Soviet Union was a self-described federal system divided along the lines of ethnonational identity into fifteen Union Republics. The basis of this claim lay in the formal autonomy with which the republics were provided. While each nation's self-determination was theoretically recognized, the reality was much different. Dominated by the unitary Communist Party, the hierarchically structured Soviet Union provided little independence to the republics.<sup>12</sup> In general, totalitarian states employed federalism as a means to consolidate their rule, only permitting a degree of cultural autonomy to ethnic groups concentrated within a particular region.<sup>13</sup> This autonomy became more limited in the USSR during the Khrushchev era.<sup>14</sup>

As one of the USSR's all-union republics, Russia's political system was little differentiated from that overall structure, although ethnicity did differentiate a number of regions as "Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics" (ASSR). Still, Russia's overall lack of experience with substantive federalism raises important questions about the country's ability to develop a functioning federal system. It has not been easy. Centrifugal forces dominated Russian politics for a period during the early- and mid-1990s. Struggles included the public feud between Tatarstan and Moscow and the disastrous civil war in Chechnya. Most center-periphery struggles were in the shadows of these two major confrontations, but the attempts by other regions to resist the center also threatened the Russian state. In 1992, this threat led to the Federation Treaty, which placed Russia perilously close to becoming a centrally weak confederation.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the rising struggle between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet led to ineffective national policy-making and only fueled the strength of centrifugal forces during 1992 and 1993 as the regions entered the policy vacuum left by central authority.

The dissolution of the Supreme Soviet in September 1993 and the violent events of early October were the starting point for Yeltsin's attempt to reassert central authority.<sup>16</sup> Yeltsin was able to enact a constitution that focused authority upon the president and gave the Russian Federation sovereignty over all of its territory (Article 4), while equalizing relations for all levels of the territory (Article 5). Nevertheless, this equality was immediately muddled by the second clause of article 5, providing republics the right to their own constitutions, and limiting all other entities to charters. This difference raised questions about the true equality of the different regional entities. The lack of clarity and the absence of the clear republican advantages codified in the Federation Treaty led some republican leaders to oppose to no avail the December 1993 referendum on the draft constitution.

Although the Constitution promised a stronger center, resistant regions diminished the centripetal forces. From that point until mid-1998, center-periphery relations entered another phase with a series of bilateral treaties between Moscow and particular regions. The first such treaty was signed with Tatarstan (which had neither signed the Federation Treaty nor participated in the December 1993 elec-

tions) in February 1994. While spelling out the policy responsibilities of central and regional authorities, this treaty recognized Tatarstan “as a state joined with the Russian Federation.”<sup>17</sup> There would be forty-one treaties with forty-five other regions to follow over the next several years; all told, eleven of twenty-one republics signed such treaties.<sup>18</sup> Although these subsequent treaties were more guarded in their allocation of authority to each particular region, Moscow nonetheless recognized the signatory regions’ right to greater control over their respective territories. This was particularly notable with provisions for “ownership of natural resources and land, wider budgetary and tax powers, and the right to engage directly in foreign economic relations.” Overall, many rights found in the Federation Treaty also appeared in these bilateral treaties.<sup>19</sup>

Rather than credit ethnic factors, Steven Solnick attributes much of the federal asymmetry to the relative wealth of individual regions, pointing to the privileged treatment and tax benefits provided to the oil-rich republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan and diamond-

wealthy Sakha.<sup>20</sup> For Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, these privileges required fulfilling social service responsibilities in ways similar to sovereign states. These center-periphery relations were often founded on the bilateral treaties in a contractual, rather than a constitutional, basis.<sup>21</sup> Solnick further portrays the limited incentives for then developing cross-regional economic associations to bend to federal demands.<sup>22</sup> With the 1998 economic crash, declining resources in the center meant even fewer incentives for regional compliance. Central weakness and regional wealth meant some regions received a host of privileges, exhibiting what Stepan characterizes as socioeconomic asymmetry.<sup>23</sup>

Some scholars were dismayed with Russia’s asymmetry. A critique of the bilateral treaties focused on how they contradicted the constitution, frequently violating Article four’s equality clause.<sup>24</sup> Sergei Valenti claimed:

Everyone knows what separating one’s children into favorites and non-favorites leads to. The result [in Russia] has been analogous—a total lack of respect on the part of the children (the RF subjects) toward the parents (the state) and toward each other. This lack of respect was manifested both in the multitude of instances when the subjects of the Federation refused to execute the decisions of the federal center, and in the adoption by a number of regions of constitutions and individual legislative acts whose basic provisions contradict the RF Constitution.<sup>25</sup>

Valenti argued that the treaties placed socioeconomic expediency over a normative-legal principle of state-building.<sup>26</sup> Uneven societal development carried even greater threats, complicating the creating and enforcing of federal legislation and breeding corruption across levels of government as regional elites and

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federal bureaucrats took advantage of unmonitored relations.<sup>27</sup> While a transition environment is primed for official corruption, the relationship created by the bilateral treaties is more so, particularly given the deliberate lack of transparency in their negotiations.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Putin's attempt to bring all of Russia's regions under a unified, coherent structure appears quite pragmatic; yet, it may ultimately affect some groups with dramatic ethnohistorical consequences.

Whether asymmetry threatens the development of a democratic federal system is open to debate. Some see these developments as pragmatic policymaking, a necessary central retreat to restrain "secessionist tendencies, allowing Moscow to negotiate on the basis of the particular interests of each republic and region."<sup>29</sup> Claiming that ethnic factors are important in federal systems the world over, Stepan argues that asymmetrical regional rights in multinational states are often necessary to ensure the continued viability of a democratic system.<sup>30</sup> While Canadian concessions to Quebec have not always been successful, the Spaniards have found some success mollifying the separatist elements in their Basque and (especially) Catalan regions.<sup>31</sup> The relatively small size of the latter two regions underlines the fact that small populations have the potential for undermining state integrity, as shown in Russia's war with the Chechen Republic. Thus, while ethnic minorities constitute only 18 percent of Russia's total population, they still have potential for dramatic influence on the integrity and effectiveness of the Russian state.

Asymmetry in federal systems is expected. Even states that seemingly model symmetry exhibit asymmetry, as Stepan indicates for Puerto Rico and Native Americans in the United States. He terms this constitutional asymmetry, in which variance of regional rights are enshrined in the country's basic document. Moreover, it is almost unavoidable that federal systems will have a certain socioeconomic asymmetry, such as California being a privileged region within the United States. The key factor explaining constitutional asymmetries in a federal system, however, rests in the existence of multinational societies, where differences are enshrined in the constitution, often providing almost state-level autonomy to minority regions. For India, Spain, and Belgium, such constitutional provisions are a "holding together" strategy designed to maintain their territorial integrity.<sup>32</sup> In this respect, asymmetry is a necessary component of state-building in multinational societies. Thus, Russian constitutional recognition of the twenty-one ethnic republics as "special" entities is a natural "holding together" strategy for a state threatened by centrifugal forces.

The presence of certain "extraconstitutional" and "anticonstitutional" characteristics of asymmetry that threaten smooth state functioning has been complicating Russia's prospects for federalism.<sup>33</sup> The bilateral treaties represent extraconstitutional devices that were negotiated between the Russian president and a particular region's executive without parliamentary approval. Examples of anticonstitutional factors, including statutes and laws that violate the federal constitution, can be found in the regional constitutions; 44,000 such regional laws and executive orders were found in 1997.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the development of Russia's asymmetrical federal system is both appropriate and expected. Yet the

system's functionality, irrespective of its democratic character, remains in question. Throughout post-Soviet Russia's political development, federal authorities and regional federal institutions have been reluctant, even unable, to hold regional political elites accountable for ineffectiveness and corruption.

It is frequently difficult to distinguish between privileges granted by bilateral treaties to republics because of their ethnic status and those simply granted to economically wealthy regions. The same contention holds for the degree to which a republic's laws contradict the federal constitution and federal laws vis-à-vis the other sixty-eight regions. Nevertheless, Stepan pointed to several factors that separate the republics from other regions. In elections for republican executive, incumbents have been less likely to be defeated, there has been greater likelihood that only one candidate will appear on the ballot, and the incumbent in a republic is likely to win by more than 85 percent of the vote. Citing Jeffrey Kahn, Stepan pointed out that in the first two years after implementing the 1993 constitution, politically "unsackable" leaders were elected in the republics, whereas eminently "sackable" presidential appointees in other regions only faced popular elections in 1995 and 1996. Moreover, although many regions negotiated bilateral treaties, the first seven were signed by republics. Finally, the republics ratified their constitutions well in advance of the charters enacted in the other federal subjects.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the republics began the post-Soviet era with a head start that was underlined by the continuing tenure of many of the republics' last Soviet-era leaders.

Although there are clear advantages for republics in some legal-political sectors, there is strong—even stronger—evidence that regional privileges frequently fall along economic lines.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, while the early period after the 1993 constitution's implementation may have favored the republics, since then such status in poor republics such as Mariel, Mordoviia, Kalmykiia, and Tuva has not generally outweighed the economic strength of regions like the city of Moscow and the Sverdlovsk oblast' when striving for favorable policy in the federal center. Additionally, while Tatarstan and Bashkortostan long resisted external corporate influence, now all regions experience the expanding influence of powerful economic interests, such as Lukoil and Gazprom. Thus, although focusing on the impact of federal reforms on Russia's republics, the influence of relative regional wealth and powerful economic actors cannot be disregarded.

### **Putin's Federal Reforms**

Vladimir Putin began to reform Russian federalism soon after his March 2000 election. Matthew Hyde quickly encapsulated the five major reforms yet hesitated at so early a stage to conclude that Putin's reforms would have a dramatic impact on Russian politics. Many observers since have been more willing to contend that these reforms are intended to undermine Russia's federal structure and create a more unitary government. According to some ethnic leaders, reforms threaten ethnic minorities with what they see as "destruction" through the potential elimination of institutional mechanisms currently limiting the impact of ongoing russification. Although Hyde's hesitant conclusions still carry merit,

particularly given the variable implementation of reforms, I argue that Putin's reforms have had and will continue to have a significant impact on the ongoing development of Russian federalism as a whole and the republics in particular.

Hyde's five major federal reforms (see table 1) continue to be a good base for this analysis.<sup>37</sup> To these five, I add fiscal reform, which may prove the most important of all.

It is a challenge to identify the differential impact of these reforms across types of regions. While *de jure* Putin's reforms more significantly impact the republics in certain areas, in others, this impact is less than clear. For example, the reforms' major impact, as primarily indicated by fiscal reforms, is on the donor regions. This diminishes socioeconomic asymmetry by bringing a diverse collection of regions into a weaker position *vis-à-vis* federal authorities. Simultaneously, *de facto* implementation of reforms exhibits continued *ad hoc* policy implementation that favors the most rebellious regions, the largest donor regions, or both. In essence, Putin strives to maintain stability through variable, pragmatic (some might say arbitrary) implementation of federal reforms, a strategy carrying commonalities with that of Yeltsin—at least in tactics, if not in style.

### **Impact on the Republics**

Federal reforms are still in progress, a point frequently made by republican elites in 2001. Current reforms, however, seem to follow the oscillating patterns of earlier federal reform: there is a significant push early that is later followed by a relaxation of central demands, which continues the dialectical pattern of the last decade, during which the center has been recouping (with some setbacks) its lost authority. Thus, the center “giveth” and “taketh away” almost simultaneously. Republics are in line to lose the most from these reforms, but they are also in a position to retain the most. Overlaying all processes is the inconsistent application of reforms, the effect of personal relations between central and regional leaders, and the difficult task of reforming such a physically large territory. In this discussion, I follow the order presented in table 1, although one must be ever mindful that reforms are quite interdependent.

### **The Seven Federal Districts**

Beyond simply being organized into eighty-nine separate constitutionally defined regions, the Russian federal system has been also loosely organized into eleven federally defined economic districts during the Soviet-era, as well as a number of newer regional associations, such as the Greater Urals and Siberian Association, which varied in their ability to resist or challenge the center.<sup>38</sup> The formation of the seven districts along the lines of Russia's military districts triggered complaints that they undermine extant economic relationships within the eleven districts and the associations. For example, complaints arose when new administrative lines left Bashkortostan out of the Urals district and Volgograd out of the Volga district. Complaints are to be expected. Yet, given the relative ineffectiveness of these early organizations, the complaints mean little. Moreover, initial indications were that the formation of the districts was less of an



**TABLE 1. Putin's Federal Reforms**

General reform	Effect of reform
Creating seven federal districts	Based on existing military districts. Cuts across boundaries of existing regional economic associations.
Redefining the presidential representative	Reduces asymmetry of regions. Reduces number of presidential representatives. Ensures closer link between representative and president. Creation of regional representatives (Federal Inspectors). Greater federal control of staffing in the regional offices of the federal ministries.
Federation council reform	Removal of regional executive and legislative leaders from the Council. Representatives appointed by regional executives and legislatures since January 2002. Becomes a full-time legislature.
Expanding federal intervention in regional affairs	Bringing regional legislation and constitutions in accordance with the national Constitution and federal laws. Holds regional executives and legislatures accountable with threat of removal. Loss of parliamentary immunity for regional executives. Questions validity of bilateral treaties. Reduces asymmetry of regions.
Local self-government reform	Attempts to create a vertical structure of authority allowing regional leaders to remove local officials, while also allowing the central government to remove regional leaders. Potentially expanded role of local governments in tax collection and service implementation. Federal allowance for regional sphere of influence.
Fiscal reform	Generally a threat to regional executives. Movement toward increasing central control of tax revenues. Expands central control of redistributable funds, while actually decreasing the percentage of funds that are redistributed to the regions. Greatest impact on donor regions that lose revenue control.

obstacle to continued interaction across districts and more of an administrative tool for comprehensive state reform. Nevertheless, republican leaders like President Murtaza Rakhimov complained that Bashkortostan would be threatened in the traditionally more restrictive Volga region.<sup>39</sup> Given the relatively heavy-

handed role taken by Urals presidential representative Peter Latishev, as compared to the less interventionist style of Volga representative Sergei Kirienko, Rakhimov may have spoken too early. Perhaps a more important indication of the future than the actual borders of the districts, none of the seven district capitals is located in a republic.

District borders do not ultimately indicate any particular challenge to the ethnic republics. However, Nationalities Minister Blokhin's previously quoted August 2001 pronouncement and Urals representative Latyshev's September 2000 calls to reduce the number of territories inflamed leaders among the titular nationalities.<sup>40</sup> Scholar and Mari leader Ksenofont Sanukov said:

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I consider [the federal districts to be truly] the first step to ‘gubernizatsii’ and the spread of [central] state power, these [steps] are the start of state power, which has been presented to the non-Russian peoples. The end of this will complete the liquidation [of the ethnic people] and our republic.<sup>41</sup>

Such fears are echoed in other ethnic republics, whether the political executive is a member of that ethnic group or not, as shown in ethnic Russian Yuri Spiridonov's use of the “ethnic card” to defend the Komi Republic's relative independence.<sup>42</sup> Not all ethnic Russian leaders of republics employ a region's ethnic characteristics for regional advantage, however. Mariel President Leonid Markelov, a former member of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party, frequently expresses his belief that the Republic of Mariel should simply be one of Russia's many regions. At times, he even uses the title “governor” to describe his political role, thereby indicating greater subservience to the center.<sup>43</sup>

The ethnic card carries the force of eighty years of tradition, and reforms raise ethnic elite concerns that the federal districts will lead to the formation of “Guberniias” in the Imperial Russian model and the end of any privileges for large minority ethnic groups. Such a reform may be linked to a more pernicious trend in Russian history, however. As intimated in Sanukov's comments, interviews with editors of the nationalist newspaper *Erzian Mastor* in Mordoviia and fears raised by moderate Komi national movements, ethnic elites frequently saw federal reforms as part of long-term russification processes designed to assimilate non-Russian ethnic groups.<sup>44</sup> These fears are exacerbated by ethnic Russian politicians who call for the equalization of all political regions.<sup>45</sup> Additional fears of cultural assimilation have emerged as the Ministry of Nationalities (prior to its dissolution) expanded into the seven districts and eighty-nine subjects while threats to cultural independence found in education reforms are being carried out from the center rather than in the regions.<sup>46</sup>

Fall 2001 federal pronouncements on territorial boundaries and educational reform further diminished the status of the ethnic republics and directly contradict Stepan's "holding together" strategy for multinational states, which calls for allowances in certain sensitive areas as a peacemaking strategy. Yet, whether such a policy shift will threaten Russia's integrity is as yet unclear. Continued reactions from the republics are also likely to vary. More rebellious republics, such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, likely will continue to resist federal policies, and meeker regions, such as the five Finno-Ugric republics, are more likely to acquiesce to these changes. Ultimately, varying responses could lead to a (new) constitutionally defined asymmetry, bringing aspects of autonomy in the bilateral treaties of the more resistant republics into the national constitution. This would diminish centrifugal forces of disintegration among those few rebel regions while bringing less resistant regions more firmly under the control of central authority.

### **Presidential Representative**

Although the role of presidential representatives has changed, it is still uncertain how much independent impact this newly constituted position has on governance. Whereas previous presidential representatives to nearly all of Russia's regions were quite weak,<sup>47</sup> as one of only seven individuals mediating between the regions and the center, the newly incarnated representative is more significant for overall federal relations. At first glance, the move may limit access of the more insistent and influential regions to the center. Yet, specifically determining the representatives' influence on the republics is more complex, in part because it depends on the individual representative as much as on the powers provided to that representative. For example, the Urals' Latyshev has been the most forceful of the seven representatives while Georgy Poltavchenko in the Central district and Konstantin Pulikovskiy in the Far East were less obvious in their early efforts.<sup>48</sup>

Early indications were that presidential representatives would largely fill an oversight role. These individuals monitor various fiscal transfers, while also coordinating the federal agencies at the regional level. Moreover, even as talk at the end of 2000 was on expanding the powers of the representatives in socioeconomic matters, such an expansion was conditional on bringing regional laws and constitutions in accord with federal documents.<sup>49</sup> Results in this area are quite mixed. Moreover, indicating that the construction of "vertical authority" is more the goal than creating seven super-regional governments, in January 2001, Putin placed the representatives directly under the (then) presidential Chief of Staff Andrei Voloshin, who had fought to limit their powers.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps suggesting a shift in this policy back towards expectations in 2000, however, in his April 2002 speech to the Federal Assembly, Putin indicated that he was leaning toward providing greater authority to the district level in monitoring financial flows and federal employment practices at the regional levels.<sup>51</sup>

Interviews in the regions did little to clarify the roles of the presidential representatives. In May 2001, Nikandor Popov, the chairman of the national organization Mari Ushem, argued vaguely that the presidential representative is playing a more significant role than in the past.<sup>52</sup> A highly informed political

functionary in Mariel claimed that Volga's Kirienko indirectly influenced Mariel's presidential elections by ensuring they were relatively free of fraud. In doing so, corrupt incumbent Viacheslav Kislytsin was defeated. He went on to describe that while relations were not ideal between new President Markelov, Kirienko, and Federal Inspector Egorov, the new region-level federal representative, there were no open conflicts.<sup>53</sup> Such vague comments typified the interviews, although one description raised the personal nature of federal relations, depicting the antipathy between Mordoviiian Head Nikolai Merkushkin and Kirienko by relating how the presidential representative referred to Merkushkin as a *moskoi*, a pug dog from a Russian fairytale. He went on to argue that Mordoviia's chief federal inspector, Aleksandr Pykov, was more independent of regional authorities and was working hard to bring regional laws in accord with federal laws, actually acting as somewhat of a counterweight to Merkushkin. Simultaneously, he saw Pykov as more talk than achievement.<sup>54</sup> A journalist in Komi also diminished the importance of the presidential representative and his team, relating how then Head Yuri Spiridonov's apparatus largely ignored then North-West District Representative Viktor Cherkesov's chief federal inspector, Aleksei Grishin.<sup>55</sup>

The quandary for differentiating the impact of presidential representatives on the republics from that on other regions goes to the inconsistent use of those powers that these officials do have. For example, the process of naming federal inspectors to the regions has no clear pattern. In some cases, like Tatarstan and Komi, a federal inspector closely aligned with regional leadership has been chosen, perhaps to keep the peace. Meanwhile, the joint federal inspector for Kalmykiia, Astrakhan, and Volgograd has pushed the local legislatures to allow the federal Ministry of Justice to introduce legislation.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, the pressure placed on one of the more rebellious regions, Sverdlovsk, indicates that policy heavily depends on the personality of Peter Latyshev and/or Putin's personal desire to limit the position of Governor Rossel. One policy indicating an attempt to undermine the national republics has been the role of representatives in establishing a unified media structure in each district that would present information in a common language understood by all, presumably Russian.<sup>57</sup> Designed to limit the authority of all regional executives over the regional press, this policy could have the side-effect of undermining minority languages across the country. Such an effect is quite important but seems only to underline the development of a "vertical authority" structure, in this case based on the dissemination of information. Nevertheless, showing the vagaries of the role of the presidential representatives is the June 2001 presidential decree, removing regional influence over the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). By placing a coordinator at the district level, there is clearly a relationship with the presidential representative, yet the MVD official apparently is still beholden to the central ministry.<sup>58</sup> While this process will surely influence the more independent regions disproportionately, the expanding roles of the MVD and FSB could indicate (depending on the degree of this expansion) a form of centralization that undermines the existence of federalism as Russia's organizing concept.

### Reconfiguration of Federation Council Membership

The Federation Council's powers were unclear following passage of the 1993 constitution. Never a bulwark of unified regional opposition to the center, the council was described not infrequently as an ineffective legislature, driven by division based on the privileges of the republics alongside the varying rights of members enshrined in bilateral treaties.<sup>59</sup> It would only become effective as an opposition body following the economic collapse of 1998, when a federal government emasculated by revenue shortfalls became more vulnerable to regional influences, represented in part by the strengthened Federation Council.<sup>60</sup> Drawing on analysis by Darryl Slider, however, Stepan argues that the council was actually quite powerful in its original configuration. He described several characteristics: it effectively blocked central legislation, despite the ability of the Duma to override vetoes; its part-time nature allowed it to delay federal laws; and disagreements with the Duma were generally overcome through a conciliation commission, rather than veto, which gave the regions significant impact on the final form of central legislation. Although not as powerful as the U.S. senate or the Brazilian upper house for constraining central legislation, the Council was quite influential.<sup>61</sup>

Since January 1, 2002, regional executives and legislative speakers no longer serve on the council. Instead, each branch appoints its individual representatives, with executive appointees subject to regional legislative approval. Although regional executives clearly lost influence on central proceedings, they are not entirely removed from that process.<sup>62</sup> Given their frequent dominance over regional legislatures, executives are still in a strong position to influence the choice of both deputies, help direct these deputies' council votes, and, if dissatisfied, remove their deputy, as long as the regional legislature does not override that decision with a two-thirds vote.<sup>63</sup>

The reform may actually enhance the positions of firmly entrenched regional leadership, a group once seen as more likely to have been located in the twenty-one republics.<sup>64</sup> This was underlined by a winter 2001 amendment to an October 1999 law. Originally limited to two terms, long-standing executives may now stand for a third (and sometimes a fourth) term.<sup>65</sup> If republican executives maintained certain advantages in the council, the election provision extends these advantages. Nevertheless, Putin's strategy to create greater symmetry includes tactical retreats designed to gain greater central authority in the long term through short- and medium-term concessions. In this sense, the early 2002 turnover of executives in a number of republics—including Komi, Sakha, and Ingushetsia—undermines any interpretation that republics will hold such an advantage for long.<sup>66</sup> It remains true that long-serving political executives in powerful republics, such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, maintain certain advantages; and, although the number of such executives in the republics is shrinking, five long-term leaders were re-elected in 2002.<sup>67</sup>

A number of regions appointed their new representatives prior to the end of 2001. An early practice in numerous republics was to appoint deputies hailing from Moscow and St. Petersburg, choosing individuals with no previous formal

connection to the region from which they are named and no ethnic affinity to the titular nationality.<sup>68</sup> In 2002, both Mariel deputies hailed from Moscow, and Mordoviia followed a similar line.<sup>69</sup> This practice may initially prove advantageous, as the new full-time representatives should be effective advocates, given their central locations and extant federal contacts. Moreover, appointing outsiders is certainly advantageous to regional leaders not wanting to create a political base for potential rivals. Yet, the practice of naming nontitular outsiders actually serves to undermine further the basis for the ethnic republics. Not only will these representatives be personally removed from the issues of concern to titular nationalities and thus less likely to fight for these issues, but their choice further indicates to the center that ethnic issues have become less potent in Russian politics.<sup>70</sup> Although not all republics followed this pattern in choosing their council deputies, these types of official decisions do threaten to weaken the long-term viability of the ethnic republics as separate entities. In this case, the central drive toward symmetry is actually enabled by the republics themselves.<sup>71</sup>

As 2002 came to an end, the “new” Federation Council became more supportive of Putin’s legislative agenda.<sup>72</sup> Two early indicators in late 2001 foretold this development: a faction comprising new deputies, *Federatsiia*, had (temporarily) formed largely in support of Putin; and Sergei Mironov, an ally of Putin’s in St. Petersburg, became the new council chairman.<sup>73</sup> Mironov quickly moved to bring the Council under his direction, even reining in the overly ambitious *Federatsiia* faction.<sup>74</sup> During 2002, the upper house could no longer muster a unified regional opposition to central policy, although members did continue to lobby for regional interests.<sup>75</sup> Regional political independence across Russia faces other threats, however. Membership in the council shows the rising impact of corporate Russia, with approximately one-third of the ninety-one new members named by the end of November 2001 coming from business circles.<sup>76</sup> This could be a sign of erosion in regional authority across Russia, although not necessarily linked to federal reforms. For example, corporate giants such as Lukoil have actively participated in regional electoral campaigns. In addition, regional executives are ever-beholden to these corporations for tax revenues, an issue not unfamiliar to liberal democracies the world over.

### **Federal Intervention in the Regions**

Encompassing all federal reforms are rising levels of federal intervention into regional affairs. Federal tactics range across all three branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) and all three levels (federal, regional, local) of government. Federal attempts to bring regional laws and constitutions or charters in line with federal foundations, along with movement to create a vertical control structure over federal agencies located in the regions, have the greatest impact on the republics: they have had many more violations than the other regions. For example, nineteen of twenty-one republican constitutions in 1996 violated the federal constitution, with almost all of these documents claiming republican sovereignty.<sup>77</sup>

The republics were well-situated to create contradictory legal documents. Although the constitution does not provide republics with the level of advantage

found in the Federation Treaty, it does provide some benefits—including the right to a republican constitution—that were further expanded for some through early bilateral treaties. In several cases, republics claimed regional legal supremacy over federal laws.<sup>78</sup> When combined with a weak center throughout the 1990s, legal discord has been rampant. Thus, policies designed to create a unified national “legal space” most threaten those regions with the most violations, namely the republics. Overall, Putin’s attempts to develop constitutional symmetry undermines Yeltsin’s “holding together” strategy. In his state of the nation speech in April 2002, Putin actually supported Yeltsin’s treaty-making policy as necessary at the time, although he expressed recognition that these documents often created in secret were unequal and violated a self-proclaimed goal of transparency in policy-making.<sup>79</sup>

A key goal has been to reclaim independent federal appointment powers in regionally located federal ministries without first seeking regional approval, as was the practice in the past. Examples of other new practices include the creation of seven separate media

districts under district-level direction, the appointment of federal inspectors to most regions, and the appointment of independent procurators by the justice ministry. Federal funds, rather than money from regional administrations, are now used to provide regional office space, apartments for personnel, and other necessities. Yet, despite such attempts to create an independent space for federal regional representatives, this process exhibits the differences between powerful and dependent regions. For example, the 2001 appointment of new figures to head the power ministries (FSB, Procuracy, Tax Police) in Mordoviia indicated central displeasure with the republic’s president Nikolai Merkushkin.<sup>80</sup> While Mordoviia is one of the poorer, less rebellious regions in Russia, wealthy and confrontational regions like Tatarstan and Bashkortostan generally have received less intrusive treatment.<sup>81</sup>

Of course, federal strategies are not always effective, as shown in attempts to influence elections in the regions or prevent long-running political executives from continuing in office. Volga District oversight of January 2001 presidential elections in the Republic of Mariel contributed to the defeat of incumbent Viacheslav Kislytsin,<sup>82</sup> but seemingly stronger pressure by federal authorities in Primorskii Krai could not elect a centrally supported candidate.<sup>83</sup> As noted, allowing regional executives to run for a third term was an early concession to the republics. Yet, electoral defeat and federally “enticed” resignations in Sakha and Ingushetsiya have reduced this number,<sup>84</sup> whereas even Shaimiev and Rakhimov are experiencing increasing central challenges to their authority and independence. Ultimately, while early concessions were being contradicted by an expand-

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***“Federal strategies are not always effective, as shown in attempts to influence elections in the regions or prevent long-running political executives from continuing in office.”***

ing tide of federal intervention as 2002 progressed,<sup>85</sup> Putin's strategy of vacillation re-emerged as federal pressures on the regions diminished with the approach of the 2003–04 election season. In striving for election of "his" bloc, United Russia, in the Duma, Putin has sought allies among the regional elite.<sup>86</sup>

The clearest form of federal intervention concerns attempts to bring regional constitutions, laws, and practices in accordance with the same on the federal level. Again, with the most violations, republics have the most to lose, even if the goal is one of simple constitutional symmetry. Resistance to federal proposals was almost immediate from Tatarstan, with regional leadership calling for a two-way legal reform following the litmus test of "progressiveness," an argument later made by Ivan Kulakov, first deputy chairman of the state council of the Komi Republic.<sup>87</sup> One target of a May 2000 presidential decree involving three regions, Bashkortostan's President Rakhimov argued that Russia would be healthier with a formula of "strong regions—strong Russia," a position also taken by Kulakov a year later.<sup>88</sup> Presidential decrees involving other regions soon followed.

The first significant challenge to the republics came on June 7, 2000, in a Constitutional Court ruling involving the Gorno-Altai Republic. The Court declared the sovereignty declarations of most republics and their claims of natural resource ownership unconstitutional and asserted that "only the federal government has the right to sign international treaties," a right that some republics took for themselves.<sup>89</sup> Initially, I was unsure how much impact this ruling would have, as the Court had frequently been ignored throughout the 1990s.<sup>90</sup> Times appear to be changing, however, as shown in a court ruling giving the procuracy the right to sue regions over laws that violate federal legislation.<sup>91</sup> This began a more concerted federal effort to bring the republics in line. While there were early successes bringing some regional laws into line without direct federal prodding,<sup>92</sup> many republics continued to resist federal pressure, prompting Putin's move toward strengthening the court system.<sup>93</sup>

On June 27, 2000, the Court declared parts of the constitutions of six republics (Adygeya, Bashkortostan, Ingushetsiya, Komi, North Ossetiya, and Tatarstan) in violation of the Russian constitution, invalidating provisions allocating the source of authority for the regional political leadership in the people of the republic rather than the Russian Federation. Moreover, the court expanded the Gorno-Altai ruling to other regions.<sup>94</sup> These and other rulings since have led to numerous adjustments to republican laws and constitutions across the country. Bashkortostan amended its constitution in fall 2000, although it was not until January 2003 that it actually came into line with the federal constitution under strong central pressure. Still, Tatarstan continued to delay changing its own fundamental laws.<sup>95</sup> While not entirely in agreement, Sakha and Kabardino-Balkariya began to address disagreements between republican and federal laws.<sup>96</sup> The Komi Republic renounced its sovereignty in September 2001.<sup>97</sup> Indicative of wider processes, Putin's reforms have had a significant effect, causing regional political elites to calculate their political resources more in terms of federal interests and policies than they had under Yeltsin.<sup>98</sup>

In a speech to the federal assembly in May 2003, Putin argued that the process



of reforming regional laws in accordance with federal legal standards was largely complete. He claimed that Russia had “finally—juridically and factually—restored a unified country,” brought federal authority closer to the regions, and restored a unified legal space to guide center-periphery relations.<sup>99</sup> Is this actually true? It is likely the case that the country is closer to Putin’s election-year rhetoric than it was in his speech a year earlier; yet, only time will tell the true story. To some, these reforms actually circumscribe regional legislative independence rather than build a workable legal structure, in a move toward vertical power structures.<sup>100</sup> In other cases, for example, the institution of local self-government, the battle is ongoing, something that Putin acknowledges.<sup>101</sup>

Even with real legal reform in the republics, regional obfuscation, delay, and outright resistance continues; the net result in any given region is not always clear, with executives finding other means to ensure continued control over resources, legislatures, and local government. At the end of 2001, 72 percent of Bashkortostan’s laws violated federal norms, more than at the beginning of Putin’s reforms.<sup>102</sup> The ultimate fate of the bilateral treaties—which are being undermined in the reform process and are the main component of Russia’s extra-constitutional asymmetry—will be quite telling for the republics and an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of federal reforms. In his own evaluation, a Syktyvkar journalist pessimistically sees the coming elimination of federalism as the regions increasingly lose their independence.<sup>103</sup> Yet, in 2001, State Duma Deputy A. S. Tomov claimed that symmetry is unlikely, although bringing regional laws into accord with federal norms is a positive development. Perhaps playing to his republican constituency and his Komi nationality, although not his electoral district, he argued that Russia differs from the United States in that its ethnic republics are here to stay.<sup>104</sup>

### **Reforms in Local Self-Government**

Since the 1995 law on the “General Principles for the Organization of Local Self-government,” the institution of local government has been full of possibilities. Although initial indications were positive,<sup>105</sup> in the period since, many regions have avoided developing the independent local institutions. Instead, local self-government has been at the center of the struggle between federal and regional authorities, frequently involving regional and national courts. Often finding against the regions, court rulings are almost as frequently ignored, avoided, and corrupted as regional leaders have struggled to ensure control over their respective territories. This became a major battle within the larger war over federal supremacy, as the center tried to break the vertical authority within the regions by providing local governments with legal and fiscal space, a sort of independence that would increase the regional position of federal institutions.<sup>106</sup> In summer 2001, Putin began pushing for better definition of the three levels of government by establishing a commission under the direction of Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Dmitry Kozak.<sup>107</sup> Ultimately, with the release of the Kozak commission report on local government in fall 2002 and its subsequent adoption in a modified form by the Duma in its first reading in spring 2003, the cen-

tral government has pushed the agenda further toward “vertical power” emanating from the center.<sup>108</sup>

Varying levels of regional willingness to implement federal laws on local self-government show the divide between the republics and other regions, most specifically because republican constitutions had clauses defining local government that predated the federal law. Many non-republics had implemented the laws to some degree by early 1999, but several republics justified their resistance on the fact that the 1993 Russian constitution gave them the right to their own constitutions. Thus, two of the most resistant republics, Komi and Bashkortostan, founded their positions on claims of territorial sovereignty and also argued that local governments were simply unprepared for self-governance.<sup>109</sup> This uneven development of local government represents the asymmetrical nature of Russian federalism. Putin has sent mixed messages, however, showing how reform cannot be implemented solely on the basis of central dictates.

Although there had been attempts to provide local governments greater independence in the Yeltsin era,<sup>110</sup> Putin’s pre-Kozak commission reforms exposed the continued strength of the regions in Russian politics, largely undermining any true development of independent local authority. While laws passed at the federal level placed municipalities with over 50,000 residents largely under federal dictates, they also gave regional executives a power concurrent with the center to remove local heads of administration. This concession was linked with negotiations on the reformation of the Federation Council and the discussions to allow the president to remove regional executives and disband regional parliaments acting contrary to federal legal guidelines. Again, it would seem Putin played for strategic advantage, with local self-government being expendable. It is not surprising, therefore, that Putin’s speech on local self-government to the state council in February 2001 was met with skepticism. Even raising the possibility for greater legal and fiscal power at the local level met with the claim that it was simply a rhetorical device and elicited fears that reforms are part of Putin’s goals to develop vertical authority structures in Russia by creating a structure that comes ever closer to unitary government.<sup>111</sup> In this process, the ethnic basis of Russia’s republics become further marginalized, only confirming the fears of ethnic elites in those regions.

Any reformation of the system of local self-government disproportionately affects the republics, which were the most resistant to the 1995 law. Any increase in the measure of independence at the local level in republics that were loathe to allow any autonomy earlier is going to have some effect. Yet, prior to the Kozak legislation, Putin’s political bargaining balanced out any reduction in authority at the regional level in one sector by increasing that authority in another. Compromises most affected those regions that had complied with the 1995 law, actually improving the regional executive’s position.

In the three years since Putin began his federal reform program, activity has surrounded the topic of local government. Republics such as Mariel, Kalmykiia, and Komi either resisted implementing central directives or passed their own regional laws in apparent defiance of federal laws.<sup>112</sup> In Dagestan and

Kabardino-Balkariya, regional leaders resisted central demands for democratic elections and legal requirements that mayors be elected rather than appointed.<sup>113</sup> This last strategy is a common one for regional leaders who have been clinging to their powers of appointment, a process also evident in some ethnic Russian regions.<sup>114</sup>

Despite resistance, a number of regions showed signs of movement toward independent local self-government in the year prior to the Kozak-inspired legislation. Kalmykiia and Kursk implemented regional laws that came closer to federal directives;<sup>115</sup> and even as regional executives resisted, “rebellious” sub-regional governments and legislatures, as well as citizen activists, have pushed for a more independent local space.<sup>116</sup> Long one of the regions most resistant to implementing the 1995 federal law, Komi appeared poised to bring its laws in accordance with the center in 2001–02. Whereas in 1999 Komi State Council Deputy Chairman Ivan Kulakov had argued that the republic was not ready for local self-government, in 2001 he predicted that a law in concert with federal guidelines would soon be passed.<sup>117</sup>

It is with the State Duma’s basic acceptance of the Kozak legislation, however, that the central role in governing across levels of authority makes most clear the threat to federalism as a whole in Russia and to the individual republics. The reform undermines constitutional guidelines separating local government from regional and federal levels by creating a “hierarchy of power.” It creates a two-tiered power structure that gives certain duties to local officials along with independent budgets and means for tax collection. These local officials are, however, vulnerable to external oversight from the regional executive. Meanwhile, a similar policy defines the role of the regional executive and his or her relationship with the central government. Depending on a number of potential triggers, each level of government can essentially remove the lower level’s executive and govern from above.<sup>118</sup> Although the governors expressed most significant opposition to federal oversight over the regions and themselves, Putin and Kozak raised the likelihood of the final passage of the bill by having gained earlier support for the gist of the proposal from the state council, which comprises the eighty-nine governors and Putin, and the Council of Regional Legislative Speakers.<sup>119</sup>

Despite such an expectation, almost four months after its initial passage in the State Duma, little had been done regarding its movement through the Federation Council and its actual implementation. As the State Duma Committee for Questions of Local Self-Government embarked on a second reading of the legislation, it had to consider close to six thousand suggested corrections to the bill from regional and local governments.<sup>120</sup> As is often the case in Russia’s political evolution, fiscal issues bedeviled this legislation, prompting the chairman of the Federation Council’s Committee for Questions of Local Self-Government to argue that without new tax and budget codes “this law will be left hanging [for] we would not want to have once again an unworkable legislative act in Russia.”<sup>121</sup> Over the past several years, federal tax reforms that placed more funds in federal coffers have made the financial situation even more dire for local government across Russia.<sup>122</sup> Often subsidized by regional administrations, local governments

will have trouble gaining any true level of independence so long as the financial situation is not solved. The Kozak-inspired legislation offers guarantees that each level will have its own source of funding and makes unfunded mandates illegal. Putin has long recognized the financial burdens being placed on the local governments, but he has never clearly shown a commitment to address these issues, perhaps exhibiting his attempt to balance needed political changes with regional resistance, the reality that Russia continues to be financially strapped, and, more recently, the approaching legislative and presidential elections. Overall, Putin is pushing for a unified legal space on numerous levels. He understands that true local budgetary control is very much dependent on reforms in national tax laws.

### **Fiscal Reform**

When asked about federal reforms, a number of interviewees claimed that Putin's initial tax reforms are the most significant of all. Through these reforms, the federal government increased its share of regional tax revenues from approximately 50 percent of the total to 56 percent in 2001 and 62 percent in 2002, with the regions taking a commensurate loss. Perhaps most disturbing for the regions, however, was a shift in the expenditure of tax revenues away from regional programs toward federal concerns. As further indication of Putin's double game of balancing policy impact, however, regional executives were able to transfer 15 to 20 percent of local tax revenues to the regional level.<sup>123</sup> In the end, however, this ongoing reform may have the greatest affect on the changing balance of power. If legal reforms were aimed at bringing the country into constitutional symmetry, tax reforms would work toward socioeconomic symmetry by creating a more fiscally dominant federal center, able to both extract more taxes and redistribute revenues. As a result, the tax reform is less a threat to the republics than to all the wealthy donor regions.

Reforms directly hit two of Russia's most powerful and resistant regions, Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, as they had been largely self-sufficient regions, neither providing most taxes to the center nor receiving federal program support. In Bashkortostan, tax transfers to the center increased from 18 to 20 percent of total regional tax revenue in the past to just over 50 percent of the total in the first quarter of 2001.<sup>124</sup> These reforms, in fact, enable greater federal oversight over tax collection by introducing representation from the federal treasury that previously did not exist in Tatarstan and had an insignificant role in Bashkortostan.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, even as these two republics were pushed to contribute more revenues to federal coffers, the central government retreated from its hardline position and provided certain advantages to each that softened the blow.<sup>126</sup> Again, Putin's tactics were to take short-term losses in playing for long-term strategic gains.

By spring 2002, the federal government was pushing Tatarstan and Bashkortostan even harder, requiring more tax payments while intervening in decisions related to the oil industry.<sup>127</sup> Tatarstan's politically dominated economy was suffering partially because of the federal tax payment requirements and Bashkortostan was being pressured by Putin-friendly Gazprom to repay its debts.<sup>128</sup> Komi and Kalmykiia also faced increasing federal tax demands.<sup>129</sup> In Komi, the per-

centage of total tax revenues paid to the center increased from 25 percent in 1998 to 42.3 percent in 2000 and 51.7 percent in 2001, while revenues were paid at a rate of 58 percent in 2002.<sup>130</sup> Most remarkable in these examples is that those regions, seemingly with the greatest political and economic advantages (both donor regions and republics), are slowly being forced to bend under central pressure, with federal tax payments now a part of everyday life for all of Russia's regions.<sup>131</sup>

In a still uncertain tax environment, however, it is increasingly difficult for local governments to gain any degree of political independence from regional centers, as Putin has indicated that he wants. In fall 2002, it was estimated that only 500 of Russia's 13,000 local governments had sufficient funds to meet expenses, with unfunded mandates around 300–350 billion rubles for 2001.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the chairman of the Federation Council committee on local government, Rafgat Altynbaev, has argued that workable local government will need 30–35 percent of the country's revenues, not the paltry 5–7 percent local entities controlled on average in 2002.<sup>133</sup> As discussions began in spring 2003, it was obvious that without true tax reform the Kozak legislation on local government cannot be meaningfully enacted.<sup>134</sup>

Overall, these reforms affect all of Russia's regions. Although republics will lose fiscal independence, all donor regions, particularly those with the strongest economies in this category, will bear the brunt of these reforms. As a result of these wide-ranging reforms, there have also been changes in the ability of individual regions to give tax advantages to investors.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, at the end of 2000, there was a move to expand presidential influence over regional audit chambers, thereby taking away a measure of independent control from the State Duma.<sup>136</sup> One clear challenge to the republics was a November 2000 Constitutional Court ruling that eliminated special privileges held by republican executives to name the head of each republic's branch of the federal tax police.<sup>137</sup> Without a role in this process, these executives lost much of their ability to influence tax collections.<sup>138</sup>

Overall, fiscal reform may indicate a long-term federal strategy to bring the country toward greater socioeconomic symmetry. This type of symmetry is not normally linked to federal systems and instead is best associated with a decentralized unitary state.<sup>139</sup> This may, of course, be Putin's long-term goal that would complement other reforms and move Russia away from a formal federal system more closely resembling a unitary state. Entering the equation are new oil tax guidelines that challenge authorities in oil rich regions and benefit corporate oil producers, begging the question of whether the relative strength of regional regimes becomes less relevant in the face of pressures from varying directions.

## Conclusion

Vladimir Putin's federal reforms have challenged the levels of regional autonomy across Russia, perhaps even challenging the very existence of federalism as the organizing concept for the Russian state. Moreover, these reforms have been especially challenging to the republics. Because the republics have had certain

special privileges and rights, reforms that are designed to remove these privileges are a significant threat. In this respect, Kahn's and Stepan's pre-Putin assessments of the advantages held by republics have been significantly undermined after three years of federal reform.<sup>140</sup> The threat, however, affects more than one level, and the implications for the entire country are huge. At the very least, all indications are that Putin is trying to bring an asymmetrical federal structure into greater symmetry in both constitutional and socioeconomic terms. Putin may have more significant goals, however. The question may not be whether an asymmetrical system is becoming more symmetrical, but whether Putin aims to abandon a poorly functioning federal system for a unitary structure. The signs for both are many and often identical, as either path represents some movement toward greater centralization.

In relating these possibilities to the republics, achieving either of these ends in a multi-national Russia depends on how a number of variables in the center-periphery relationship evolve, including the strength of central authorities; the response of a rather small group of politically-weakened ethnic minorities that must frequently overcome resistance from their ethnic Russian regional leaders; the center's ability to support its more wayward regions; and more fundamentally, the state's ability to effectively govern the largest country in the world. Many Russian reforms over the past decade have been ineffective and incomplete. The results of the reform process depend on a lot of factors, not the least of which is the long-term coherence of these reforms and the commitment of central reformers.

As shown in figure 1, the ability of individual regions to manage their own affairs vis-à-vis potential federal intervention is a combination of both political and economic factors. For the moment, the most privileged regions are those that combine political status as a republic with general economic success, which frequently has meant the existence of valuable natural resources. Among the republics, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Komi, and Sakha fall into this category. The least privileged are neither economically successful nor endowed with traditional political advantage of republic status. In the middle is a sort of amorphous group of regions that are either economically successful or possess political advantages. Examples of the former are the city of Moscow and an oblast' such

	<b>Republic</b>	<b>Non-republic</b>
<b>Economic success</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium/high</b>
<b>Little economic success</b>	<b>Medium/low</b>	<b>Low</b>

**FIGURE 1. Relative independence of regions by type.**

as Sverdlovsk or Perm, while those of the latter include republics such as Tuva, Mariel, and Kabardino-Balkaria.

The emerging question as Russia evolves pertains to which category is more advantageous. Under Putin's reforms, which stress constitutional symmetry over socioeconomic symmetry, economic considerations are likely to be more of a force for the future as the political considerations of ethnic identity slip into the past. Although an appropriate "resting place" in reforms has not been reached for more definitive conclusions, identity as a republic is being increasingly marginalized as a factor in national decisions.

Overall, the impact of federal reforms on the republics has a dual effect. First, the very basis of the republics, ethnic identity, is threatened. Ethnic identity is important to a number of national groups' leaders who fear the rise of the federal government and the potential for the "gubernizatsiia" of Russia that would largely eliminate the separate ethnic territories. These leaders, if not their often indifferent ethnic relatives, fear the cultural assimilation of their peoples, a fear that is underlined by calls from leaders in ethnic Russian regions for the equalization of federal relations. Second, the political advantages enabled by central recognition of the ethnic basis for territory are also threatened by these reforms. Even in regions where an ethnic Russian leads a republic, there have been attempts to take advantage of the special position of a republic. The willingness of many republican leaders to name non-ethnic non-residents to the newly configured Federation Council only serves to undermine their republic's own relative position and even enables an expanding central authority.

Although not always the case, the political advantages of an ethnic region are linked to whether a republic's leaders represent the titular nationality. The most powerful dynamic where they are linked exists. Bashkortostan's and Tatarstan's titular leaders recognize the threats to their nationalities and territorial autonomy. Simultaneously, however, Putin's reforms have had a differential impact on these regions. Federal authorities see that the more resistant regions, particularly those with significant economic wealth, must be handled with care. Central authorities frequently have made strong statements about the most disobedient regions but have then appointed weak representatives to their regional ministries and momentarily ignored glaring disagreements between regional and federal laws. Federal authorities are willing to take a strategy of large gains accompanied by small and medium concessions when real resistance arises. The key example rests in the reformation of the Federation Council in which the governors were "bribed" with a law giving them a certain measure of control over executives at the local level. Federal willingness to allow long-serving regional executives, largely executives in the republics, to run for a third term was another compromise.

One must keep in mind, however, that the balancing strategy of federal reforms is ever moving toward greater centralization. Several examples not discussed above underline this statement. First, at the end of 2001, federal authorities enacted a national sales tax. Tax revenues will stay in the regions, but the tax itself will be rescinded at the beginning of 2004. Second, this movement toward "nationalizing" policies is underlined by the political party law designed to force national

parties into regional legislatures. In having their personalized rule challenged, regional executives lose a key source of their ability to resist central policy. Third, a November 2001 meeting in Moscow involving civic organizations from across the country carried an almost surreal message that the federal government is attempting to direct, even control, civil society, normally a fundamental component in democratic societies independent of the state.

The elevated role of the Constitutional Court represents a major shift in federal strategy. Although frequently ignored in the past, the court has become a focal point for change in ruling on inconsistencies between the federal constitution and laws and the laws in the republics. Nevertheless, while strong rulings have had an effect on some republics, the most powerful of this group continue to stall the implementation of court orders. Yet, political expediency may undermine the development shown by the court through 2002. Showing the impact of approaching legislative and presidential election, the sort of ad hoc policymaking most evident under Yeltsin emerged in the March 2003 constitutional referendum in Chechnya. In what may be a blow to judicial and executive credibility, yet the ultimate "holding together" strategy, Putin allowed Chechnya to assert its sovereignty and provide citizenship to its residents. Both concessions contradict recent constitutional and legal precedent.<sup>141</sup> In a similar vein, although local self-government and tax reform legislation appears to be advancing, there are cracks in this process as well. While aiming to develop independent local self-government as a counterweight to powerful regional executives, legislators made compromises that permitted these same executives the power to dismiss ineffective mayors. Additionally, tax reforms to this point have left local governments even more destitute than before, making them more dependent on regional governments to bail them out.

It is perhaps through taxes that federal reforms will show their greatest effect in creating greater socioeconomic symmetry, whereas in the past, certain wealthy regions, republic and oblast' alike, had disproportionate independence from, and influence on, federal authorities. As the federal share of regional tax revenues has risen, the wealthy regions have lost a powerful tool with which to resist federal authorities. This is especially true for the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, which are now required to pay tax revenues and accept greater federal intervention in state services that were once managed almost entirely independently. Nevertheless, all donor regions have been affected by these reforms in ways that limit their independence, and this does not even account for the threat to regional relevance posed by rising corporate power across all of Russia.

Overall, Russia is amidst extensive reforms to an ineffective system. It continues in a phase of regime change that carries great uncertainties for the future, particularly regarding the president's ultimate goal: a unitary or federal state structure. Although reforms do challenge the independent positions of the republics, it is difficult to see how they will continue to develop. In fact, it may be the case that the most resistant republics may still be able to wrest some form of constitutionally based asymmetry that would incorporate aspects of their bilateral treaties into the Russian constitution. Much like the strategy of reform politicians in late-1970s Spain, such a development may be necessary if Putin is truly



looking to hold together a functioning state. In the end, however, if predictability and accountability in government are not the product of these reforms, Russia will continue its patterns of corrupt and ineffective governance.

## NOTES

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1. Matthew Hyde, "Putin's Federal Reforms and their Implications for Presidential Power in Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 53, no. 5 (July 2001): 719–43.

2. I studiously avoid discussing federal relations with the Republic of Chechnya, the ultimate outlier in Russia. Chechnya's relationship with the national government is too far from "normal" politics.

3. Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy: Observations on the Devolution Process in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1999): 87–106; Steven Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak or Too Strong in the Russian Federation?" in *Building the Russian State*, ed. Valerie Sperling (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 137–56; Jeff Kahn, "The Parade of Sovereignties: Establishing the Vocabulary of the New Russian Federation," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2000): 63–4; Gail Lapidus, "Asymmetrical Federalism and State Breakdown in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1999): 74–82; and Alfred Stepan, "Russian Federalism in Comparative Perspective," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2000): 133–76.

4. Paul Goble, "Analysis: Russia to End Ethnic Federalism," *United Press International* (August 30, 2001) as appeared in *Johnson's Russia List* #5419 (August 31, 2001).

5. This information draws on 1989 data from an online map, "Russia's Ethnic Republics," found in the Perry-Casteneda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas at Austin, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/russia\\_ethnic94.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/russia_ethnic94.jpg).

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8. Stepan, "Russian Federalism."

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10. Daniel Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 5–6.

11. Alain-G. Gagnon, "The Political Uses of Federalism," in *Comparative Federalism and Federation*, ed. Michael Burgess and Alain-G. Gagnon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 37.

12. Zvi Gitleman, "Federalism and Multiculturalism in Socialist Systems," in *Federalism and Political Integration*, ed. Daniel Elazar (Tel Aviv: Turtledove Publishing, 1979), 159.

13. Daniel Elazar, "International and Comparative Federalism," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (June 1993), 191.

14. Gitleman, "Federalism and Multiculturalism," 162–3.

15. Vladimir Lysenko, "*Problemy Razvitiia Federativnykh Otnoshenii v Sovremennoi Rossii*," *Kentavr* (March–April 1995), 24.

16. Lysenko, "*Problemy Razvitiia Federativnykh*," 25.

17. James Hughes, "Moscow's Bilateral Treaties Add to Confusion," *Transition* (September 20, 1996): 40–1.
18. Kahn, "The Parade of Sovereignties," 83.
19. Hughes, "Moscow's Bilateral Treaties," 41.
20. Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak?" 139.
21. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness," 89.
22. Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak?" 139.
23. Stepan, "Russian Federalism."
24. Vladimir Lysenko, "How Strong are the Treaty Foundations of Federative Relations," *Anthropology & Archaeology of Eurasia* 36, no. 1 (1997): 33–55.
25. Sergei Valenti, "Russian Reforms and Russian Federalism," *Anthropology & Archaeology of Eurasia* 36, no. 1 (1997): 78–9.
26. Valenti, "Russian Reforms," 79.
27. Lysenko, "How Strong," 52.
28. Hughes, "Moscow's Bilateral Treaties," 42.
29. Hughes, "Moscow's Bilateral Treaties," 43.
30. Alfred Stepan, "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model," *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 4 (October 1999): 19–34.
31. Elazar, "International and Comparative Federalism." See also, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
32. Stepan, "Russian Federalism," 141–4.
33. Stepan, "Russian Federalism," 145.
34. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness," 96.
35. Stepan, "Russian Federalism," 152–4.
36. Solnick, "Is the Center to Weak?"
37. Hyde, "Putin's Federal Reforms."
38. Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak?" 147.
39. Igor Rabinovich, "Bashkortostan: Views Differ from Moscow," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 21 (2000). See also *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 20 (2000).
40. "Latyshev Calls for Reducing Number of Regions," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 35 (2000).
41. Interview with Ksenofont Sanukov, professor of history, Mari State University, Ioshakr-Ola, Mariel, May 2001.
42. Yuri Shabaev, "Regional Leaders Resort to Ethnic Factor," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 21 (2000) and Igor Rabinovich, "Rakhimov Lays out Critique of Federal Policy," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 12 (2001).
43. Sanukov interview.
44. Interview with editors of *Erzian Mastor*, Saransk, Mordoviia, March 2001; Yuri Shabaev, "Sixth Congress Held in Syktyvkar," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 41 (2000).
45. "Vladimir Zhirinovskiy on Federalism," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 17 (2001); Andrei Miroshnichenko, "Rostov: Speaker Sees Decrees Aimed at Ethnic Republics," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 20 (2000); and "Ivanovo Governor Tikhomirov on Federation Council Reforms," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 30 (2000).
46. Igor Rabinovitch, "Bashkortostan, "Nationalities Ministry Disagree over Nationalities Policy," and Pavel Isaev, "Governors' Body Wields Little Power," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 32 (2001).
47. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness," 101.
48. Robert Ortung, "Battle Intensifies Over Presidential Representatives," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 1 (2001).
49. "Presidential Representatives to Gain More Power," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 42 (2000).

50. "Putin Issues Decree on Representatives," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 4 (2001).

51. "Poslanie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatzii V. V. Putina Federalnomu Sobraniu Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Prezident Rossiiskoi Federatzii*, April 18, 2002, <http://president.kremlin.ru/events/510.html>.

52. Interview with Nikandor Popov, Director *Mari Ushem*, Ioshark-Ola, Mariel, May 2001.

53. Interview with Mari political functionary, Ioshkar Ola, Mariel, May 2001.

54. Interview with Valery Yurchenkov, professor of history, Mordovian State University, Saransk, Mordoviia, April 9, 2001.

55. Interview with Syktyvkar correspondent, Moscow-based newspaper, Syktyvkar, Komi, June 2001. Cherkesev was replaced in spring 2003 by Valentina Matvienko. See Daniel Tsygankov, "Putin Replaces Cherkesev in Northwest," *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 5 (2003).

56. Vladimir Volgin, "Federal Official Seeks Ability to Initiate Regional Legislation in South," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 14 (2001). Note, not all regions have been assigned their own federal inspector.

57. "Putin Continues to Tighten Screws on Media," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 36 (2000). "Coordinating information flows" in broadcast media had gathered momentum as fall 2003 elections approached. See Sergei Sarychev, "Central Okrug, Pro-Kremlin Party Prepare Unified Media Coverage for Duma Campaign," *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 8 (2003).

58. Pavel Isaev, "Police Reform Benefits Presidential Representatives, Limits Gubernatorial Power," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 23 (2001).

59. Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak?" 146.

60. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness," 87–8.

61. Stepan, "Russian Federalism," 161–4.

62. Simultaneously, Putin created an advisory body, the State Council, by executive decree as a palliative for regional executives who will serve on this body. To date, the council has not significantly impacted central decisions.

63. Hyde, "Putin's Federal Reforms," 729.

64. Kahn, "The Parade of Sovereignties," 62.

65. "Duma Approves Bill Allowing Current Governors to Seek Third, Fourth Terms," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 4 (2001). Court challenges would delay official implementation of this law until it was upheld by the constitutional court in July 2002. See Sergei Markedonov, "Chechnya in the Context of Russian Federalism," *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 7 (2003).

66. Yuri Shabaev, "Torlopov Unseats Spiridonov in Komi Election"; and Robert Ortung, "Putin's Main Accomplishment is Centralization," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 45 (2001).

67. Danielle Lussier, "Putin Continues Extending Vertical Power," *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 3 (2003).

68. Yuri Shabaev, "Komi Names Petersburg FSB Man to Upper Chamber," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 16 (2001). By mid-2002, some 35 percent of deputies in the federation council lacked regional connections at the time of their initial appointment. See Robert Ortung, "Conference Analyses (*sic*) Impact of Federal Reforms," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 7, no. 20 (June 2002).

69. Svetlana Zaslonskaya, "Marii El Sends Muscovites to Upper Chamber," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 14 (2001); and Igor Telinn, "Mordoviia Hands Seats to Yukos, Presidential Administration," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 43 (2001). Ultimately, almost half of the council members are permanent Moscow residents. Lussier, "Putin Continues Extending Vertical of Power."

70. Kahn argues that the force of ethnicity had generally declined as early as the time of the Soviet collapse and the rise of an independent Russia ("The Parade of Sovereign-

ties,” 63–4). Although briefly countermanded after 1992 and following implementation of the 1993 constitution, it since has continued to decline dramatically, at least in part due to Russia’s economic challenges.

71. Petr Akopov, “Russkii senat: Popytka kollektivnogo portreta novogo sostava Sove-ta Federatsii,” *Izvestiya*, January 30, 2002, <http://www.izvestia.ru/politic/30-01-02/arti-cle13615>. Overall, 71 of 166 deputies resided in Moscow at the time of their appointments.

72. Lussier, “Putin Continues Extending.”

73. Robert Orttung, “With New Speaker, Putin Tightens Grip on Upper Chamber,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 43 (2001).

74. Pavel Isaev, “New Speaker Seeks to Limit Power of Upper Chamber’s Only Fac-tion,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 44 (2001).

75. Lussier, “Putin Continues Extending.”

76. Orttung, “With New Speaker.”

77. Kahn, “The Parade of Sovereignties,” 84.

78. Kahn, “The Parade of Sovereignties,” 84–5.

79. “Poslanie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatzii V. V. Putina.” By that point, Putin claimed that twenty-eight of the forty-two treaties had already been annulled.

80. Interview with Saransk journalist, Saransk, Mordoviia, March 2001.

81. Midkhat Faroukshin, “General Named as Federal Representative in Tatarstan,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 38 (2000); and Igor Rabinovich, “Bashkortostan Chief Federal Inspector Analyzes First Year,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 36 (2001).

82. Interview with Mari political functionary.

83. Oleg Zhuntsov, “Primorskii Voters Elect Darkin Governor,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 23 (2001); and Zhuntsov, “Nazdratenko-backed Candidate Leads After First Round, Kremlin Routed,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 20 (2001).

84. “Aushev Ofitsialno obiavil osvoei otstavke,” *Polit.ru*, December 28, 2001, <http://www.polit.ru/documents/464102.html>; and “Aushev budet prestavliat Ingushetii v Sovete Federatsii,” *Polit.ru*, January 11, 2002, <http://www.polit.ru/documents/464102.html>.

85. Orttung, “Putin’s Main Accomplishment.”

86. Pavel Isaev, “2003 Marks Third Cycle of Regional Elections,” *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 5 (2003).

87. “Putin Cracks Down on Regional Laws,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 19 (2000).

88. Igor Rabinovich, “Bashkortostan: Views Differ from Moscow,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 21 (2000); and interview with Ivan Kulakov, first deputy speaker state council of the Komi Republic, Syktyvkar, Komi, June 2001.

89. “Constitutional Court Overturns Sovereignty of Republics,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 25 (2000).

90. Stoner-Weiss, “Central Weakness,” 100–1. The struggle over local self-government is one example. See James Alexander, “Pluralism in the Komi Republic? Overcoming Executive Resistance,” *Demokratizatsiya* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 370–82.

91. “Constitutional Court Declares Parts of Six Republican Constitutions Invalid,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 27 (2000).

92. “Kalmykiya Amends Contradictory Regional Laws,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 23 (2000).

93. “Poslanie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatzii V.V. Putina.”

94. “Constitutional Court Declares Parts of Six Republican Constitutions Invalid.”

95. Igor Rabinovich, “Bashkortostan Adopts New Constitution under Federal Pressure,” *Russian Regional Report* 8, no. 1 (2003) and Midkhat Farouksin, “Tatarstan Seeks to Pre-serve its Status,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 7, no. 27 (2002).

96. Oleg Yemelyanov, “Sakha Remains Defiant in Opposing Constitutional Changes,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 10 (2001) and Oleg Tsvetkov, “Kabardino-Balkariya Seeks to Bring Laws in Line with Federal Norms,” *EWI Russian Regional Report* 5, no.

27 (2000).

97. Yuri Shabaev, "Cracks Appear in Komi's Authoritarian System," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 34 (2001).

98. Interview with Igor Kalinin, senior scholar, Institute of Humanities, Udmurtiia State University, Izhevsk, Udmurtiia, April 2001.

99. Vladimir Putin, "Poslanie Federal'nomy Sobraniuu Rossiskoi Federatsii," *Krem-lin.ru*, May 16, 2003, <http://president.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2003/05/44623.shtml>.

100. Leonid Smirnyagin, "Moscow, Regions Continue Battle over Defining Responsibilities," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 40 (2001).

101. Vladimir Putin, "Poslanie Federal'nomy Sobraniuu."

102. Igor Rabinovich, "Bashkortostani Legal Situation is Worse than before Campaign to Bring Laws into Line," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 44 (2001).

103. Syktyvkar correspondent for Moscow-based newspaper interview.

104. Interview by Viktor Kovalev with Aleksei Tomov, deputy to the State Duma, Syktyvkar, Komi, May 28, 2001.

105. Peter Kirkow, "Local Self-government in Russia: Awakening from a Slumber?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 1.

106. Alexander, "Pluralism."

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110. Solnick, "Is the Center Too Weak?" 150.

111. These documents appeared in the journal *Munitsipalnaia Politika*, 2, no. 29 (2001) and include (titles translated by author): "Presentation of the President of the Russian Federation at the meeting of the Presidium of the State Council of the Russian Federation, pp. 9–10; Sergei Mitrokhin, "Position of the President Remains Vague," 4–5; and, Galina Startseva, "How to Improve the Situation with Local Self-government: The President's Suggestion," 6–8.

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118. "Rossiiskaia Federatsiia federal'nyi zakon ob obshchikh printsipakh organizatsii mestnogo samoupravleniia v Rossiiskoi fedratsii," *Informatsionnyi kanal Gosudarstvennoi Dumy RF*, <http://www.akdi.ru/gd/proekt/091204GD.SHTM>; and Pavel Isaev, "Governors Oppose Kozak Plans . . ."
119. Pavel Isaev, "Governors Oppose Kozak Plans . . ."
120. "O zakonoproekte 'Ob obshchikh printsipakh organizatsii mestnogo camoupravleniia v Rossiiskoi Federatsii,'" *Zakonodatel'naia detatel'nost Gosudarstvennoi Dumy. Parlamentskie slushaniia*, April 3, 2003, <http://www.duma.gov.ru/index.jsp?t = slush/psl20030313.html>.
121. "Sovet Federatsii rassmotrel voprosy sovershenstvovaniia zakonodatel'nogo obe-specheniia finansovykh osnov mestnogo samoupravleniia v Rossii," *Press-sluzhba Sove-ta Federatsii* (March 13, 2003) [http://www.council.gov.ru/inf\\_sl/inf\\_ps/nov/ pscf\\_n513032.htm](http://www.council.gov.ru/inf_sl/inf_ps/nov/ pscf_n513032.htm).
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133. Robert Orttung, "Kozak Commission on Local Government: The View from the North-West," *EWI Russian Regional Report* 7, no. 25 (2002).
134. Vladimir Putin, "Poslanie Federal'nomy Sobraniuu."
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137. "Constitutional Court Takes More Powers from Republics," *EWI Russian Region-al Report* 5, no. 44 (2000).
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140. Stepan, "Russian Federalism," and Kahn, "The Parade of Sovereignty."
141. Markedonov.