

KALININGRAD ANNIVERSARY: THE FIRST STEPS OF GEORGY BOOS*

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Introduction

The origin and originality of the problem often referred to as the Kaliningrad puzzle are geopolitical. Their concise description could be as follows. The part of Prussia taken by the Soviet Union after the Second World War was transformed into a gigantic Soviet military base. It performed the functions of the exclave against the West and of the barrier which helped the USSR to ensure the dependence of the Eastern Baltics and domination in Poland. After the Cold War, the territory of 15,100 square kilometres with a population of almost a million, owned by Russia and located the farthest to the West, although on the Baltic Sea, ashore became isolated from the motherland and turned into an exclave. Gradually that exclave found itself at the crossroads of different security structures and later – surrounded by one of them. Changes in the situation gave rise to the so-called Kaliningrad discourse, i.e. political decisions influenced by international policies in Central and Eastern Europe and academic discussion and studies of the role of this Russian-owned exclave in the relations of the East and the West.

The academic literature reveals quite a broad panorama of interpretations of this topic. It should be pointed out that the issues which appeared atop of the research – how the collapse of the USSR affected the situation of the Kaliningrad Oblast, what it would be in the future, what role would be played by the motherland and the neighbours, what influence it would experience from the Euro-Atlantic development to the East, how the international community should help the Oblast to adapt to the changing environment, etc. – mostly coincided with the slips of the West-East relations after the Cold War. As the

* This article is a part of the broader monograph by R. Lopata, “Anatomy of Hostage: Kaliningrad Anniversary Case”, to be published in English in Tartu, Estonia, in March of 2006.

latter were essentially marked by the search for the so-called new security architecture, the Kaliningrad topic was dominated by the tendency of overcoming insecurity, “a threat potentially encoded in the Oblast.”

At the end of the 80's and beginning of the 90's that tendency was reflected in texts modelling the future of the Kaliningrad Oblast based on the Potsdam Tail and analysing the military threat constituted by the Oblast to the security of the Baltic Sea region. In the mid-90's, the idea of Kaliningrad as the “Baltic Hong Kong” started developing as an alternative to various internationalisation and demilitarisation proposals for the Oblast. It aimed at revealing the potential of the Oblast as a possible economic link between the East and the West. At the turn of the century, following practical steps to reduce the militarisation level of the exclave, the Kaliningrad topic became more focused on non-military threats. More and more attention was devoted to issues relating to the impact of the expansion of the European Union to the East on the socioeconomic development of the Oblast, its lagging behind its neighbours and consequences of turning into a “double periphery.”¹ Popularity was acquired by recommendations suggesting that such problems should be overcome relying on the principles of organising the political space which were followed by the EU multi-stage governance logic and spread with EU enlargement: deterritoriality, devaluation of the state borders and qualitative change of their functions, border cooperation and international interconnectivity enhancing mutual dependence of regional players.² Finally, a few years ago, after the Kaliningrad Oblast found itself surrounded by NATO and the EU, related tension was attributed to the practical and technical decisions concerning Russian passengers, goods and military transit to/from the Kaliningrad Oblast.³

Thus, the Kaliningrad Oblast did not become the factor which would block the development of Euro-Atlantic institutions, nor did it cause a military

¹ Lopata R. Naujausios kaliningradistikos apžvalga // Politologija. – 2002. – No. 1. – P. 96 – 104.

² Joenniemi P., Dewar S., Fairlie L.D. The Kaliningrad Puzzle. – Karslkrona: The Aland Islands Peace Institute, 2000. – P. 3 - 4, 26.

³ Daniliauskas J., Stanytė-Toločkienė I. Derybos dėl Kaliningrado tranzito // Maniokas K., Vilpišauskas R., Žeruolis D. Lietuvos kelias į Europos Sąjungą. – Vilnius, 2004. – P. 309 – 349.

conflict as was sometimes forecast, and eventually did not turn into a “black hole” in the so-called soft security context, or a site of socioeconomic destabilisation in the Baltic Sea region, which was also widely discussed and written about. In other words, it could be stated that the Kaliningrad wheel is moving forward encouraging thoughts of progress after each cycle.

On the other hand, the optimistic scenario which required unconventional solutions to the situation in place and outlined the principles of free trade, wide autonomy and clear independence in the actions of the Oblast did not come true either. Discussions as to whether the overlapping process of the West and the East structures seen in this part of the Baltic Sea region has essentially neutralised the “potential encoded threat” in the Oblast are still hot. In fact, this demonstrates that the Kaliningrad topic remains especially sensitive. Clear evidence thereof could be seen in mid-summer of 2005 when Russia organised a pompous celebration of the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad in the first three days of July.

A missed opportunity and further complications of the Kaliningrad puzzle are just a few evaluations of the Kaliningrad Anniversary expressed by foreign political observers.⁴

“Whenever Russia is on some bigger booze, Lithuania faces political upheaval and the EU holds another sycophancy race who will ingratiate Putin more.”⁵ It is undoubtedly sarcastic but not deprived of felicity in characterising the peripeteia of the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad as they have been perceived in Lithuania.

One cannot be but charmed by those political observers who manage to describe processes tormented by political scientists in long articles or even monographs in just one sentence. No doubt, political scientists would go into broad explanations of the situation. Here colleagues, journalists appeal to the disgraceful step of Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania Kazimiera Prunskienė – her visit to Kaliningrad despite the fact that her counterpart from Russia did not invite the president of our country to the celebration and objections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and political tension caused

⁴ Dewar S. Lost Opportunity // <http://kaliningradexpert.org/node/1578>

⁵ Valatka R. Kremliai – šventės, ES – pagirios // *Lietuvos Rytas*. – 4 July 2005 – No. 153.

thereby in the country. The same could be said about toasts pronounced by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and French President Jacques Chirac together with Vladimir Putin to the non-existent city of Immanuel Kant.

Certainly, political scientists would not miss an opportunity to add something. Inga Stanytė-Toločkienė in a popular fashion, focusing on the meeting of the heads of Russia, Germany and France in Svetlogorsk (Rauschen) wrote: "...only the German chancellor and the French president were invited to attend the celebration. Heads of the neighbouring countries did not receive such an invitation. Vilnius started talking about the Moscow-Berlin axis. Warsaw did not hide its disappointment with Germany and Russia either. The acceptance of Putin's invitation made the countries of the Baltic Region play the role of supernumeraries in the relations of Russia and the EU /.../ The tendency to talk and 'solve problems' with the largest countries is perfectly in line with Russian diplomatic traditions. It suffices to remember that at the end of 2000 the representatives of Moscow spoke about the desire to limit the activeness of foreign (neighbouring) countries towards Kaliningrad until Russia finalised its negotiations with the EU regarding transit to the Oblast. At the same time, Russia had active dialogue with some EU Member States. The Kremlin managed to win discounts from the EU. During the last month the voices speaking about the necessity to create a multi-speed Europe with the nucleus comprising closely cooperating old Member States have been prominent in the EU Member States. Thus the choice of partners in whose company the Russian President was willing to celebrate the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad seems especially logical."⁶

However even Inga Stanytė-Toločkienė studying the Kaliningrad problems for five years did not see quite clearly whether namely such an interpretation of the summit of the three could help in trying to answer several more questions. The author formulated them as follows in her popularising article:

"Festivities will last for the entire weekend. There are many of them: nine international festivals, three exhibitions, nearly two dozen concerts, ceremonial attribution of Kant's name to Kaliningrad University, a spectacular procession and even a bikers' show. By the abundance and effectiveness of

⁶ Stanytė-Toločkienė I. Pavojaus signalai per jubiliejų // Lietuvos Rytas. Rytai – Vakarai. – 2 July 2005 – No. 152.

events these festivities are not expected to equal the 300th Anniversary of Saint Petersburg celebrated in 2003. However, why is such significance given to the anniversary of a city which for a long time was the capital of Eastern Prussia?

“It would seem that anniversary festivities and the simultaneously held meeting of the State Council to discuss the prospects of reforms in the Kaliningrad Oblast witness positive changes. Maybe this could be the acknowledgement of miscellaneous historical experience? Or a striving to take real steps modernising the Oblast and integrating it into the European processes? The official concept of the anniversary celebrations seems to be in line with such an assumption. Slogans of the celebration days: “Kaliningrad – One City, One History”, “Russian City in the Heart of Europe”, “Kaliningrad is Where Russia and Europe Meet” – demonstrate the acknowledgement of historical experience and at the same time emphasise the importance of partnership with Europe.”⁷

It is worth pointing out that quite some time before the anniversary celebrations, when some news started spreading about considerations concerning this issue in Kaliningrad and Moscow, many analysts posed similar questions.⁸ They all relied on the cornerstone – *What are the real intentions of the organisers of the celebration of the 750th Anniversary of Königsberg/Kaliningrad?*

How to study the Kaliningrad issue?

At least several options exist. For example, the so-called discourse analysis. How to use it has recently been shown by Pertti Joenniemi and Vyacheslav Morozov studying the 300th Anniversary celebrations in Saint Petersburg in 2003 as a mnemonic battle.⁹ Admitting that debates on the issue raised many

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Karabeshkin L., Wellman Ch. The Russian Domestic Debate on Kaliningrad: Integrity, Identity and Economy // *Kieler Schriften zur Friedenswissenschaft. Kiel Peace Research Series.* – Münster, 2004. – Band No. 11. – P. 29 – 34.

⁹ Joenniemi P., Morozov V. The Politics of Remembering: Saint Petersburg’s 300th Anniversary // *Journal of Baltic Studies.* – Winter 2003. – Vol. XXXIV. – No. 4. – P. 375 – 396.

fundamental problems, the authors exclusively focused on interpretations of historical heritage: whether they promote nostalgic feelings for the “good old” imperial times, favour the modern urban conceptualisation, i.e. political, cultural and territorial demarcation, or vice versa, they reveal post-modernist spirit encouraging one to open to the changing external environment characterised by deterritoriality, localisation, regionalisation and Europeanisation? In other words, in analysing the discourse of the Petersburg celebrations the researchers did not conceal their attempts to do a test whether and how Saint Petersburg (Russia, in fact) is ready to use historical heritage to project their relations with Europe. This way, for example, it would be possible to provide a comprehensive analysis of the official concept of the Kaliningrad anniversary celebrations.¹⁰

Incidentally, Joenniemi together with Christopher S. Browning applied the same analytical scheme of competing modern and post-modern discourses to the Kaliningrad Oblast.¹¹ They were interested in the problem raised by Noel Parker of how marginal provinces located in the outskirts of different political centres (including structural overlapping areas) using namely their territorial peripherality can benefit acquiring resources and influence. Identifying differences between modern and post-modern approaches to the periphery, Parker accentuated four criteria: self-identification of the periphery, border conceptualisation, relations with the centre/-s, possibilities for representation and influence.¹² In the modern (closed) discourse the marginal province is perceived as an integral subject of the state. Its borders are fixed and impermeable (“billiard ball” countries). The periphery is ruled by one centre assessing it as the final limit of the state territorial sovereignty. It

¹⁰ *Konsepciya prazdnovaniya 750-letiya osnovaniya Kaliningrada. – Mezhtregionalnii Press-Centr, – 2005.*

¹¹ *Browning Ch. S., Joenniemi P. The Identity of Kaliningrad: Russian, European or a Third Space // Tassinari F. (ed.). The Baltic Sea Region in the European Union: Reflections on Identity, Soft-Security and Marginality. – Gdansk, Berlin, – 2003. – P. 58 – 99; Browning Ch. S., Joenniemi P. Contending Discourse of Marginality: The Case of Kaliningrad // Geopolitics. 2004. – Vol. 9. – No. 3. – P. 699 – 730.*

¹² *Browning Ch. S., Joenniemi P. – Contending Discourse of Marginality. – Op. cit. – P. 703 – 705*

finally becomes a defence object of the state using the threat factor to expand its influence. At the same time, in the post-modern (open) discourse the periphery is treated as an interstate link with flexible borders open for revision; it is connected with one or more centres and is able to freely relax from previous constraints.

Relying on the ways of treating modern and post-modern peripheries defined by Parker and supporting his thought about the influence of one or another discourse on the periphery by properly selecting the strategy, Joenniemi and Browning clarified how those ways corresponded to the three factors: regional subjectivity (identity, maturity of the elite), international and regional structure and the discourse role of this environment, and historical narrative resources of the periphery. They specifically analysed the paradigms of Kaliningrad as a military outpost and the fourth Baltic republic referred to as modern ones and the post-modern paradigm of Kaliningrad as a pilot experimental region. Some insights revealing certain aspects of the relations between Moscow and Kaliningrad (for example, the discourse of Kaliningrad as a military outpost spread by the motherland in the early 90's was useful for and supported by the Oblast as it guaranteed resources and certain economic security and stability) were interesting.¹³ True, the final conclusion of the authors was characterised by flexibility. It announced that the identity of the population of the isolated region as well as the dynamics of relations between the motherland and the province were of especial importance for the manifestation of influence of the Oblast but an answer to the question of which paradigms would be more favourable for the marginal periphery to turn into a region with more autonomy and potential power depended on specific circumstances.

¹³ True, the authors interpreting the situation, apart from anything else, also appealed to the absence of self-identity among the Kaliningrad population (*Ibidem.* – P. 716). However they could not explain why at that time 20% of the population of the Oblast supported the independence of the Oblast, and 50% supported the idea of the Oblast having more rights.

See Savkinas A. *Santykiai tarp Kaliningrado srities ir jos kaimynų: esama padėtis ir jos vystymosi perspektyvos // Lietuva ir jos kaimynai.* – Vilnius, 1997. – P. 113-118; Gricius A. *Kaliningrado srities raidos perspektyvos ir saugumo aspektai Baltijos regione // Ibidem.* – P. 121 – 122.

It would be difficult to argue such conclusions. Especially because there are other studies confirming the same. True, these works based on neorealist and geopolitical perspectives focus on namely the relations between Moscow and Kaliningrad.¹⁴ Their significance for the development of the Oblast is not only acknowledged but attempts are made to specify the mechanism of such dynamics applying the principles of research into exclaves introduced by Honore Catudal.

Comparative studies of the triangle – the metropolis (“motherland”) – the territorial political anomaly (exclaves, enclaves) – the neighbouring state (-s) – carried out by Catudal prove that motherlands are mostly concerned with the task of strategic capacity to govern territorial fragments.¹⁵ It requires ensuring security, proper socioeconomic development and communication with separated regions as well as targeted efforts in shaping the loyalty of the population of the territorial anomaly to the centre. Therefore, motherlands looking for ways to neutralise threats to the preservation of sovereignty usually strive to establish in territorial anomalies administration which would not violate the principles of political territorial control prevailing in the state and spare no effort in ensuring effective communication therewith (“ignoring the host state”). The role of the host state is reflected in the response to the actions of the motherland undertaken with a view to ensuring communication with the exclave/enclave. And the latter, especially in the cases where the problems of relations between it and the motherland reach the level of so-called “high” politics, experiences “the exclave/enclave syndrome” – if such territorial formations are treated as specific or special but the specific needs of their population are not realised through specific measures, such a formation finally “loses” the desire to have a special status. In other words, the above

¹⁴ Holtom P. Kaliningrad in 2001: From Periphery to Pilot Region // Russian Participation in Baltic Sea Region-Building: A Case Study of Kaliningrad. – Gdansk, Berlin, – 2002. – P. 36 – 67; Lopata R. Geopolitinis įkaitas: Rusijos Federacijos Kaliningrado (Karaliaučiaus) srities atvejis // Lietuvos Metinė Strateginė Apžvalga. – Vilnius, 2004. – P. 177 – 192 (also in English); Lopata R. Kaliningrad, otage géopolitique de la Russie. Un point de vue lituanien // Le Courrier des pays de l’Est // Paris. – Mars – Avril 2005. – No. 1048. – P. 30 – 39.

¹⁵ Catudal H. The Exclave Problem of Western Europe. – Alabama, 1979. – P. 60 – 66.

triangle gives the key role namely to the motherland, its strategy and tactics with respect to the separated territory.

An example of the aforesaid attempts to detail those principles when studying the relations between Moscow and Kaliningrad would be the concept of a geopolitical hostage presumably revealing the essence of the Kaliningrad dossier.¹⁶ What is it?

It is a tangle of expressions of the status of relations of the motherland (the Russian Federation) with its geopolitically separated territorial fragment (the Kaliningrad Oblast) depending on internal and international factors. For over fifteen years combinations of internal and external factors have determined their diversity this way or another making Russia face the tasks of retaining, effectively governing and controlling the territorial fragment, i.e. preserving sovereignty and assuring legitimacy. While the academic community is obstinately looking for visions of the future of the Oblast, Moscow is solving somewhat more pragmatic issues. The motherland faces certain complications provoked by the dilemma between the role which, in Moscow's opinion, legitimately (*po pravu*) belongs to it and the role which it is let to play by the external environment. In other words, Russia is forced to correct its chances to implement one or another strategy of relations with the fragment adjusting it to the changing situation both in and around the Oblast. Failure to solve this dilemma would create a real opportunity for the Oblast to break away from Moscow, without negating the motherland defragmentation scenario.

Precisely because of that Moscow tried to turn this Oblast into a geopolitical hostage – a territory received in the process of cession as the spoils of war which is to be not only retained (the internal aspect) but is also to make other countries and international institutions refrain from any direct or indirect act of liberation of the hostage (the external aspect). As regards the specific features of Kaliningrad (the Potsdam Tail, geopolitical location, socioeconomic factors), namely the internal aspect officially covered with the external one may be of greater importance for Moscow. Formally, the motherland does not object to and even promotes interpretations of the province

¹⁶ Lopata R. Geopolitinis įkaitas. – Op. cit. – P. 181; Lopata R. Lopatologija: apie politinį popsą. – Vilnius, 2005. – P. 198.

as a specific region. However in practice it does not allow such uniqueness to be manifested. This is a way to invoke and support a peculiar Stockholm Syndrome* in the Oblast – the Kaliningrad population must themselves reconcile with the status of an ordinary region of Russia, i.e. all decisions regarding the expression of the Oblast will be taken by Moscow and the Oblast will not be allowed to express itself as a subject.

We targeted our study of Kaliningrad's 750th Anniversary to check this version. True, those who more or less attentively followed the anniversary case would probably agree with the idea that the proposed ways of analysis do not exclude but rather complement each other. Certainly, the Russian rhetoric referred to as the European one was prominent in the case. It demonstrated the Russian approach to the historical heritage of the Kaliningrad Oblast. However it also highlighted the practical relation of the Russian foreign policy to Eurocontinentalism, Central Europe and the placement of the Kaliningrad factor therein. The outlines of the regional policy of the motherland framing relations with the specific subject of the Russian Federation were also visible. To make a long story short, we saw essentially all aspects attributable to the Kaliningrad dossier.

The analysis has revealed that Moscow is preparing for serious corrections in its policy towards this region. The same is shown by a decision maturing in the celebration peripeteia to change the political management of the Kaliningrad Oblast. Below, the survey of appearance of the new governor of the Oblast unveils and explains the circumstances of this remarkable shift.

* The first one to use the Stockholm Syndrome concept in 1978 was U.S. psychologist F. Ochbergh who studied the hostage drama of 1973 at the Stockholm Sveriges Kreditbank. The American used it to define a psychological phenomenon when hostages start feeling sympathy for their captors and feel like ingratiating them, fulfilling their wishes, cooperating, forgiving and justifying their behaviour and start feeling antipathy to their rescuers. As for political manifestations of the Stockholm Syndrome, some appeal to the Western Berlin of the end of the eighth decade and the beginning of the ninth decade of the 20th century where the population, especially the young generation became ambivalent to the unification of Germany and the issues of relations between the GDR and Western Berlin due to continuous tension. See – Dean J. The Future of Berlin // Moreta E. (ed.) Germany between East and West. – Royal Institute of International Affairs: Cambridge University Press, 1989. - P. 172.

Georgy Boos: “Russian Window to Europe”

From a formal point of view, it is somewhat awkward to speak about post-anniversary Kaliningrad because Decree No. 1353 of the Russian President of 13 November 2003 announced the celebration of two dates, not only the 750th Anniversary of the City of Kaliningrad but also the 60th anniversary of the Kaliningrad Oblast. The decision to focus on the former as a core event did not mean that the latter had been forgotten. The recommendation was to “attach” a relevant label to most of the major cultural events to be held in the Oblast after 3 July. In other words, the celebration was to go on for an entire year. In addition, preparations were underway for another planned event on 19 November 2005, i.e. the inauguration of the governor. The inauguration took place, although much earlier than anticipated. And after that, celebrations were certainly not on most people’s agenda. This development overshadowed the emerging discussion over the significance of the city’s anniversary for the Oblast as well as the dividends it might reap from the forthcoming visit by Putin. It also became a kind of a threshold of the new stage in the Kaliningrad case.

The anniversary was supposed to give start to the fight over the governor’s chair. After the event, headlines implying such a possibility appeared in the local press of the Kaliningrad Oblast and later in the newspapers of the motherland.¹⁷ However, the anticipated fight never happened. The new governor was sworn in and took office on 28 September rather than on 19 November. Moscow decided to act and solve the governor’s issue quickly and tellingly. The action was illustrated by several parallel and complementary processes: the appointment of the new favourite and the campaign to discredit Vladimir Yegorov during his last days in office.

Below is a short chronology of these processes which developed at a lightning pace.

¹⁷ A v glazakh – revnost. Yubilei Kaliningrada dal start borbe za gubernatorskoye kreslo // *Komsomolskaja pravda v Kaliningrade* – 07 07 2005; for more about the related media publications in the metropolitan area see: *Kaliningradą valdys Kremliaus vietininkas // Lietuvos Rytas*. - 9 August 2005 – No. 183.

On 4 July, Putin offered Georgy Boos, deputy speaker of the State Duma, to take the governor's office.¹⁸ The latter did not object. The rest was just a formality: the Kremlin took care of the appointment procedure and Boos made relevant preparations.

On 6 July, the expert opinion on the SEZ in the Kaliningrad Oblast was published by the Audit Chamber of the Russian Federation.¹⁹ It did not bode well for the administration of the Oblast. Experts concluded that tax incentives in the Oblast cost the Russian budget 32.49 billion roubles in 2004.

On 25 August, Klebanov indicated during consultations with local politicians that he would propose two candidates, member of the Yedinaya Rossiya party Boos and Kaliningrad Deputy Governor Yury Shalimov, to the president. The Presidential Envoy to the Northwestern Federal District also hinted that he had offered several alternate jobs for Yegorov in Moscow. The next day, Vladimir Nikitin, speaker of the Oblast Duma, was summoned to the Kremlin where he was offered the chance to discuss the prospects of strengthening the role of the motherland in the Oblast and introduced to the candidacy of Boos.

On 29 August, Klebanov officially submitted the names of the two candidates to the office of the Kaliningrad Oblast governor to Putin. Several days later there were publications in the media claiming that Yegorov requested to represent Russia in Belarus after his term of office and that Boos was on his way to Kaliningrad to deliver his speech on the regional development programme.²⁰

The deputy speaker of the State Duma arrived in Kaliningrad on 2 September and stayed there for four days. According to the reporters, Boos "acted as if he had already been appointed" and ignored the statements by

¹⁸ Na post kaliningradskogo gubernatora pretenduyet bivshii nalogovik, vice-spiker Gosdumi Georgii Boos, 05 07 2005 // <http://www.newsru.com/russia/05jul2005/boos>

¹⁹ Shchiotnaya palata raskritikovala zakon ob O EZ // www.news.ru/newsline/index.shtml?2005/07/06/181782

²⁰ Rossiya mozhet poslat v Belorussiyu eshchio odnogo gubernatora // <http://www.rosbalt.ru/2005/08/30/223691.html>; Rodin I. Boos zakroet okno v Evropu, no otkroet ulitsu. Vice-spiker sostavil plan raboti v Jantarnom krayu // *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. – 31 08 2005.

Yegorov of his intent to continue in office for the full term.²¹ At the same time, Klebanov pointed out that Yegorov had been offered appropriate public service positions, while the Oblast was overtaken by rumours about the new corruption scandal brewing in the governor's office over the lease of hunting areas previously supervised by the administration of the Oblast to private undertakings including one run by the son of Yegorov.

On 13 September, Nikitin received an official submission by Putin, which was way before the deadline of 15 October, for the appointment of Boos as the new governor of the Oblast. The speaker of the Oblast Duma, after consultation with Klebanov, decided to submit the candidacy of Boos for discussion during the first Duma hearing to be held after the summer break on 16 September.²² Nikitin insisted that a favourable decision by the Duma members would not result in any diarchy in the Oblast. Yegorov would continue in office until 19 November when the new governor would be sworn in and would formally take office. Meanwhile Klebanov made it plain that at 66 the ex-Governor might not be able to continue in the public service. By contrast, the president's envoy claimed that the new governor was merely 42 and he had already earned "federal acclaim."²³ Klebanov appealed to the extensive experience gained by Boos serving on the State Duma (from December 1995) and efficient work in the position of the head of the State Tax Authority and, after reorganisation, the Russian Federation Ministry for Taxes and Duties (1998-1999).

On 16 September, 27 members of the Oblast Duma, with two votes cast against, supported the submission by Putin and deputed Boos to the office of the Governor for the period of five years. Three days later Yegorov met Boos in Moscow and announced his resignation.²⁴

²¹ Boos znakomitsia s lichnymi delami sotrudnikov Kaliningradskoj administracii // <http://www.rosbalt.ru/2005/09/06/224697.html>; Riabushev A. Boos udarilsia v obeshanija // *Nezavisimaja Gazeta*. – 05 09 2005.

²² Kaliningradskaja Oblastduma zavtra reshит vopros s Boosom // <http://www.rosbalt.ru/2005/09/15/226351.html>

²³ Smirnov V. Chelovek s federalnoj prochodimostju // *Komsomolskaja pravda v Kaliningrade*. – 17 09 2005.

²⁴ Kaliningrade – naujas vadovas // *Lietuvos Rytas*. – 29 September 2005 – No. 226.

On 28 September, the Oblast Duma accepted Yegorov's resignation and swore in Boos. The inauguration of the new governor took place in the evening of the same day.

Formally it looked like the motherland had carefully followed every letter of the law of 12 December 2004 regulating the appointment of governors: the president's envoy to the Northwestern Federal District held consultations with local politicians, delivered the list of candidates for the governor's position to Putin in due time, the Kremlin administration discussed these candidates with the leadership of the Oblast Duma, Putin made his submission which was discussed and approved by the Oblast Duma.

However, a closer look shows that the situation is reminiscent of the developments five years ago. At that time, outgoing Governor Leonid Gorbenko was taking part in the election race but fell under heavy criticism for his ties with the criminal world, promotion of smuggling, etc. Stories about the criminal rampage by the "governor's entourage" were even published in *The New York Times*. Even though Gorbenko was not re-elected, he received a personal gift from the president – a special watch with the inscription "For achievements in developing the economy of Kaliningrad Oblast."²⁵ The election of Yegorov, who was favoured by Putin, gave hope that the region would finally receive support from the federal government and that the residents of Kaliningrad would not be left on their own facing the inevitable enlargement of the EU. The leadership of the Oblast Duma also showed their strong support for Yegorov both during and after the election.

Now, five years later, the Kremlin delegates again promised special treatment for the region surrounded by NATO and EU members. Putin's representatives insisted that the anniversary was intended to demonstrate to everyone that the territory would never and under no circumstances be surrendered to anybody.²⁶ The words had to be supported by practical implementation of the Kremlin's aim to strengthen of the role of the motherland in the region. The mechanism of "controlled democracy" was engaged. The candidates selected by the Kremlin were members of Yedinaya Rossiya, which

²⁵ Lopata R. Geopolitinis įkaitas. – Op. cit. – P. 189.

²⁶ Andrey Stepanov: "Nikto i nikogda ne sobiraetsia ot davat etu teritoriyu, 14 07 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k51355.html>.

had a dominant majority of 19 members in the Oblast Duma. The Oblast Duma, which had been supporting Yegorov for a long time and whose leadership had promised intense discussions, especially over non-local candidates, obeyed the Kremlin even before Putin made his submission (by the way, after the successful procedure of appointment and approval of Boos, Putin proposed an amendment to the law of 12 December 2004 entitling the dominant majority in regional parliaments to submit candidates for the governor's office to the president). At the same time, Yegorov was definitely under pressure to leave his office as soon as possible, first by promising him positions in the public service and then by appealing to his old age and withdrawing these promises as well as initiating journalist investigations into the outgoing governor's personal responsibility for corruption in the regional administration. So the natural question is: Why was the Kremlin in such a rush and what were the underlying interests?

It must be said though that the ex-governor claimed that it was he who decided to resign prematurely and that he felt no pressure and only tried to maintain public, political and economic stability in the region. He also appealed to pending adoption of the SEZ law and approval of the federal budget for 2006 and federal strategy for socioeconomic development of the Kaliningrad Oblast. "I hope that the new governor will be able to raise the additional money, approximately three billion roubles, necessary to tackle the problems of this region," said Yegorov.²⁷ In other words, he agreed with Klebanov that Boos was a more powerful figure.

It was an important factor from which Boos, with the assistance from the Kremlin and the leadership of Yedinaya Rossiya, reaped benefits. But was that the most important thing? Yegorov himself had also been viewed as

²⁷ Gubernator Vladimir Yegorov slagaet polnomochiya i utochniaet formulirovki // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k61737.html>; As strange as it may seem, but the next day after inauguration of Boos it was announced that 3.08 billion would be invested into construction of the TEC-2 power plant in Kaliningrad (TEC-2 poluchila investiciji na dostroiku, 29 09 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/economy/k63469.html>). Maybe it was just a coincidence. Putin demanded that the federal authorities speed up construction of TEC-2 after he listened to complaints from Yegorov during his visit to Kaliningrad.

a powerful politician close to Putin for a long time. However, the Kremlin insisted that the region was in crisis because its administration was totally inefficient, corruption was widespread, major economic and environmental problems were ignored, and the benefits of the special economic zone were not captured.²⁸ Although the disputes between the motherland and the Oblast over the SEZ law were not brought back, the implications were quite clear: the office of the governor should be in the hands of a person free of any local interests.

Boos was more subtle. He promised to take the interests of small and medium-sized businesses on board during discussion of the draft SEZ laws and to rely on the local political elite when selecting his team. Admittedly, the new governor kept his promises. In early October, the Yedinaya Rossiya group in the State Duma decided to postpone the reading of the SEZ law and the official government of the Kaliningrad Oblast formed by Boos included two deputy prime ministers and six of the 12 ministers who were from Kaliningrad.²⁹ However, these measures were more of a shock-absorbing nature designed to “mitigate” the governance reform started by Boos and implementation of the new economic development outlook for the Kaliningrad Oblast.

The fact that the outlook was bright and that the population in the Oblast in five years would be able to enjoy the same standard of living as in neighbouring Poland and Lithuania was no news for the locals. It must be said though that the optimistic outlook promised by Boos had its reservations. We will attain the same standards as the Poles and Lithuanians not because our salaries will be higher, he claimed, but because the ratio of our salary to service package, affordable for our wages, will be higher.³⁰ However, before the new governor it was both the leadership of the Oblast and President Putin who had emphasised the necessity to provide people with normal living and working conditions, quality education, health care, etc. Therefore,

²⁸ Fichte M. Boos stal federalnim “prochodimcem” // http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/09/16/oa_171069.shtml

²⁹ Morozov: Zakon ob O EZ v Kaliningradskoy oblasti primut do konca goda // <http://www.rosbalt.ru/2005/10/11/230147.html>

³⁰ Cherez 5 let kaliningradtsi budut zhit ne khuzhe, chem litovci i poliaki // <http://www.regnum.ru/dossier/586.html>

such promises in Kaliningrad were usually followed by a popular jest dating back to Perestroika times: “I promised that *we* would have everything after the reform. But I did not promise that *you* would have everything.”

The visions of the privileged and model Oblast acting as a donor to the federal budget had been discussed before on numerous occasions. The same could be said about the ways of achieving them: an increase several times over of the energy capacity of the Oblast, developed transport infrastructure, promotion of investment and tourism, elimination of corruption and improvement of tax collection through effective introduction of public administration principles.

So was Boos proposing anything new?

First of all, Boos, in contrast to his predecessors, proposed a specific anti-corruption governance scheme of the Oblast and started its implementation in practice.

On 29 September, the day after his inauguration, the members of the Oblast Duma had to sit through two successive emergency readings and adopt legal acts and resolutions expanding the powers of the governor and entitling him to set up a new regional government. Many subjects of the Russian Federation have their own governments. However, in the case of Kaliningrad Oblast, the regional administration lost more than just its name. Boos used his new authority appropriately and implemented a virtual structural reform of the executive branch.³¹ By 10 October, the Government was set up comprising 12 ministries and seven agencies within the economic, real sector and social component managed by deputy prime ministers. There was a dramatic reduction in the number of departments (from 34 to 24), and the number of staff was reduced (without litigation, it must be said) from 1,200 to 695. Salaries of the remaining public servants were tied to the minimum wages. Public servants lost their pension bonuses. It must be said that the Oblast Duma was also encouraged to start reform and initiate a bill revoking privileges for former governors and its outgoing members. It was also suggested that the number of members in the Oblast Duma should be reduced from 32 to 20.

The governor claimed that his scheme of the executive branch was borrowed from foreign countries. He did not specify, though, which foreign

³¹ Nastoyashchii Boos // <http://www/newsinfo.ru/static/1237824.html>

countries operated such a scheme. Actually, not many were willing to ask that in Kaliningrad. One way or another, Boos was known as one of the best managers in Russia. Therefore, many focused on the anti-corruption rhetoric of the new governor, watched the raids conducted by special services in former administrative units and the specific policy of the governor in the field of human resources.

“I want to warn all con men, children of Lieutenant Schmidt, that no one will be offering any positions or resources for sale,” stated the governor.³² Indeed, there was no improvisation in his actions when distributing posts. As Boos himself said, he had had a lot of time to think about it since April 2005 when the Kremlin started to tempt him with the office of governor of the Kaliningrad Oblast. So he had plenty of time to both select his candidates and secure the federal “roof” for his revolution in the field of human resources. The governor co-ordinated all major appointments with the presidential envoy.³³

These appointments followed several trends. The Government comprised two groups: Muscovites invited by Boos and locals from Kaliningrad brought round by Deputy Prime Minister Shalimov. The governor praised the professionalism of his team. Shalimov could only rely on the experience of working with his team dating back to the times of Gorbenko. But he didn't want to. The question of whether these two groups will develop into factions remains open. However, there is no doubt that the Muscovites managed to secure supervision of government bodies, control of financial flows and posts in major ministries (infrastructure, economy, agriculture, finance, and education). This fact was noticed immediately and a relevant conclusion was drawn, i.e. the main goal of Boos in the region was to deliver a blow to corrupt structures and wasting of public finance.³⁴ The conclusion is rather reasonable. However, it has to be expanded as the new governor has far more ambitious plans. It is reflected in the commitment to take direct control of

³² Boos, kotorii postroit vsekh, 07 10 2005 // <http://www.vremya.ru/136045.html>

³³ Boos ne protiv stat gubernatorom, 26 08 2005 // www.ntv.ru; Boos, kotorii postroit vsekh. – Op. cit.

³⁴ Sredi novogo pravitelstva Kaliningradskoi oblasti mnogo moskvichei // <http://www.regnum.ru/news/521365.html>; Novaya metla Putina (“Spiegel”, Germanija), 27 09 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k62947.html>

the most important economic component and emerging intention to change the geopolitical vector of the Oblast. It is no coincidence that Klebanov, who was introduced to the strategy for development of the Oblast on 18 October, was unable to hide his astonishment. "I have never seen such ambitious plans. They indicate that nowadays the Kaliningrad Oblast is a 'mini state' while St. Petersburg is merely a megacity-state."³⁵ Besides, Putin's envoy also added that realisation of these plans requires several preconditions such as consolidation of the political elite in the region and serious effort, both financial and ideological, by the federal government.

Boos himself calls this vector "Russia's window to Europe."³⁶ According to him, instead of being the area which the Europeans are trying to play as a privilege card for penetrating Russian markets the Kaliningrad Oblast has to become a platform for integration of Russian business into the European and global markets. This requires urgent revitalisation of the Oblast, i.e. development of a transparent and understandable financial system, public access to the budgeting process, twofold increase in the energy capacity of the region, development of transport infrastructure and logistics, and, last but not least, drafting of the SEZ law so that all these actions could promote the arrival of large and competitive Russian capital to the Oblast. Moreover, Boos believes that the region could become more attractive if certain ideological clichés could be eliminated and its image as a conflict and chaotic zone could be significantly improved. The Oblast is the part of the Russian Federation at the spearhead of Russia's rapprochement with the West and, therefore, there is no rhyme or reason to treat it as an exclave of Russia or to "fence it off." On the contrary, it must become the icon of Russia's openness to the West. The new governor, who is keen on demonstrating the openness of the province, has said that he is even prepared to double the population of the Kaliningrad Oblast (from one to two million) in five years and open the doors for immigration from both continental Russia and EU Member States.

³⁵ Klebanov: Novaya programa razvitiya oblasti sdelana pod mini-gosudarstvo, 18 10 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/economy/k66399.html>

³⁶ Boos Kaliningrada // *Delovaya Rosija*. – 30 08 2005; Fichte M. Boos vyekhal s trudom // http://gazeta.ru.print/2005/09/02/oa_169431.shtml; Boos nameren izmenit reputaciyu KaliningradsКОЙ oblasti v luchuyu storonu // http://www.inerfax.ru/r/B/politics/23.html?id_issue=11385292.

Although the new programme for the development of the Oblast is still being prepared and is to be made available for public discussion in three months, the priorities included into the political rhetoric of the governor have already been reflected in some of his practical steps.

The new governor has already sent his first serious signal to the local business community, confirming the characterisation of Boos given by Yevgeny Primakov: he knows the schemes which are used to circumvent the taxation system. Operators of retail chains in the Kaliningrad Oblast were given an ultimatum: either they give up their strategy to benefit from tax incentives by “breaking up” their business, capitalise their assets and absorb USD 250-300 million in the form of investment projects prepared by the regional government or these projects will be offered to large retail chains from Russia. “I don’t care and neither do the people of Kaliningrad who will be working in the market – you or, for instance, the Seventh Continent from Moscow,” the governor explained.³⁷ The implications were clear. If local businesses cannot make up their mind, they will not be able to compete with businesses from Moscow protected by Moscow Mayor Luzhkov, godfather of the governor’s daughter.

The threat of large Russian capital entering the Oblast was also used by Boos in reference to his intentions to recover the property which had allegedly been privatised in the Oblast by unlawful means.³⁸ So far, only a few specific properties such as the confectionary factory and shipbuilding companies have been the target of reprivatisation. However, the governor makes no secret of the fact that he intends to review the privatisation cases of several more properties and that all new contracts on the sale or lease of state property will only be awarded through public tendering procedures.

In the energy sector, Boos has already approved a concrete action plan securing continuous gas supply to the region in full volume until 2010, when the problem will finally be solved by the new branch of the Northern European pipeline to Kaliningrad.³⁹

³⁷ Kogo Boos naznachit mestnim Khodorkovskim: Kaliningrad za nedeliu // <http://www.newspb.ru/allnews/528521>

³⁸ Boos nastupil na bolnoye // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/economy/k67460.html>

³⁹ Boos: oblast budet polnostyu obespechena gazom // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/economy/k66398.html>

Some statements of Boos regarding the new image of the region did not go unnoticed as well. The German *Spiegel* noted with satisfaction that he was the first governor to speak openly about the necessity to speed up “restoration of the monuments of the German Order of Knights and the Prussian Monarchy” for promotion of tourism.⁴⁰ The same, however, does not apply to the Russian military establishment in the Oblast.

Admiral Valuyev clearly indicated that the Baltic Navy disapproves of the efforts to improve economic and cultural cooperation between the Kaliningrad Oblast and foreign countries. They believe that such efforts will facilitate non-violent separation of Kaliningrad from Russia.⁴¹ Valuyev did not elaborate on his arguments any further. However, even in the absence of further clarification they can be viewed as a serious signal to Boos to watch out when speaking about the openness of the Oblast and consider all local political players and their spheres of influence.

It is worth noting that even the regional Duma dominated by Yedinaya Rossiya, which supported Boos’s commitment to cut the number of administrative staff in the Oblast by one half, refused to reduce the costs of administration at their own expense as proposed by the governor. Members of the Duma explained that the decision to increase the seats from 32 to 40 had already been adopted taking account of the mixed electoral system to be used in general election.

This context gives more clarity to Klebanov’s hint at the local political support and unity with the “ideological approach” of the federal government as prerequisites for the successful implementation of the new governor’s plans.

Boos was able to see that such words had serious footing reflected in the reaction by the federal government in response to some of his initiatives in the area of external relations.

Some of them were embraced by Moscow.

For instance, after the meeting on 11 October 2005 with the delegation of the European Parliament, Boos put forward the idea to set up a club of the

⁴⁰ Novaya metla Putina (“Spiegel”, Germanija). – Op. cit.

⁴¹ Possorit li komanduyuschii Baltflotom Putina so Shrederom, 04 09 2005 // <http://www.regnum.ru/news/506957.html>

Kaliningrad Oblast's friends in Europe. This governor's idea was immediately presented by Stepanov at the conference of the German-Russian Forum in Berlin.⁴²

Visiting members of the European Parliament representing the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee were offered by Boos and members of the State Duma to sign a memorandum summing up the results of the visit. Representatives of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry helped draw up the memorandum but the EU delegates refused to sign it as the text was only available in Russian.⁴³ The memorandum, inter alia, stated that the delegation of the European Parliament approved of the changes in the Oblast and expected that neighbouring countries would pay more attention to facilitation of transit procedures for Russian passenger and cargo traffic as well as to possibilities to abolish visa regimes. Considering that around the end of September and beginning of October the federal government renewed its dissatisfaction with the terms governing cargo and military transit through Lithuania⁴⁴, there is no doubt that the issue of transit will remain a priority issue on the agenda of both the federal and local governments.

Boos expressed his apology to the delegation of the European Parliament over the misunderstanding with the memorandum. At the same time, he suggested that Moscow should avoid similar misunderstandings in the future and put forward a specific solution aimed at consolidating the external relation agendas of the federal and local government. On 19 October, the Government of the Oblast published a press release stating that Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov approved the decision of the governor to merge the International Relations Agency of the local government with the representative office of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kaliningrad.⁴⁵ As the press release stated, the merger was aimed at ensuring faster adoption of

⁴² Kaliningrad mozhnet stat obraztsom sotrudnichestva mezhdou RF i ES // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k65620.html>

⁴³ Deputati Evroparlamenta otkazalis podpisivat memorandum po stogam vizita v Kaliningrad // <http://regnum.ru/news/526500.html>

⁴⁴ Rusija nepatenkinta tranzito per Lietuvą sąlygomis, 27 September 2005 // <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=7577404>

⁴⁵ Boos obyedinil mezhdunarodnoye upravleniye s predstavitelstvom MID // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k66620.html>

decisions related to development of relations between the Oblast and foreign countries. However, the press release by the new leadership of the Kaliningrad Oblast was premature.

The Russian Foreign Ministry did not comment on the press release but it is said that Lavrov explained, in a rather mocking manner, to Boos the relevant boundaries of competence of federal and local authorities, especially in the field of foreign policy. It must be said though that hard feelings of the ambitious governor were soon soothed.

First of all, the governor, who was eager to develop cooperation with foreign countries, was notified by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that his concern about the potential inactivity of the German Consulate General was unfounded because the Russian side managed to grant the agrément to the new consul general of Germany in Kaliningrad in record time.

Indeed, as soon as it became clear that Boos would take the governor's office in September, Consul General of Germany in Kaliningrad Kornelius Zommer notified Berlin of his resignation after just one and a half years in office. When, after his long-lasting complaints that the Russian side was not able to provide the Consulate General of Germany with suitable premises, he was notified on 3 July, the last day of the Kaliningrad Anniversary, by Yastrezhensky of the decision to grant such premises, Zommer appealed to his old age. While everyone in the Oblast was preoccupied with the rumours that the resigning German diplomat could be replaced by Chairman of the German-Russian Parliamentary Group Gernot Erler, Bundestag parliamentarian and member of the Social Democratic party, Boos managed to share his concerns on several occasions over the stalling plans to give locals access to the Schengen area in the German Consulate General in Kaliningrad. However, the rumours proved wrong. Berlin appointed career diplomat Guido Herz as its consul general in the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation.⁴⁶ In the second half of October he was officially introduced by Moscow to the regional government.

⁴⁶ Genkonsul FRG v Kaliningrade ukhodit v otstavku, 22 09 2005 // <http://www.regnum.ru/news/5170958.html>; Deputat bundestaga FRG Gernot Erler ne budet genkonsulom v Kaliningrade // <http://www.regnum.ru/news/526673.html>; Noviy Genkonsul FRG predstavlen v oblasti Dume, 19 10 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k66508.html>

Finally, at the end of October Boos was directly complemented by the Kremlin's administration through Head of the Board for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries Modest Kolerov, who expressed his support for the governor's plans to increase the population of the Kaliningrad Oblast twofold.⁴⁷ The Kremlin official, just as Boos, emphasised the socioeconomic dimension of the idea: implementation of large investment projects and the programme for socioeconomic development of the Oblast not only required measures to tackle the deficit of skilled workforce currently standing at 15,000 people but attraction of new human resources. Therefore, Moscow was ready to help the leadership of Kaliningrad and would facilitate in every way possible the immigration of people of working age from continental Russia, Russian-speaking residents from the Baltic States and other countries.

It is worth noting that this initiative of Boos and the Kremlin support came under heavy criticism. For instance, advocates of the rational choice theory were asking in a mocking way: "What is a Russian living in Latvia more likely to choose – the Kaliningrad Oblast where his monthly salary can be \$300-\$500 or Ireland where he can earn €3,000?" Since the intention to double the population of the region was based on economics, it's hardly surprising that most critics ridiculed economic motives. Maybe this is why few people could have thought that the driving force behind this intention could be both economic and geopolitical considerations. Even the question regarding the choice of the Russian living in Latvia could have been answered by asking whether the official Russia had ever offered him any other alternative.

The formulation of such a question would imply that the motherland and the new leadership of the Kaliningrad Oblast are not only committed to unconventional solutions for modernisation of the region but are also keen on giving new life to the issue of Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States. Even though the Kremlin may still be inclined to maintain its influence in the Baltic States through the Russian-speaking population, it is likely that this factor is losing its importance in the light of rapprochement

⁴⁷ Nas zhdut v Rossiyi, 24 10 2005 // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k67241.html>

between Russia and the West. At the same time, it is believed that the Kaliningrad factor may become a “passed pawn” in a complex geopolitical game of chess between the EU and Russia. In the atmosphere of natural and open rapprochement this would undoubtedly strengthen the European sentiment of the local population, which could have adverse political consequences for Russia. Given the current situation, the Government is searching for possible ways to strengthen its population’s loyalty to Russia.

These considerations could be rather eloquently reaffirmed by the leitmotif from the meeting between the president of the Russian Federation and the new governor of the Kaliningrad Oblast which took place in the Kremlin on 7 November: “We often state that Kaliningrad is the Russian exclave in Europe,” said Putin. “It must be in line with this description in terms of development of infrastructure, standard of living and other indicators; however, the most important thing is that we need to resolve all issues regarding the relationship between this region and the remaining territory of our country.”⁴⁸ Putin expressed his belief in the ability of Boos to tackle all these problems.

⁴⁸ Vladimir Putin vstretilsia s gubernatorom Kaliningradskoy oblasti Georgijem Bossom // <http://www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/news.shtml#96783>; Prezident Rossiyi Vladimir Putin nadeetsia, chto noviy gubernator Kaliningrada G. Boss smozhet okonchatelno reshit vse voprosiy sviazey Kaliningrada s ostalnoi territoriyey Rossiyi // Interfaks. – 07 11 2005; Putin i Boss obsudili problemi Kaliningradskoi oblasti // <http://www.kaliningrad.ru/news/politics/k69978.html>.