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ON PUTIN'S LONG STATE (REFLECTIONS ON THE ARTICLE OF VLADISLAV SURKOV)

The author, analyzing the article by V. Surkov "Putin's Lasting State", expresses either agreement with a part of his theses, substantiating it, doubting or denying and also briefly justifying them.

Agreement with the theses: "illusion of choice", "realism of predestination", "logic of the historical process", "state of a new type", "uniqueness and viability of Russia", "model of the state", "ideology of Putinism", people, "the military and police functions are the most important and decisive".

Doubts, denial: "impossible, unnatural, counter-historical disintegration of Russia", "growing Russia", "survival of the Russian nation", the absence of mention of the First President of the Russian Federation, which laid the foundation of the new Russia; "a significant export potential of the Russian political system", "supreme ruler, understating the value of political institutions and the promotion of one person against this background, "multi-level political institutions – outlet clothing", "trust in one person".

Key words: *political system, state, state models, national policy, state policy.*

It is intentionally that I did not rush to respond to the article and decided to get acquainted with the positions of other readers. After I watched and listened to the TV discussions, read the printed and electronic products (probably not all), I came to the conclusion that some of the opponents did not want to sincerely talk about the problems or did not understand what the article was about. Someone even took the article as V. Surkov's personal motive in his career.

As for personal motivation, it does not interest me at all, since any act (action) of great or small significance, down to historical one, has a personal interest (foundation, motivation).

Often in the history, a trivial, at first glance, event of a personal (family) character becomes a pretext for large-scale historical processes.

The point is not by what interests V. Surkov was guided by, the point is what he said. In addition, if somebody else wrote it, it could go unnoticed. In this case,

the author is an official person. We should not forget that his thesis about sovereign democracy did not turn out to be an empty air shake, as many in their time prophesied.

A few words about the sovereign democracy in order to better understand how to perceive the new article by V. Surkov. In 2006, my analysis of V. Surkov's presentation ended with the publication of a small book [1. S. 82]. I will quote a few paragraphs from this book.

The first "reason that prompted me to address the topic of sovereignty was the book "Sovereignty" (1), or rather, the speech by Vladislav Surkov published in that book at a meeting of United Russia party activists, or more precisely, the thesis contained in it that... 'Russ, Russians have been a state-forming nation for 500 years...' (1). In that thesis, I am interested in the figure of 500. We live in 2007, the words were pronounced in 2006. If we subtract 500 from that figure, then it turns out that 'Russ, Russian' state appeared in 1506... Surkov did not say 'about 500 years', 'more than 500 years', or 'Russ, Russians have been a state-forming nation for centuries', etc. without specifying the exact age of Russian state. He said mathematically specifically 500 years" [1. P. 3]. I wanted to refute these 500 years.

The second reason is the significance of what was said by V.Yu. Surkov in respect of sovereign democracy.

"In connection with this", I wrote in my book "the thought of the President of Russia V.V. Putin about the phrase 'sovereign democracy' seems interesting. In his opinion, the category of 'sovereignty' is intended for external use and the category of 'democracy' – for internal use. Indeed, the problem of sovereignty for Russia at different stages of its existence and development manifested itself in different guises: now it turned inland, then outside. Today, we are more concerned with sovereignty from the point of view of external influences" [1].

At the end of the study I summarized 28 points-conclusions. Below are two of them: points 27 and 28.

Point 27: "the components of sovereignty should be remembered: respect for oneself, for the native country and its history (whatever it is), reliance on one's own strength, faith in oneself, society, country, trust (with fair criticism) in the authority, the state; openness to the world (taking into account the preservation of one's own roots and traditions); striving for justice, liberation from arrogance, pride, narcissism and self-flagellation; desire for self-preservation and reproduction; the raising of the educational and cultural level, peaceful, benevolent cohabitation of all nationalities and religions. It should be remembered that Russia is our common state. Sovereignty involves the strengthening of the Armed Forces, the intensification of diplomacy; ensuring the security and protection of citizens both within the country and abroad; consolidation of the political elite, the business, the society as a whole around the main tasks of Russia, etc. If the thesis 'sovereign democracy' put forward by the authorities will help this, let it exist".

Point 28: “if we want to have ‘sovereign democracy,’ then its ideological sources should be sought at home, and not in France or elsewhere. The history of the teachings shows that there are many such sources in Russia!” [1. S. 74-75].

Thus, “sovereign democracy” was not rejected by me. The essence of the last two conclusions (27 and 28) in the life of Russia has practically been realized or is being realized. I doubt that they were read by the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation, but objectively they coincided with its plans.

This factor gives me the moral right to speak about the “Putin’s Long State”. Let us follow the order in which the article is presented.

Why the thesis “It only seems that we have a choice” is considered by the author to be amazing in their depth of meaning and audacity? The article begins with these words. It further states that “The illusion of choice is the most important of all illusions... The rejection of this illusion in favor of realism of predestination has led our society first to reflect upon its own special, sovereign version of democratic development, and then to completely lose interest in any discussions on the subject of what democracy should be like and whether it should exist even in principle” [8].

“The realization of the realism of predestination led to another realization: state-building must be carried out in accordance with the logic of historical processes” (ibid.).

How, in my opinion, can one perceive what was said by V. Surkov in the first lines of his article? If he had in mind the same thing that seems to me, then one cannot but agree with that even if you are not a believer in God, not a Marxist, but simply an expert in the field of world history. The listing in the same rank of a believer in God and a Marxist should not confuse anyone. If a believer (I consider myself to be one) considers History as the procession of God on Earth, then Marx and his followers operate with objective regularity (this is something that does not depend on the will of the people).

So, whatever you preach:

- a) the procession of God on the Earth;
- b) objective regularity;
- c) the logic of historical processes, – we come to the realism of predestination, that is, to the illusion of choice: what V. Surkov asserts.

I cannot agree with part of the following thesis of V. Surkov. He writes: “Impossible, unnatural and counter-historical disintegration of Russia was, albeit belatedly, but firmly stopped...”

First, that which is impossible does not occur. If it happened, then it became possible.

Secondly, the collapse of the USSR (Russia) was not unnatural. From the point of view of Russia’s being in the Universe, this is a very natural process (event). On that occasion, I wrote a lot in my time. In one of the books it was written: “The Lord saved Russia, having abolished the USSR” [2. P. 36].

I note that I consider myself a pro-state person and a patriot of Russia. However, if we consistently adhere to the thesis of “realism of predetermination”, then there is no reason to consider the collapse of the USSR to be unnatural. But what a scientist can say, it is not always justifiable to be pronounced by a politician. On the other hand, it is still necessary to be consistent in one’s judgments: either the realism of predestination and the illusion of choice, or unnatural and counter-historical process. By the way, about the counter-historical process. The collapse of the USSR (Russia) was not counter-historical as it was not unnatural. That was a process sad and catastrophic from the point of view of life of specific people, but it was natural, inevitable and necessary from the point of view of Russia’s Being. And there were several such processes (stages) in the history of Russia.

It is not for political leaders to groan and gasp about such things, but one should not undermine the people’s trust in the ideals of the state. I believe that the most optimal formulation regarding the collapse of the USSR was given by V.V. Putin: “geopolitical catastrophe”. It fits perfectly into the formula of realism of predestination.

Alarming among others is the word “growing”. I will quote the following thesis: “Russia ... has returned to its natural and its only possible condition: that of a great and growing community of nations that gathers land”. Great – yes! Gathers – yes! “Growing” is questionable. If it concerns the historical past – yes! That process was predetermined. If it concerns the future, one has to think carefully. First of all, it is necessary to comprehend the logic of historical processes. The historical fact that the disintegrated Russian Empire was restored geographically in a new political form (USSR) is not yet a reason to put forward the thesis of a growing modern Russia. It seems to me that the number of decays that brought Russia to new political forms should lead us to the realization of the need to move to a new quality and not to an increasing territory. Attempts to increase geographically in the form of Russian statehood will be counter-historical. At the same time, it does not matter whether we are talking about the space of the former USSR, or about some kind of “new territories” that have already been developed and settled by someone. If we are talking about territories like the Russian continental shelf that goes over the entire seabed of the Sea of Okhotsk (52,000 sq. km) [8], then there are no objections. However, should such an increase in the territory be laid publicly in the Concept of the Putin’s Long State.

As for the territory of the USSR. The events of recent years show that Russia already “stands with one foot” on the road of an “increasing country”. It seems that in this matter it is necessary to be specially cautious, so as not to be in conflict with the “predetermination”. I am a supporter of the restoration of Russia’s influence in its historical space (Russian Empire – USSR). I even consider that this is its historical (predetermined) task (mission). But the question is whether the implementation of such task should remain unchanged. This question begs a negative answer. The task is the same, but the solution forms are new. What

kind? It's necessary to think it over. Just to increase the territory is not the answer (Crimea is beyond these considerations.) It is even better not to increase the territory. If political ambitions do not give rest, then it is better to talk about the restoration of historical justice, historical space, etc., **relying on the clearly expressed will of the nations.**

I am sure of one thing: for 28 years of the life of nations without the USSR, there have been tremendous changes in the minds of people, which are impossible to ignore, foolish and dangerous for Russia itself. And then what is the historical meaning of the collapse of the USSR? This geopolitical catastrophe cannot be explained as an error of some personalities. Inevitable processes are always realized through the actions of people, bearing in mind humanity. As for the nature, it does not occur to anyone to present an account to the Lord God for a volcanic eruption, earthquakes, an all-destructive wind, etc. In this case, the person learns to resist the development of construction technologies, other scientific achievements, although not always successfully. In a word, what to be, cannot be avoided.

As to the states of a new type, uniqueness and viability of Russia, discussed in the article of V. Surkov, it's not disputed. True, they use the term "survival" in this paragraph. Do things go so bad with the Russian nation that we need to talk about survival ... Previously, we talked about the viability of the state. If there is Russia, then there is the Russian nation. And the "rise of the Russian nation" is encouraging.

The author of the article under review writes about the **four main models** of the governance, conventionally calling them by the names of their, let's say, Leaders.

1. The government of Ivan the Third (the Great Principality /the Kingdom of Moscow and of All Rus, XV-XVII century);
2. The government of Peter the Great (Russian Empire, XVIII-XIX centuries);
3. The government of Lenin (Soviet Union, XX century); and
4. The government of Putin (Russian Federation, XXI century).

Since the meaning of the article is directed not into the past, but into the future, there is no need to talk about models before the 20th century. The selection by V. Surkov of the government of Lenin was a revelation to me. During the past 30 years, many unflattering words were addressed to Lenin/Stalin, including from the depths of the Presidential Administration, that there was no reason to expect recognition of the "Lenin's government". After all, it was possible to find dozens of other words – terms for the Soviet period. In no case do I criticize, for me the recognition of the "Lenin's government" is a balm for the soul. Moreover, V. Surkov attributes Lenin to people of the "long-term willpower" who "provided for the relentless ascent of the Russian world".

For the sake of objectivity, it should be noted that the state was created mainly through Lenin's efforts, but its consolidation, development, and greatness was ensured by the hated by many I.V. Stalin. Without these two personalities there would be no Soviet state.

With regards to the Putin's state (Russian Federation, XXI century). The thesis is legitimate and it seems to me undeniable. But, given the high status of the person proposing and introducing this political thesis, it was necessary to find an opportunity to find a "place" for the First President of the Russian Federation B.N. Yeltsin. And politically, and scientifically, and historically, and morally – this had to be done. Let us leave aside the conflicting assessments of the individual. Let us proceed from the postulate: the needs of the time determine the demand for the individual. The person performing the destructive function has an unenviable fate. But if it was inevitable and has been fulfilled, then there can be no claims.

B.N. Yeltsin not only fulfilled the destructive function, he (since we are personal) created the foundation of the new Russia. It is quite possible, even probable that in the shadow, "in the depths" Putin's team was working, but the country, the world knew the President of the Russian Federation B.N. Yeltsin. It is necessary to proceed from this. The other is indecent.

Political machine Putin really, – as V. Surkov writes, – is only gaining momentum, for me it is also obvious, just as the "long-lasting buildup" due to the reality through which it was impossible to jump over. Therefore, I consider unsubstantiated criticism of opponents like "what did Putin do for 20 years, did anyone obstructed him", etc. Compared to the first decades of Soviet power, the achievements seem less significant. However, other times dictate their methods and forms. People need change here and now, and in politics, patience is needed. Lenin taught this to his comrades-in-arms when he had to sign "this bawdy, shameful" Brest peace treaty.

We have to admit, that objectively the society and the country has long been in need of a more clearly defined and shaped ideology. It seems to me that Surkov's thesis on creating an ideology called "Putinism" is quite acceptable. But in order to comprehend the essence of this ideology, its principal strategic direction, it is necessary to return to the past ideologies in the sense of their analysis, understanding of the tasks facing the state. Ideology should not be built from a bare place, and one should look into the past with an open mind. There is something that should lie at the basis of a state, a society **for all times**, and there are some temporary things.

More than a thousand-year long history of Russia crystallized ideas that are "eternal" for it and consistent with the "predestination" (V. Surkov's term). If this is recognized, then in formulating the ideology of Putinism, one should abstract oneself from the "beloved" and "unloved" state leaders, remembering that each time has its own leader (the first person in the state). It is quite possible that such an ideology will be "moderately heretical" (words by V. Surkov). It seems to me that the ideology of the future should be more focused inward. Its external aspect and value should be viewed, guessed and derived from the internal characteristics. **I would least like haughtiness, mentor tone, hints on the spread of our own experience in other countries (points of the world).** In the XXI century, the leading role should be carried out in other ways, in other forms.

From this point of view, **I am disturbed by the thesis** of V. Surkov on the significant export potential of the Russian political system. Especially from the perspective of his own arguments about the desire of peoples for sovereignty, about the flaws of Western democracy and the “deep state”.

Political history shows that the “deep state” is not a product of the XX-XXI centuries. Its elements are “hidden” in political systems from time immemorial. Otherwise there would be no one to change political regimes, to overthrow kings, czars, etc. The strength and scale of this “state” depend on the country and time. Russia with its centuries-old history is no exception.

Evidently, the words of V. Surkov, that “our state is not split up into deep and external, it is built as a whole, with all of its parts and its manifestations facing out. The most brutal constructions of its authoritarian frame are displayed as part of the facade, undisguised by any architectural embellishments. The bureaucracy, even when it tries to do something on the sly, does not try too hard to cover its tracks, as if assuming that “everyone understands everything anyway”.

But this happens, in my opinion, not because we are special, smarter than others or more honest, but in part because of V.V. Putin's profession and status in the period before his presidency. I do not say that it is bad, on the contrary, the state is largely connected by these structures, perceiving them as a core (a bond for the rest of the parts). Therefore, the following thesis of V. Surkov does not seem strange to me: “The great internal tension caused by the need to control huge heterogeneous geographic areas, and by the constant participation in the thick of geopolitical struggle make the military and policing functions of the government the most important and decisive. In keeping with tradition, they are not hidden, but quite the opposite, demonstrated, because Russia has never been ruled by merchants ...”.

Thesis about the «deep nation» is natural, historical. The deep nation saved Russia from the Poles, they won in 1812. This nation became the mainstay of the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. By the way, V.I. Lenin spoke about the presence of two nations (peoples): there is a oppressing nation and an oppressed nation, there is a proletarian culture and a bourgeois culture, there is (a need of) the proletarian dictatorship to overthrow the bourgeois dictatorship. Such words were pronounced, were written openly, honestly. While some were fighting totalitarianism, others were building factories, plants, power plants, etc., raising the country. This is the deep people, a reliable, sacrificial support of the state at all times. Alas, the President needs to “be friends” with both nations, while maintaining balance.

I do not understand, why the term “**supreme ruler**” is introduced for today and especially tomorrow, as if there were no revolutions or a civil war in which the “supreme rulers” suffered a historic defeat. In the same paragraph V. Surkov writes that “various branches of power come together at the person of the leader and are considered valuable not in and of themselves but only to the extent to which they provide a connection with him”. I do not think that this thesis is worthy of approval, moreover, it is incorrect in relation to the branches of gov-

ernment and the institutions representing them. Thank God that our President is not positioning himself in this way but acts strictly in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and common sense.

For me, as a subject of political processes, at least as a voter, the words about **“multilayered political institutions...put on as a Sunday suit** when visiting others” sound on the verge of insulting. There are things that in our modern multilayered system really need to be corrected in accordance with the historical traditions. But this gives no reason to speak so disparagingly about Russian political institutions. And what is the reason then to export such a show system? Meanwhile, several paragraphs above, V. Surkov argues that “the political system made in Russia is suitable not only for a home future, it clearly has a significant export potential”. What countries does the author count on, if he complains that “the multilayered political institutions adopted from the West are sometimes seen as partly ritualistic...” Does it turn out that the system in Russia is not ours and ritualistic as well? Who wants to become a purchaser of a poor-quality product from someone else’s garden?

Regarding trust only to one (first) person (Surkov’s thesis), as they say, “double-edged sword”, to put it mildly. For the state and the people, in my opinion, trusting only the first person (one person) is a “pledge” of misfortunes of various kinds. One should not confuse Russia’s historical desire to centralize political forces and the accumulation of all the threads of power in the hands of one person. Anyone who does not understand the measure of their ratio, jeopardizes the strength of the system.

It is not even necessary in this case to carry out a visual analysis of the political history of Russia. Whoever has studied it carefully **without personal ambitions**, he sees it with a naked eye. And modern Russian reality shows the flaws of “manual control”, inevitable in case of the trust in one person. It is not so important as a result of what such situation develops.

But as regards good-naturedness, about which V. Surkov speaks, undoubtedly so, the proof of which is the historical example, given by M.V. Lomonosov: “Bending towards old age, Vladimir visited churches and prayed vigilantly ... Getting used to meekness, he often forgave criminals their great guilt and freed criminals from execution. Oslaba committed autrocities and ruined the innocent. All roads were occupied by brigands who stopped the travellers. Russian hierarchs got together and presented the sovereign with the danger of such indulgence, admonishing that “the sword was given to him from God not only against the enemies, but also for the execution of law-breakers and that the mercy to the villains is the tyranny against the innocent ... In that way they encouraged the king who became gentle-hearted at old age. The robbers felt a fair penalty ...” [4. P. 93-94].

A few more words about the trust, only in Confucius’ words. In the records of Confucius’ statements we read: “... 7. Zigong asked what is government. The teacher (*Confucius* – LFB) answered: – This is when there is enough food, enough weapon and there is the trust of the people. – And what of the above can be first excluded

if necessary? – Zigong asked again. – You can exclude weapons. – And what of the remaining can be first excluded if necessary? – Zigong asked again. – You can exclude food. Since ancient times, no one can escape death. When the people do not believe, they cannot resist ... ” [3. P. 55-58, 113-124, 143-148, 162-184]. **Note that Confucius does not speak of trust in one person.** It is about trusting the state in the management process. It is the state, as the main institution of the political system.

In this context, I see the task of one (main) person in building confidence in the system, the state, and not only, not even so much in himself. From this point of view, Russia is not at the highest level. In this regard, following the example of V. Surkov, who quoted Einstein's words about God, I will set out a part of the Einstein's dispute with the great physicist Niels Bohr. Einstein, not accepting quantum theory, said, referring to a probabilistic picture of the world, corresponding to the quantum physics: “The Lord God does not play dice”. To this, Bohr objected: “However, it is not our business to prescribe to God how He should rule the world” [6. P. 192]. I would add: it is not our business to assess God and compare with him the earthly ruler, even the supreme one.

NOTES:

(1) See: Sovereignty: Collection / Comp. N.V. Garanzha. M., 2006.

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