

these ethnic minorities begin to carve out significant economic niches for themselves.

Another issue that is of great importance here is the compatibility between national and economic policies. This issue is very poignant for Moscow, for instance, because the representatives of the Caucasus diaspora often control substantial economic resources. Seeing as how **most regions adopted a pragmatic stance, there was a symbiosis between the Caucasus businesses and the local elites.** When the problem becomes public and voters grow uneasy, regional leaders are caught between the necessity of retaining popularity and keeping on good terms with businesses, most of which are viewed by the

populace in a negative light. Most of them still don't know how to deal with the situation.

We are very likely to see a scenario where the regional leaders will publicly profess their support for the dominant position of the ethnic Russians, and privately rely on the support of the Caucasian businesses. The use of nationalist rhetoric by the representatives of various political parties that we see today is nothing but a pre-election publicity stunt. **The Manezhnaya Square factor has become important in Russian politics, and political parties are not really trying to fight against it – they are trying to win the votes of that part of the population,** realising its true potential. Basically, what we see is an ideological

struggle to grab the vote of the nationalists. Every party has its own agenda – the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has always promoted a fusion between leftist and nationalist ideas, while Yedinaya Rossiya finds nationalism to be the natural extension of conservatism. We may see more parties or movements of a more radical nature. For the moment, it appears that every party is ready to use nationalist rhetoric at least to the extent that is necessary to have an edge over the competition in the next election. Yet they realise that the issue of Russian nationalism is one to be addressed with the utmost diligence and over a very long term, which is also important to any party-wide strategy. ■

'THE YUGOSLAV SCENARIO' IS NOT POSSIBLE IN RUSSIA



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The collapse of the socialist Yugoslavia demonstrated that it was a project that completely failed in terms of nation or state building. It is debatable as to whether this was simply a failure or whether this downfall was somehow supported by external forces. This issue inevitably brings us to the role of the elites. **As I see it, Yugoslavia was primarily destroyed namely from within by various nationalistic movements, and the elites in Yugoslavia undoubtedly played a crucial role in terms of their actions.**

The small number of people, including those who capably used the mass media, were able to successfully destroy the Yugoslav Federation by playing on its structural weaknesses and, primarily, owing to its constitution of 1974. This document essentially turned Yugoslavia into a confederation, which was highly dependent on the concept of mutual agreement amongst its constituent republics. If there had

been no such agreement, the country would basically no longer exist. The elite subsequently started to build a new national form, effectively leading to the emergence of new countries – there would be the new Croatia, the new Slovenia, the new Serbia and so forth. All of these nations, as countries, are new. Within each of them, one can find only a little continuity with the previously existing Yugoslavia. Thus, these nations are relatively young and the new nation-building that occurred within each of them is what basically caused the outburst of hatred and animosity between these groups. It is namely for this reason that a full-scale war ended up breaking out.

I cannot imagine that something like what happened in Yugoslavia could ever happen in the Russian Federation. Russia may encounter problems on its territory with various nationalities and so forth, but **in the core of the ethnic and national mosaic, Russia is built on the majority being comprises of ethnic Russians – Russia remains Russian.** This country is so large that it would be impossible that things could happen in the way that they happened in Yugoslavia, where several peoples and several groups were taking sides. In Yugoslavia, there were essentially small groups fighting against each other, and it is namely due to this fact that the war dragged on so long and why it turned out to be so bloody. It is virtually impossible that something like that could ever happen in Russia. ■