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Commencement of the New Putin Administration and its Strategy

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Introduction

The Putin administration, which is now in its fourth term overall, was inaugurated in a presidential inauguration ceremony on May 5, 2018. It is no exaggeration to say that the previous administration from 2012 to 2018 was characterized by an oppositional relationship with the Western countries, including the expulsion of Russia from the G8 triggered by annexation of Crimea and the Ukraine conflict, the resulting economic sanctions on Russia, and military intervention in Syria, etc.

At a time when discussions anticipating the post-Putin era¹ such as about Putin “becoming a lame duck” and “the decline of his leadership,” etc. are taking place due to the presidential term limits under the Russian Constitution and the age of President Putin, this essay presents a discussion of the domestic and foreign policy under the new administration with the focus on the newly-approved policy documents and personnel appointments and the trends of the Kremlin core.

Declaration of the “New May Order” and policy directions

On the day of his inauguration ceremony, President Putin signed an Executive Order

entitled “On National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024.”² Its main objectives are development of the stagnating social and economic sectors and science and technology sectors, and it instructed the federal government led by Prime Minister Medvedev to achieve specific national goals pertaining to the development of the Russian Federation, including natural population growth, increased life expectancy, measures to fight poverty, improvement of housing conditions, and guarantee of the rapid introduction of digital technologies in the economic and the social spheres, etc.³ However, in Russia where so-called “modernization”⁴ of the social and economic spheres, namely diversification and innovation of the industrial structure, has been advocated for a long time, this Executive Order does not necessarily include any groundbreaking content.

When the first term of the second administration was inaugurated in May 2012, 11 executive orders were issued on the day of the inauguration ceremony. The content of the series of executive orders ranged broadly from foreign policy to education and social and economic policy and, regarding military security policy, the modernization of the military using the latest equipment and

development of the nuclear deterrent were mentioned.⁵ These attracted attention as the Майские указы (“May Orders”) and led to the basic policies of the administration being presented to both domestic and foreign audiences.

The recent Executive Order issued on the day of the inauguration ceremony was reported as the “New May Order,”⁶ and it can be concluded that it is an important normative document for ascertaining the characteristics of the new administration in conjunction with the reorganization of the government organs and changes to the personnel appointments. In particular the basic perception of the new administration with respect to the “modernization” policy followed from the Medvedev administration onwards was glaringly apparent in the statement at the beginning of the Order: “development of the stagnating Russian science and technology, society and economy.” The Medvedev administration inaugurated in May 2008 was under pressure to handle the Georgia war in August the same year and then the worldwide financial crisis triggered in the United States, and following that in the first term of the second Putin administration, due to the Ukraine conflict and annexation of Crimea and the resulting tense relations with the Western countries, intervention in Syria, etc., the priorities of military security and foreign policy were much higher than social and economic policy based on the “modernization” policy. Furthermore, taking into consideration presidential term limits under the federal constitution and the age of President Putin himself, he has limited time

in which he can run state affairs directly. The background to the fact that the recent “New May Order” is focused on social and economic policy is that Russia is aiming to correct the course of the policy in the previous administration which had an excessive emphasis on an assertive foreign policy and military security.

Reorganization of ministries and agencies and young cabinet ministers

The reorganization of ministries and agencies was implemented in a form matching the policy directions shown in this Executive Order, and changes in personnel appointments were seen. Among the various organs of federal executive power under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications was reorganized into the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, and 39-year-old Konstantin Noskov was appointed the minister. After earning a Master Degree at the Moscow Higher School of Economics, he worked at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (2001-2008), transferred to an internal subdivision of the federal government under the Medvedev administration, and served as the Director of the Department of Information Technologies and Communications (2009-2011), the Head of the Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, etc., so he is an expert in economic and information and communications policy.⁷ Maxim Oreshkin, who also graduated from the Moscow Higher School of Economics, has been reappointed Minister for Economic Development. He was

born in 1982 and is 36 years old.⁸ Alexander Kozlov, who was newly appointed the Minister for the Development of the Russian Far East, was born in 1981 and is 37 years old, and has experienced regional politics including serving as the Governor of the Amur Region, etc.⁹ Minister of Agriculture Dmitry Patrushev is 40 years old and has joined the Cabinet for the first time, but he is the oldest son of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF) Secretary¹⁰ Nikolai Patrushev (discussed later), and at 32 years old was appointed the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank). In addition to the State University of Management, he has received training at the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry and the FSB Academy.¹¹ Therefore, he does not seem to be a pure expert in agricultural policy. His recent promotion to Minister of Agriculture can be regarded as nothing more than a reward for the good work of his father, Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, in the Putin administration, and in relation to the series of promotions of young officials it can be interpreted as a personnel appointment that anticipates a post-Putin structure.

In the Presidential Executive Office which assists the President, the Presidential Directorate for Application of Information Technology and the Development of E-Democracy was reorganized to establish the Presidential Directorate for Development of Information and Communication Technology and Communication Infrastructure, and it was put in charge of the policies of the development of digital

infrastructure and application of information and communication technology.¹² Andrei Lipov (48 years old), who used to work in the Ministry of Communications and Mass Media and is an expert in information and communications policy,¹³ is continuing to serve as the Chief of the Presidential Directorate. Furthermore, Dmitry Peskov¹⁴ (42 years old) was appointed to the newly established position of Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Digital and Technological Development. He is an education and social policy expert who majored in the political behavior of young people at Voronezh State University, and then led the Center for Internet Policy at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, served as the Director of the Young Professionals Division of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, and served as a member of the Working Group of the Economic Council under the President of the Russian Federation in the area of "Social Policy and Human Development," etc.¹⁵

It can be concluded that the series of personnel appointments and reorganizations of organizations were aimed at the solution of the policy issues raised in the "New May Order," in particular "rapid introduction of digital technologies in the economic and social spheres," but if the new administration intends to seriously tackle the development of Russia from a long-term perspective, surely the improvement of diplomatic and economic relations with the Western countries is the top priority issue.

Development of National Security Council personnel and “NSC diplomacy”

Turning our attention to the composition of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF), which is equivalent to the National Security Council (NSC) in Japan and the United States, and in particular to the permanent members¹⁶ who have voting rights in the meetings, heads of military security, diplomacy, and intelligence sections such as Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Director of the Federal Security Service Alexander Bortnikov, and Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service Sergei Naryshkin stayed in office, so major changes to the lineup of the NSC were not seen.¹⁷ Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has been in office for more than 14 years, and SCRF Secretary Patrushev has reached his tenth year since taking up his post. In the strategic cores of Russia such as the heads of the various organs of federal executive power under the jurisdiction of the President that are responsible for diplomacy, the military, and intelligence, the permanent members of SCRF, etc., aging and ossification is observed, and this phenomenon is also seen in SCRF staff organization¹⁸ (administrative organization) top level personnel.

SCRF Secretary Patrushev, who commands said SCRF staff organization and guarantees the activities of SCRF, was born in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) and formerly worked at the KGB, so he is the closest of close advisors to President Putin, who had also served as the Chief of Main Control Directorate in the Presidential Executive

Office and Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), etc.¹⁹ In the political reforms from 2000 onwards the legal status and authority of the SCRF were strengthened, and Secretary Patrushev actively developed travelling meetings including regional inspections,²⁰ and meetings with NSC counterparts (NSC diplomacy²¹).

Two travelling meetings that are particularly noteworthy were held at the beginning of July. The first was held jointly with the Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District on July 3 and July 4 in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in the Kamchatka Krai, and on the first day discussions were held about environmental security, including the various problems related to transportation in that region and measures to combat illegal logging in forests.²² On the following day, July 4, Secretary Patrushev visited the Pacific Fleet submarine base in Vilyuchinsk, and held discussions with the headquarters about the various problems related to modernization of the military infrastructure and equipment using the latest weapons and military technology, and held inspections of the new model (Borei-class) nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine Alexander Nevsky and the border infrastructure facilities.²³

Due to the development of Arctic Ocean shipping routes and China's “Maritime Silk Road” concept,²⁴ the strategic importance of the Kuril Islands and the Kamchatka Peninsula is growing, so it is surmised that the Kremlin has a high level of interest in military equipment upgrades, the border security structure, and the status of the development of port and harbor

infrastructure, etc. in that region. The recent inspection by Secretary Patrushev, who is the closest of close advisors to Putin, can also be described as “supervision of the military by the Kremlin.”

The following week on July 9 and July 10 he visited the Crimean Peninsula which Russia annexed in 2014, and in Sevastopol he held a travelling meeting, and a meeting with the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet was also included in his schedule.^{2 5}

In this way Secretary Patrushev has implemented a series of local inspections of military bases and infrastructure important for national security on the East Asia front and the European front, and these inspections can be interpreted to be not only the work of confirming the status of policy implementation by the Kremlin but also to have the function of information transmission about the national security policy to domestic and foreign audiences through media reports by the mass media in federal central and regional areas.

Moreover, Secretary Patrushev has also actively pursued NSC diplomacy. On June 22 he held a meeting with the Director of the National Security Office in the Blue House of South Korea, Chung Eui-yong, who was visiting Moscow with President Moon, and they held discussions about security cooperation between the two countries and the situation on the Korean Peninsula.^{2 6} In addition to this, he has held meetings with some of his counterparts from Europe and the United States, namely Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs John Bolton of the United States^{2 7} and the French Secretary General for Defence and

National Security,^{2 8} so it can be surmised that Russia is using the NSC framework to implement policy coordination at the strategic core level.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the new Putin administration is tackling priority measures in the social and economic spheres in accordance with the “New May Order,” but diversification and innovation of the industrial structure cannot be achieved overnight. At the end of July, a large-scale demonstration was held in Moscow, etc. over pension reforms,^{2 9} and due to the handling of the administration the influence of President Putin has declined; moreover, the possibility that he is “becoming a lame duck” cannot be denied. Furthermore, there is a possibility that this situation will increase the influence of the administration in terms of diplomacy and military security, but at a time when stabilization of diplomatic and economic relations with the Western countries is essential for the long-term development of the Russian economy and society, there is an inherent limit to taking an assertive foreign policy, so the new administration is under pressure to follow a difficult course.

In such a situation, formulation and coordination of a national security policy based on a comprehensive and long-term perspective is required, and the SCRF (and staff organization), the control bodies, play a large role in this. Continuing on from the previous administration, Secretary Patrushev, who is the closest of close advisors to Putin and leads the SCRF staff organization, is

actively travelling around to domestic and foreign destinations to inspect military bases and tackle important diplomatic matters. At a time when “becoming a lame duck” and “decline of leadership” are becoming concerns of the new administration, it can be concluded that the importance of SCRF Secretary Patrushev, an “ally” Putin can trust, will become greater than ever before from the perspective of maintaining the political influence of the Kremlin core led by President Putin.

(Completed July 31)

* The website access date for this paper is July 31, 2018. The ages of the cabinet ministers are also as of July 31, 2018 if not otherwise specified.

¹ Shinji Hyodo (2018), President Putin's Leadership: Future of Russia's Assertive Foreign Policy, *Journal of International Security*, Vol. 46 No. 1, p. 51-67.

² Указ Президента РФ от 7 мая 2018г. № 204, «О национальных целях и стратегических задачах развития Российской Федерации на период до 2024 года», *Собрание законодательства Российской Федерации (СЗРФ)*, 14 мая 2018г., № 20, ст. 2817.

³ Пункт 1, Указ Президента РФ от 7 мая 2018г. № 204. Furthermore, Putin instructed the federal government to approve the federal government's basic activities policy and forecasts for social and economic development until 2024 taking into consideration the need to ensure mechanisms and resources to achieve the national targets by October 1, 2018. «а» Пункт 2, № 204.

⁴ “Modernization” is deemed to be not only technological innovation but also building the economic structure and the large-scale issues pertaining to the means of building the economic structure. Satoshi Mizobata (2013), Economic Policy of Modernization, Co-editor, *The Political Economy of Russian Modernization*, Bunrikaku, p. 41.

⁵ Указ Президента РФ от 7 мая 2012г., № 603, «О реализации планов (программ) строительства и развития Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации, других войск, воинских формирований и органов и модернизации оборонно-промышленного комплекса», *СЗРФ*, 7 мая 2012г., № 19, ст. 2340.

⁶ *РБК*, 7 мая 2018г., «Новый майский указ Путина. Главные целевые показатели»: [<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/07/05/2018/5af060c79a79472bc16ff1f9>]

⁷ Сайт «Минкомсвязь России»: [<http://minsvyaz.ru/ru/ministry/persons/262/>]; ТАСС, 18 мая 2018г., «Биография Константина Носкова: 18 мая Носков стал министром цифрового развития, связи и массовых коммуникаций РФ»: [<http://tass.ru/info/5213695>]

⁸ Сайт «Правительство России»: [<http://government.ru/gov/persons/512/bio/>]

⁹ Сайт «Правительство России»: [<http://government.ru/gov/persons/447/bio/>]

¹⁰ This refers to Секретарь Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации. It is possible to translate this as the Secretary-General, Secretary, or Director of the Security Council, but due to the nature of the published media, in this paper we employ the widely used translation “Secretary.”

¹¹ *Ведомости*, 25 мая 2010г., «Россельхозбанк возглавил 32-летний сын секретаря Совета безопасности»:

[<https://www.vedomosti.ru/finance/articles/2010/05/25/rosselhozbank-vozglavil-32-letnij-syn-sekretarya-soveta-bezopasnosti>]; Сайт «Правительство России»: [<http://government.ru/gov/persons/544/bio/>]; his

second son Andrey is also a graduate of the FSB Academy, and is an energy expert who stands at the top of a joint venture of Gazprom and Lukoil, etc. *РБК*, 1 марта 2017г., «Сын Патрушева возглавил совет директоров СП «Газпрома» и ЛУКОЙЛа»: [<https://www.rbc.ru/business/01/03/2017/58b6abe99a7947f1a2310d9b>]; ТАСС, 18 мая 2018г., «Биография Дмитрия Патрушева»: [<http://tass.ru/info/5213120>]

¹² 4-а, «Положение об Управлении Президента Российской Федерации по развитию информационно-коммуникационных технологий и инфраструктуры связи», Указ Президента РФ от 14 июня 2018г., № 334, «О мерах по оптимизации структуры Администрации Президента Российской Федерации», *СЗРФ*, 18 июня 2018г., № 25, ст. 3646.

¹³ *РИА Новости*, 12 июля 2012г., «Биография Андрея Липова»: [<https://ria.ru/spravka/20120712/697723763.html>]

¹⁴ This is a different person called Dmitry Peskov (Дмитрий Песков Николаевич) from the Dmitry Peskov who is Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office and Presidential Press Secretary (Дмитрий Песков Сергеевич).

¹⁵ Сайт «АО Российская венчурная компания»: [<https://www.rvc.ru/about/governance/directors/peskov/>]; ТАСС, 10 июля 2018г., «Путин назначил Пескова из АСИ своим спецпредставителем по цифровому развитию»: [<http://tass.ru/ekonomika/5361296>]

¹⁶ For the basic structure, authority, and functions of the SCRF, refer to the following literature: Shinji

Hyodo (2009), Chapter 4: Russian Security Council Yasuhiro Matsuda (ed.), *NSC, National Security Council: Comparative Studies of Crisis Management and Security Policy Making Mechanisms*, Sairyusha, pp. 136-172; Shinji Hyodo (2012), The Roles of National Security Council of Russian Federation in the Decision Making Process of the National Security Policy: The Revision of Federal Law on Security and the Regulations of National Security Council, *Cosmopolis*, Program in International Relations in the Graduate School of Global Studies, Sophia University, pp. 1-10; Takeyuki Hasegawa (2015), A Study on Russian Security Council and Putin's Political Reforms, *Russian and East European Studies*, No. 43, pp. 69-88; Takeyuki Hasegawa (2016), A Study on Russian National Security Policy under Putin - the role of Interdepartmental Commissions of the Russian Security Council and "the Putin-Patrushev Line," *Russian Eurasian Economy & Society*, No. 1009, pp. 2-21.

¹⁷ Указ Президента РФ от 25 мая 2012г., № 715 (ред. от 3 июля 2018г.), «Об утверждении состава Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации», *СЗРФ*, 28 мая 2012г., № 22, ст. 2758.

¹⁸ This corresponds to the National Security Secretariat (NSS) in the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Japan. Refer to the following analysis regarding dialogue between Japan and Russia through the NSC: Takeyuki Hasegawa (2018), New Development of Japan-Russia Relations under the Second Abe Administration — Focusing on the "Yachi-Patrushev Line" —, *HIROSHIMA RESEARCH NEWS*, Vol. 21 No. 1, p. 5.

¹⁹ Refer to the following literature regarding the relationship between President Putin and SCRF Secretary Patrushev: Hasegawa (2015).

²⁰ These are jointly held by the SCRF Secretary and a Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to a Federal District in accordance with the instructions of the President, and it is thought that the SCRF Secretary directly goes out to the regions to implement inspections, etc. of the progress of federal programs. Refer to the following literature for the details: Hyodo (2012); Hasegawa (2015).

²¹ Here we are referring to diplomatic activities by

top NSC administrators. Refer to the following literature for the details: Hasegawa 2015, pp. 8-10, Footnote 38.

²² Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»: [<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2440/>]

²³ *Российская Газета*, 4 июля 2018г., «Николай Патрушев проинспектировал базу подводников на Камчатке»:

[<https://rg.ru/2018/07/04/reg-dfo/nikolaj-patrushev-pro-inspektiroval-bazu-podvodnikov-na-kamchatke.html>];

Камчатский Край, 10 июля 2018г., «Вопросы безопасности обсудили на Камчатке»:

[<http://kam-kray.ru/news/13837-voprosy-bezopasnosti-obsudili-na-kamchatke.html>];

Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»:

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2441/>]

²⁴ Refer to the following studies for the details about the "Maritime Silk Road" and China-Russia relations: Shinji Yamaguchi (2018), The White Paper Entitled "China's Arctic Policy": the Third Silk Road Concept and the Potential for China-Russia Cooperation, *NIDS Commentary*, No. 69 (February 21, 2018) [<http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/commentary/pdf/commentary069.pdf>]; Yoko Hirose (2018), *Russia and China: Anti-American Strategy*, Chikuma Shobo.

²⁵ In addition, he inspected the FSB Republic of Crimea Border Security Division and Belbek Airport.

Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»:

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2447/>];

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2448/>]

²⁶ Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»:

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2430/>]

²⁷ Secretary Patrushev was on a trip to the Republic of Angola so Assistant Bolton held a meeting with his subordinate, Yury Averyanov, First Deputy Secretary of the SCRF. Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»:

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2437/>];

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2433/>]

²⁸ Сайт «Совет Безопасности РФ»:

[<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2450/>]

²⁹ *Ведомости*, 29 июля 2018г., «В Москве прошел митинг против пенсионной реформы»:

[<https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2018/07/29/776795-miting-protiv-pensionnoi-reformi>]

Profile

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