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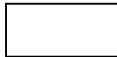


Directorate of Intelligence  
9 April 1992

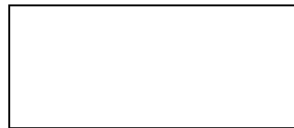
**Authoritarian Leaders in Democratic Garb: Center-Right Political Parties in Russia**

*Summary*

*Russian President Boris Yel'tsin's authority and reformist policies are coming under increasing assault by conservative and nationalist opposition leaders. Yel'tsin's most visible critic and potential opponent is his own Vice President, Aleksandr Rutskoy, who for now is trying to influence policymaking from inside the administration. Outside Yel'tsin's administration, however, stand the lesser known leaders of a handful of democratically oriented right-of-center parties or movements, who have more formally declared their opposition to Yel'tsin and their aspiration to the national leadership. In the months since the failed August coup, some of these leaders have attempted to form coalitions and alliances to strengthen their minimal clout.*

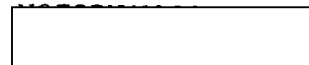


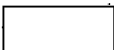
\_\_\_\_\_ prepared this memorandum. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, \_\_\_\_\_  
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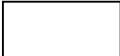



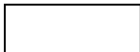
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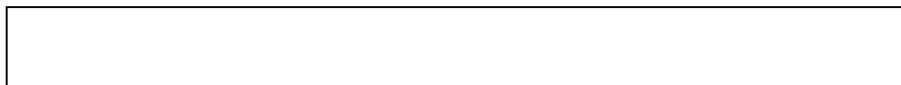


*Thus far, personality differences, clashes of ambition, and policy disagreements among these opposition leaders have hindered the cohesion essential to an effective coalition. As a result, none of them—or their parties—are likely to pose a serious threat to Yel'tsin in the near term. Socialized under the Soviet system, they lack experience with and a true understanding of democracy as it is understood in the West. Many of them manifest this deficiency in authoritarian styles, which are in stark contrast to the democratic programs of their parties. Such styles nonetheless appeal to a populace that desires both democracy and strong, decisive leaders. Still, the fact that the opposition leaders are vocal and attract sizable blocs of supporters means they cannot be dismissed as long-term threats to Yel'tsin, particularly if the nation's economic situation further deteriorates.* 

In the months since the abortive August coup, the euphoria surrounding Russian President Boris Yel'tsin's triumph and rise to preeminence in Moscow has evaporated and given way to demands for tangible improvements in day to day life. Substantive policy disagreements, as well as Yel'tsin's failure to consult adequately with most democratic party leaders, have caused some of the Russian President's erstwhile collaborators to inch away or, in some cases, to openly declare themselves to be opposition figures. 

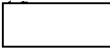
In the West, the best known ally-turned-critic is Yel'tsin's Vice President, Aleksandr Rutskoy. In recent months he has become the champion of traditionalists and nationalists who are opposed to the radical thrust of Yel'tsin's reform programs.  While Rutskoy has increasingly criticized Yel'tsin's policies and other members of the government, he has not yet openly challenged Yel'tsin himself. Rutskoy still appears to want to work within the government to steer policies in a less radical direction. 

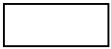
Beyond this internal criticism and the potential leadership challenge that he faces from Rutskoy, Yel'tsin must cope with a more formally declared opposition: leaders of center-right parties or movements who are vocally criticizing and seeking to alter his reform policies. In this category, we

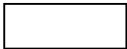


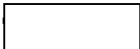


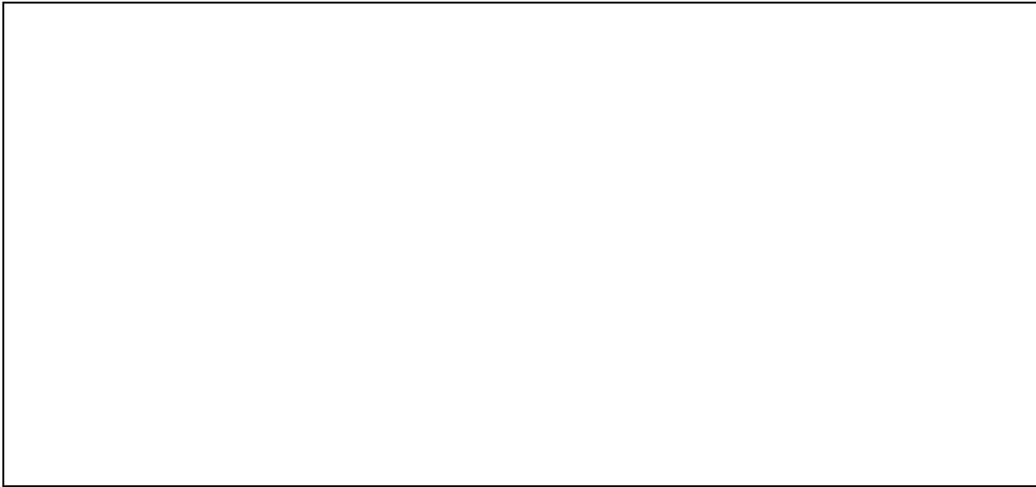
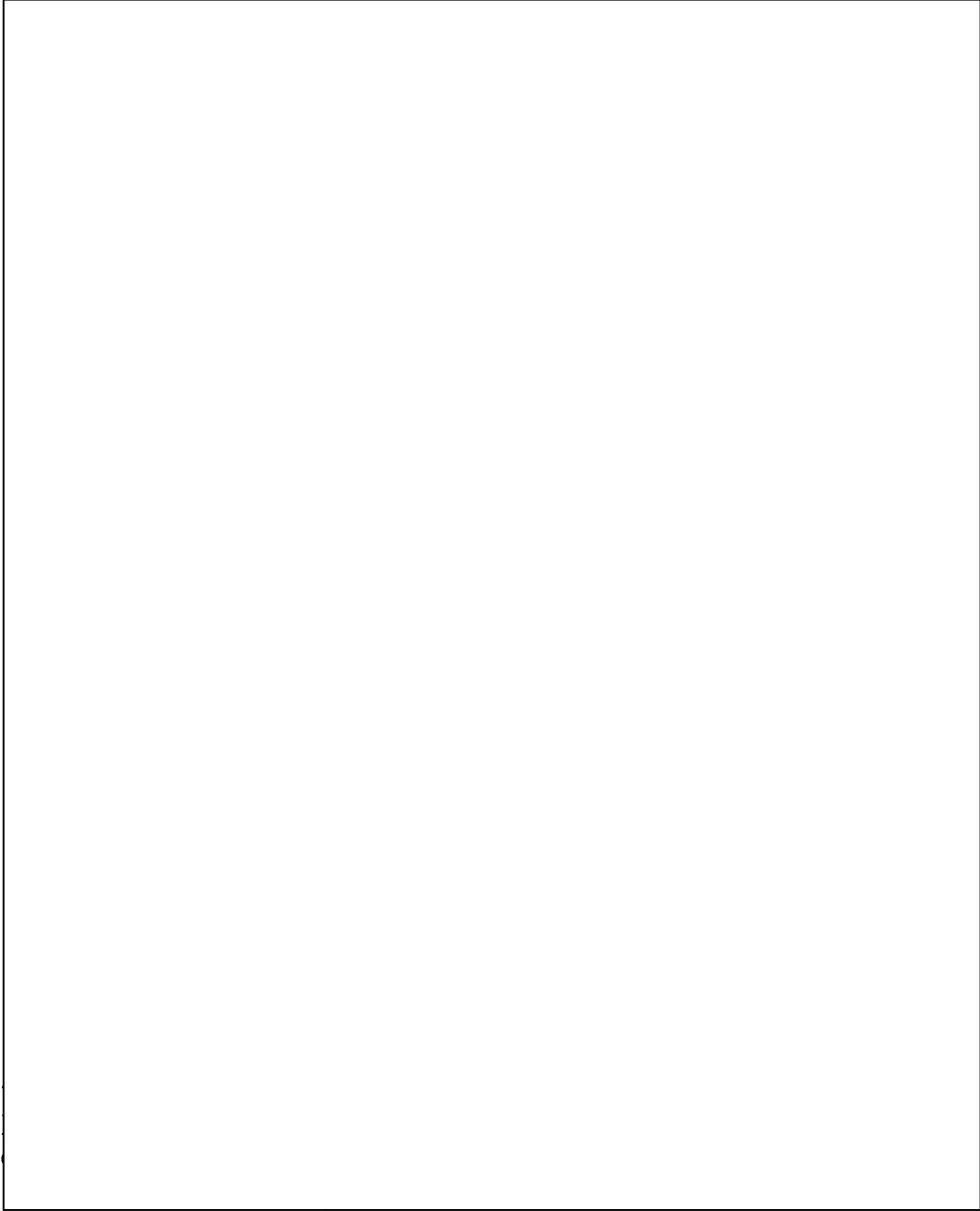
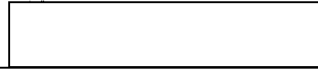
see at present five people who could eventually prove to be the primary troublemakers for him:

- **Sergey Baburin**, leader of the conservative *Rossiya* bloc in the Russian parliament and chairman of the board of the Russian Popular Alliance movement.
- **Nikolay Travkin**, chairman of the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR)
- **Viktor Aksyuchits**, cochairman of the Russian Christian Democratic Movement (RCDM) and chairman of the Russian People's Assembly.
- **Mikhail Astaf'yev**, chairman of the Constitutional Democratic Party: Party of People's Freedom (Kadets).
- **Vladimir Zhirinovskiy**, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). 

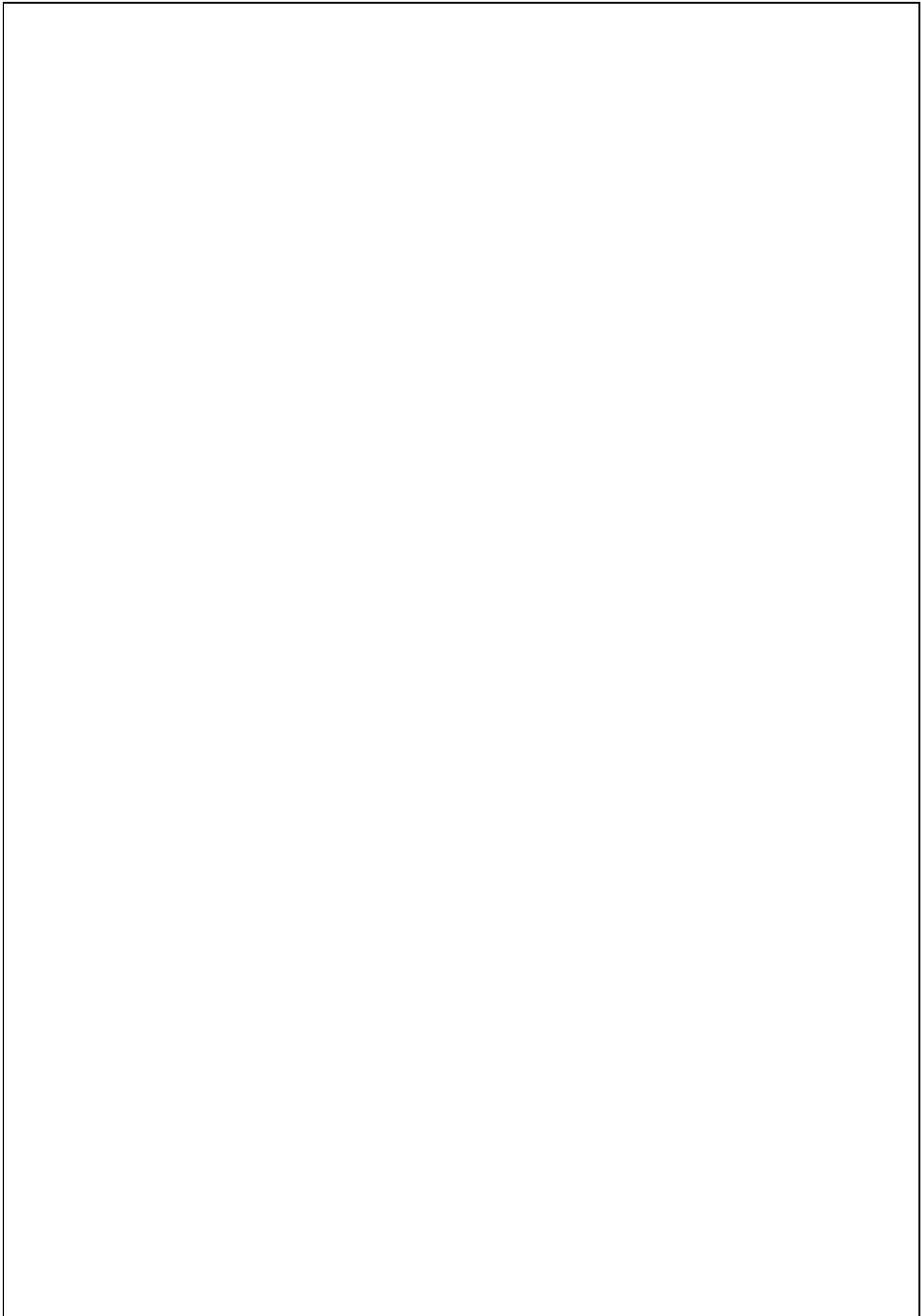
For now, we believe that these men represent little more than an annoying distraction for Yel'tsin, and his response to them has been minimal. Aside from making vague declarations about the need to work with political parties, the Russian President generally appears to ignore them. He has agreed to consult with party leaders in regular meetings but apparently does so rarely. 

Many of these opposition leaders are self-proclaimed democrats who have proved autocratic in approach, despite their democratic programs. All were socialized in a system that lacked many of the basic human rights and freedoms that characterize democratic societies. The fact that they have no experience with or true understanding of democracy often is reflected in an autocratic leadership style and mind-set that are incompatible with democratic society as understood in the West. 

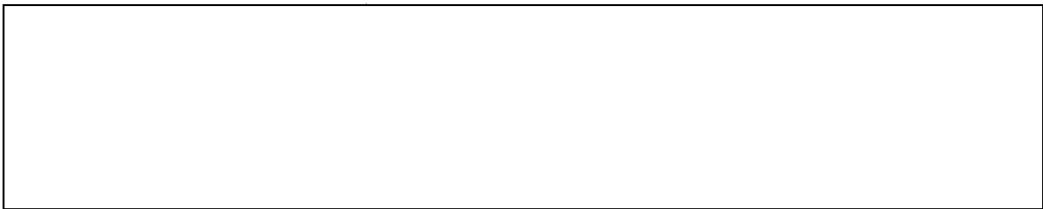
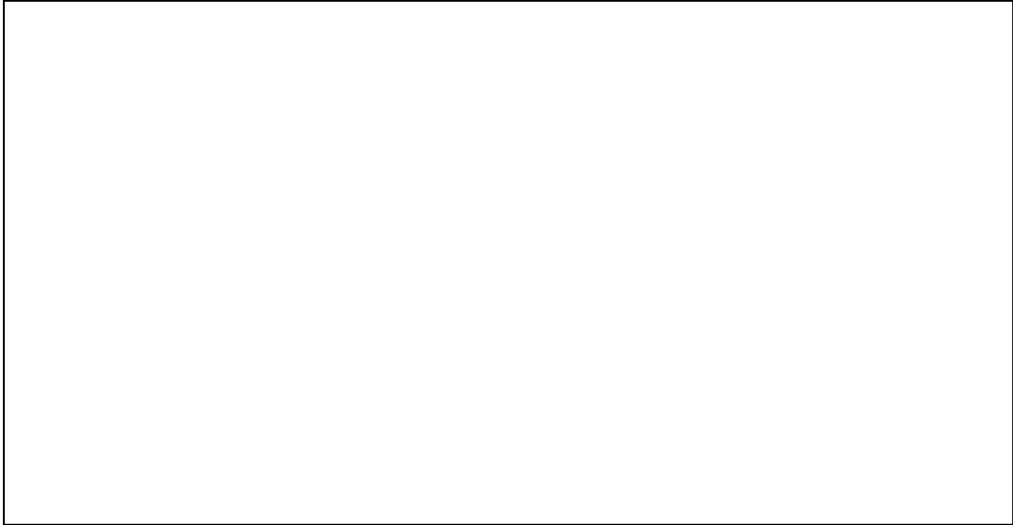
Nevertheless, because they exude the strength and decisiveness traditionally valued in leaders in Russia, these leaders may ultimately have greater electoral appeal than would Western-style democrats. For now this potential popular appeal does not translate into significant political influence because of frequent splits within their parties; an inability to build a cohesive alliance of like-minded forces; and their lack of competitiveness with Yel'tsin in the popularity department. Moreover, rising distrust of politicians as self-interested and corrupt makes it unlikely that the Russian population will place much stock in the ability of any political party to lead them out of their economic morass. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Communist Party's (CPSU) fall from grace, the concept of the political party may remain suspect for some time. 

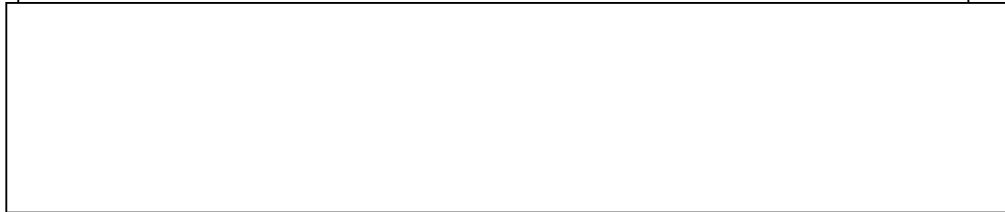
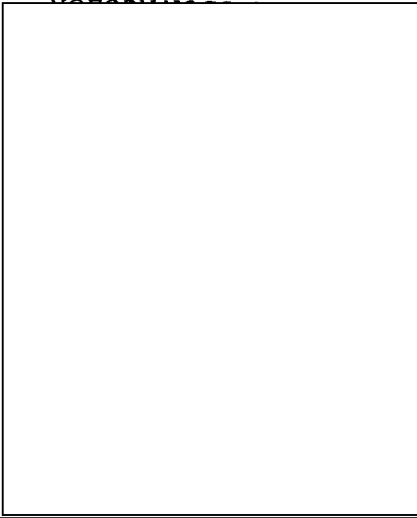
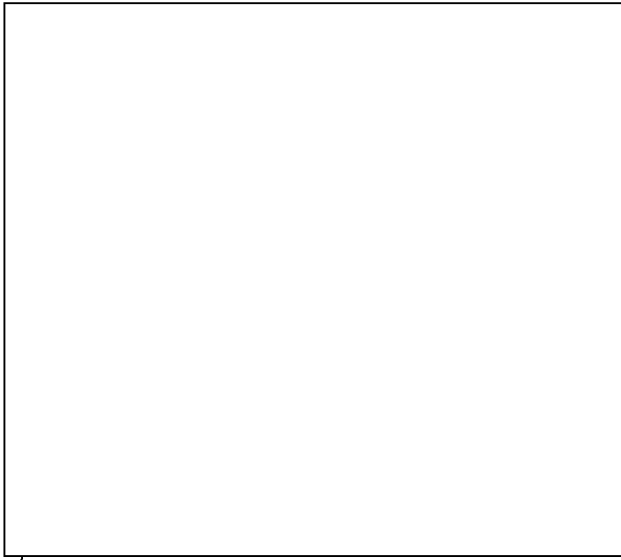


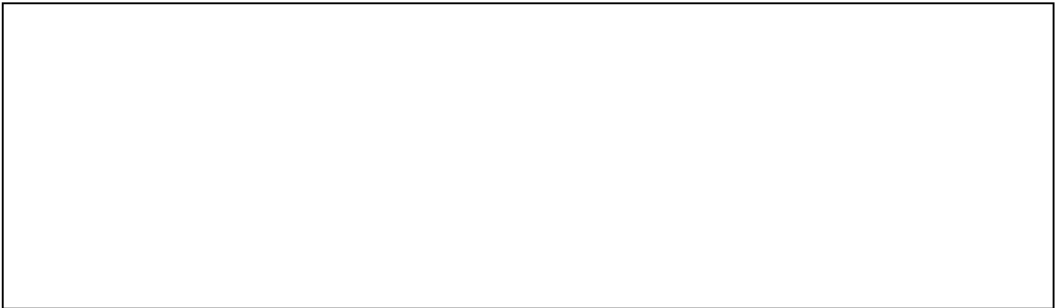
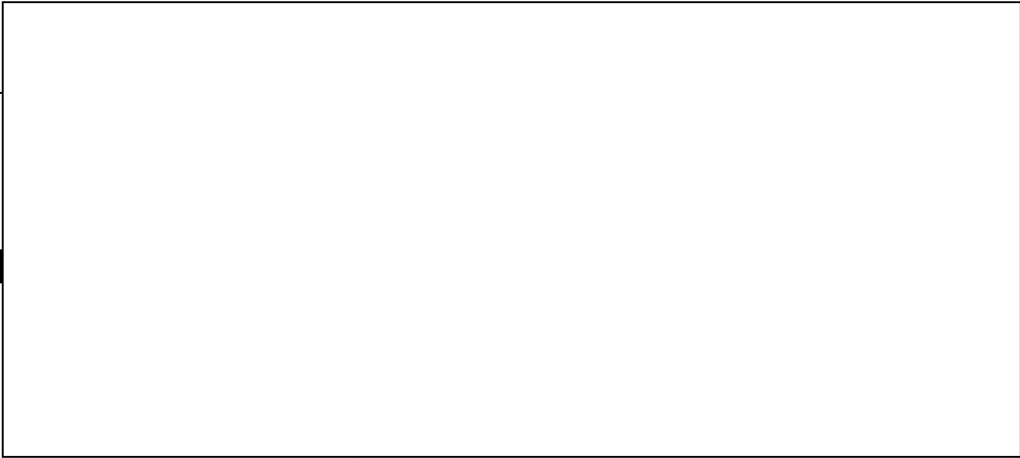
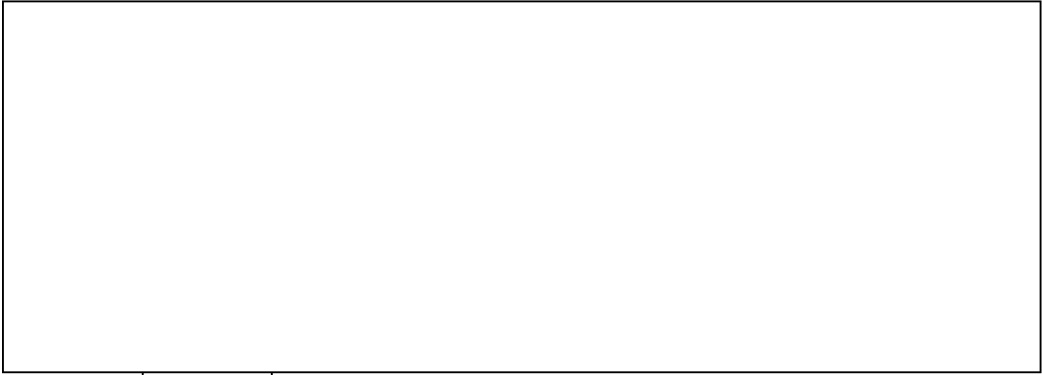
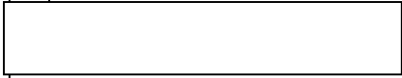
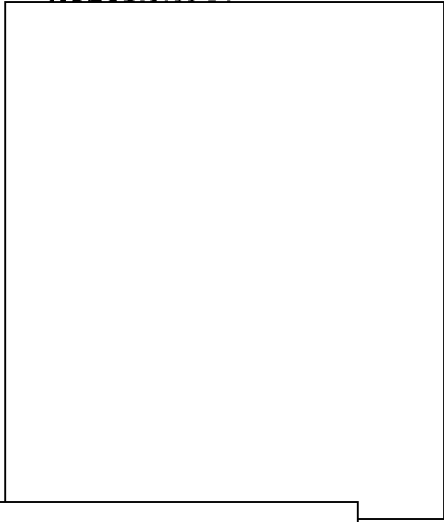
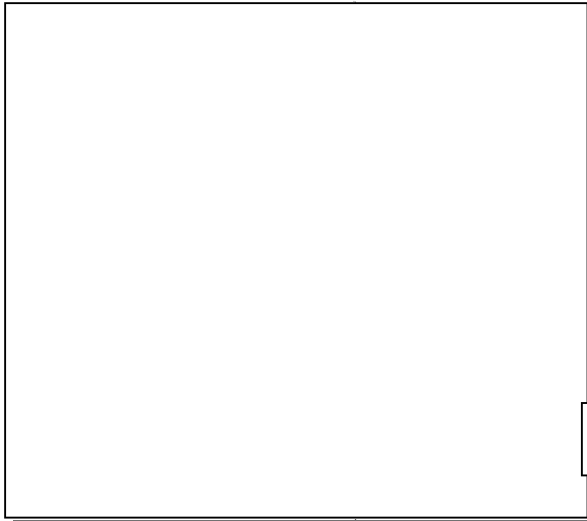
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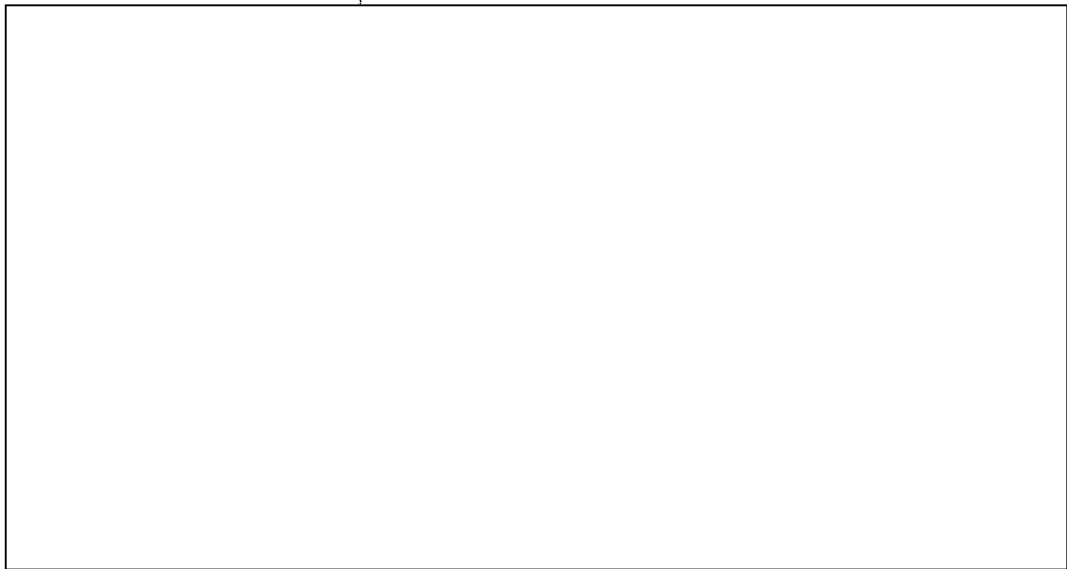
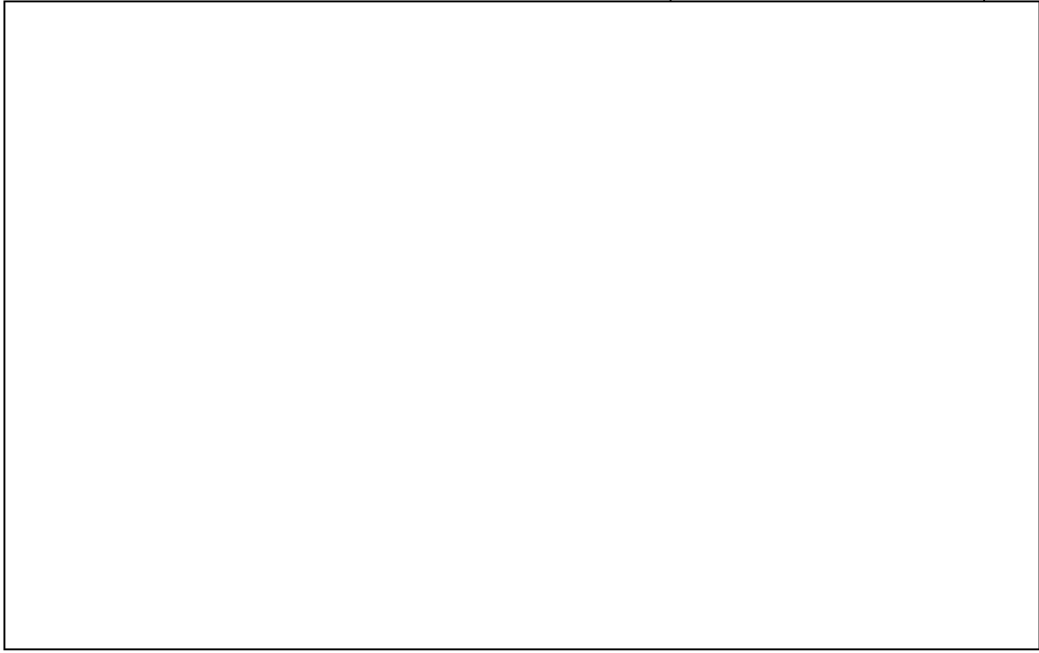
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Vintage Zhirinovskiy

*Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is infamous for his outrageous public statements. A collection of his provocations follows.*

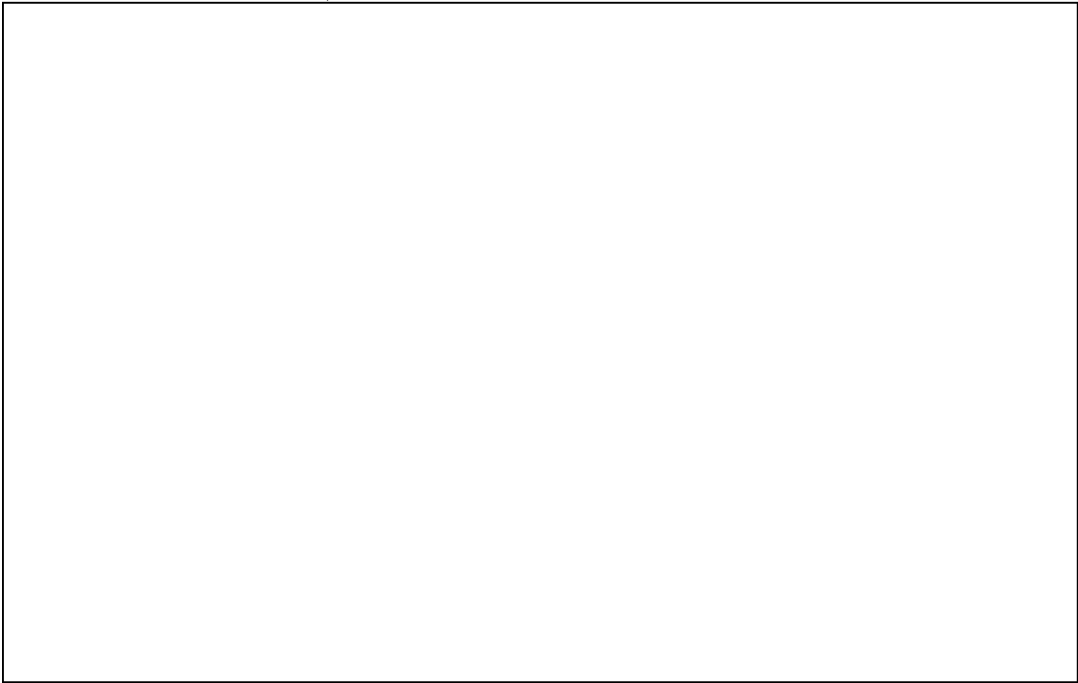
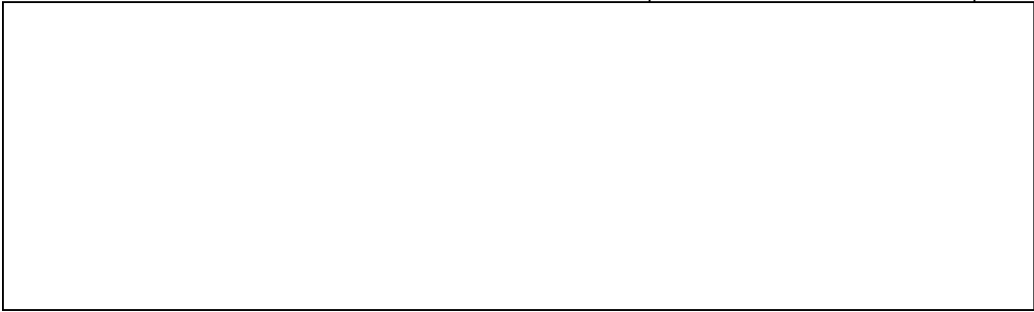
*“Any illegal rallies in Moscow will be broken up. I will use fire trucks. If that doesn’t help, I’ll use tear gas. If that doesn’t work, I’ll send people in bullet-proof jackets and tell them to fire in the air . . . . If resistance persists—shoot them! That’s it. That will be cruel, but at least there will be order in the country. They’ll fear me and respect me. And let them be afraid.” December 1991*

*“I’ll bury radioactive waste along the Lithuanian border and buy powerful fans and blow the stuff across the border at night. They’ll get radiation sickness and die of it. When they either die or get down on their knees, then I’ll stop it. I’m a dictator. What I am going to do is bad, but it is good for Russia!” December 1991*


*“The Germans must pay for every murdered Soviet citizen and therefore we should not be reducing our army in Germany but rather increasing its numbers to a million men.” December 1991*

*“The Japanese will never get the Kuril Islands—they may get a nuclear strike instead.” November 1991*

*“There could be an act of nuclear retaliation against Pakistan, a country that supports the Afghan Mujahidin who have the cheek to keep Russian lads in captivity . . . I give [the Pakistani Ambassador] 72 hours. If our Russian boys are not [home] within 72 hours, then I will send the Pacific Ocean Fleet to Pakistan’s shores and for a start it will wipe Karachi from the face of the earth.” December 1991*

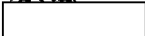


**Coalition Building Attempts**

All five of these party leaders are ambitious and appear to relish the lime-light and their self-image as kingpin. However, they also appear to recognize that their parties' influence can be augmented by joining forces.<sup>2</sup> Over the past year, we have seen evidence of at least three efforts at coalition building involving some of these groups. 

**The Civic Accord Bloc**

In April 1991 Travkin, Aksyuchits, and Astaf'yev announced that their parties were uniting to form Civic Accord; the coalition initially was part of Democratic Russia and supported preserving the union. The three party

2. Zhirinovskiy has hinted that he might be interested in a coalition with Baburin, whom he described as a kindred spirit. However, Baburin has not reciprocated the sentiment; in addition, all of the democratically oriented party leaders have eschewed cooperation with Zhirinovskiy. 

leaders joined forces to prevent leftist radicals from dominating Democratic Russia and to promote the creation of a new, democratized central government. [ ]

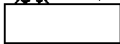
In the political turmoil in Moscow following the unsuccessful August coup attempt, arguments over Russian sovereignty and the future of the Soviet Union exacerbated the gulf between the three Civic Accord leaders and leaders of other parties within Democratic Russia. Civic Accord favored preserving the union and an indivisible Russia, while the DR was more willing to allow regions to secede. Because of personality conflicts and disagreements on issues of Russian Federation unity, the Civic Accord trio stormed out of the November congress of Democratic Russia, abandoning the organization. The following month, they found themselves even more at odds with the prevailing political sentiment in Democratic Russia and with Yel'tsin when he dealt the final blow to the USSR by establishing the CIS. The Civic Accord bloc never gained momentum or cohesion, and by the end of February 1992, Travkin announced that his party had broken off relations with the other two parties. He implied that Aksyuchits and Astaf'yev were extremists with whom the DPR should not be associated. [ ]

#### **The Russian People's Assembly**

Travkin's announcement that Civic Accord was finished was essentially a moot point, since the other two parties in the bloc had already decided to form a new coalition earlier that month. On 8-9 February, the Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces, sponsored by Aksyuchits's RCDM and Astaf'yev's Kadets, convened and established the Russian People's Assembly (RPA). The main tenets of the RPA are strong state power guaranteeing citizens' rights and freedoms, a great and indivisible multiethnic Russia, and a unified army. Astaf'yev stresses that the RPA does not intend to unify all of Russia's patriotic organizations, but rather to provide an umbrella "only for those patriotic groups that occupy right-of-center positions." The new group has distanced itself from extremist organizations on both ends of the political spectrum, eschewing cooperation with leaders like Zhirinovskiy, whom they regard as neo-Stalinists and neofascists. According to Aksyuchits, who was elected chairman of the board of the RPA, the RPA will oppose the current Russian leadership and Democratic Russia. Vice President Rutskoy, the widely publicized keynote speaker at the February 1992 Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces, did not formally associate himself with the new RPA that grew out of it. [ ]




### Proposed Travkin-Rutskoy Alliance

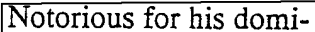
In March 1992, reacting to the Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces and the creation of the RPA, Travkin and Rutskoy signed their own protocol on cooperation. 

### Constraints on Coalition Effectiveness


Thus far, most attempts at coalition building have been ill-fated because of several factors that tend to divide the coalition leaders or otherwise limit the effectiveness or longevity of their alliances:

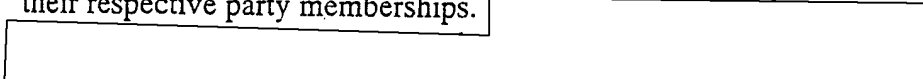
- **Clash of Ambition.** Many of these leaders have displayed excessive ambition and thus alienated other coalition members and split parties and alliances. Friction often develops between coalition leaders over issues of control. 



 Notorious for his domineering leadership style, Travkin has refused in the past to be affiliated with any organization he could not dominate, a history which leads us to judge that his purported new alliance with Rutskoy may be short lived.

- **Inflexibility.** Most of these leaders have taken obstinate stances on particular issues and have shown little willingness to compromise their views to expand their bases of support or prospects for coalitions with other parties. They appear to be more interested in convincing each other—and the Russian public—of the virtue of their individual causes than in seeking common ground to consolidate their support.

- **Internal Party Splits.** For all five of these groups, it is difficult to gauge to what extent the views of the top leaders reflect those of the majority of their nominal supporters. In the case of Baburin's *Rossiya* bloc in the parliament, for instance, members often stray in numbers from Baburin's lead in legislative votes. Even more telling is the lack of support Travkin, Akseyuchits, and Astaf'yev received when they stormed out of the Democratic Russia congress last November: jeered by the audience, they reportedly were followed by only a portion of their respective party memberships. 



[REDACTED]

## Outlook

Four factors underpin our judgment that none of these would-be national leaders will, in the near term, gather a large constituency and gain the power necessary to pose a serious leadership challenge to Yel'tsin or guide the country's political course:

- The absence of any organized political party behind Baburin's informal parliamentary bloc of deputies.
- The less-than-democratic leadership styles of Travkin, Aksyuchits, and Astaf'yev.
- The total lack of democratic credibility on the part of Zhirinovskiy.
- The fact that Yel'tsin's popularity, though slipping, still significantly exceeds that of any alternative leader.

Moreover, competing ambitions and numerous other divisive factors suggest that coalitions of these parties will lack the unity—even in the long-term—to mount an effective challenge to Yel'tsin and his government.

[REDACTED]

Currently, the main strength of the opposition party leaders is their ability to organize public opposition and to rally legislative support to impede Yel'tsin's initiatives both locally and at the national level. They serve to remind Yel'tsin that in pursuing his destabilizing economic reforms, he must contend with growing pocketbook worries on the part of a populace used to strong central control against economic and political chaos.

[REDACTED]

We believe, however, that the party leaders will continue activities that may incite public unrest, exacerbate an unstable situation, and make governing more difficult for Yel'tsin. The confident and decisive aura of figures such as Baburin, Travkin, and Zhirinovskiy could appeal to a population weary of parliamentary decrees that have not put food on their tables. Many Russians now value democratic credentials in their leaders, but the electorate may place greater value on strength and decisiveness if Russia's economy continues its free-fall. [REDACTED]