Comparing Semi-Presidentialism in the ROC and the Russian Federation[1]

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Abstract

This paper takes an institutional approach to compare the constitutional reforms in the Republic of China and the Russian Federation. It first develops a triangular perspective to analyze various government forms, and comes up with the conclusion that semi-presidentialism is prone to conflict between the president and the parliament over control of government, and that a semi-presidential system with a dominant president may provide presidential power as strong as under a presidential system. It then depicts the development of the constitutional order in the Russian Federation and the ROC, demonstrating that there are striking similarities between the two cases: Leninist past, democratic transition, assertive parliament, direct election of the president, and substantial presidential powers. This brings about semi-presidentialism and its inherent conflict: the 1993 October putsch in Russia, and the parliamentary refusal to recognize the premier in Taiwan in 1996-97. Similar desire to keep firm presidential control over government prompted Boris Yeltsin and Lee Teng-hui to amend the constitution, and brought about a semi-presidential

[1] An earlier version of this paper has been presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 3-6, Boston.

system dominated by the president. However, similar institutional arrangements do not guarantee the ROC president can exercise the same power, for besides the Russian model there are the French Fifth Republic model and the Weimar Republic model that lead to different outcomes. Taiwan's constitutional future thus remains uncertain.

Institutional comparison between East Asia and Eastern Europe is rare in the field of comparative politics. The few works done are concentrated in comparing economic reforms[2], political decline[3], democratization[4], and consolidation of democracy in the two areas.[5] As the "third-wave democracies" in East Asia and Eastern Europe have gradually matured, it becomes meaningful to study how their nascent democratic institutions function, and to make comparisons.[6] This paper sets out to examine the analytical frameworks in the field, and come up with a triangular perspective

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[2] See for example, David Stark and Victor Nee, eds., Remaking the Economic Institutions of Socialism: China and Eastern Europe (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); and Yu-Shan Wu, Comparative Economic Transformations: Mainland China, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Taiwan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[3] See Andrew G. Walder, ed., The Waning of the Communist State: Economic Origins of Political Decline in China and Hungary (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Yanqi Tong, Transitions from State Socialism: Economic and Political Change in China and Hungary (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).

[4] For example, Wu Yu-Shan, Gongchan shijie de bianqian: sige gongdang zhengquan de bijiao (Communist world in flux: a comparison of four communist regimes) (Taipei: Tung-ta); Wu Yu-Shan, Yuanli shehui zhuyi: zhongguo dalu, sulian han bolan de jingji zhuanxing (Away from socialism: the economic transformation of mainland China, the Soviet Union and Poland) (Taipei: Cheng-chung, 1996); and Minxin Pei, From Reform to Revolution: the Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[5] See the articles in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien, eds., Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[6] The "third-wave democracies" are those nascent democratic systems that came into being during the "global democratic revolution" from the middle of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s. According to Samuel P. Huntington who coined the term, the third wave of democratization followed the first wave from the 1820s to 1926, and the second wave from the end of WWII to 1962. See Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., The Global Resurgence of Democracy (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

to analyze the constitutional order of the Republic of China (ROC) after the 1997 amendments, and the 1993 constitutional system of the Russian Federation. The two cases are chosen for they both belong to the category of "semi-presidentialism," a constitutional order that goes between the British-style "parliamentary" system and the American-style "presidentialism," and has been popular among the "third-wave democracies" when they chose their constitutional system. A comparative study of the Taiwanese and Russian cases may shed light on the interaction of political institution and the functioning of nascent democracies.

Study of Political Institutions

New institutionalism is an effective instrument for studying emergent democracies in formerly socialist countries and other "third-wave democracies."[7] To take a neo-institutional approach is to concentrate on three types of issues each of which constitutes a meaningful research agenda. The three issue areas are institutional choice, constitutional order, and institutional impact.[8] The sequence is important here. The three follow a logical order in that institutional choice brings about the political institutions in the first

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[7] It can be argued that the shift in general orientation in political science (from legalistic to behavioralist to neo-institutional) is mirrored in the study of comparative politics (from comparative governments to modernization theories to state-society research) and comparative communist/post-communist studies (from totalitarianism paradigm to various pluralist models to transition theories). For a discussion of the rise of new institutionalism in the study of political transition in formerly socialist countries, how it relates to comparative politics in general, and the trend toward neo-institutional research in social sciences, see Wu Yu-Shan, "Ouzhou hougongchan shehui de zhengzhi zhidu bianqian: yi eluosi lianbang weili" (The change of political institution in post-communist societies in Europe: the case of the Russian Federation), America Europe Quarterly, no. 4 (forthcoming); Howard J. Wiarda, "Comparative Politics Past and Present," in Howard J. Wiarda, ed., New Directions in Comparative Politics (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985).

[8] Arend Lijpart points out that the debate on the forms of democracy centers on their relative advantages and disadvantages, their origins and causes, and their exact definitions. Lijpart's three concerns are exactly what we mention here as "institutional impact," "institutional choice," and "constitutional order." See Arend Lijpart, "Introduction," in Arend Lijphart, ed., Parliamentary versus Presidential Government (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 2.

place. Constitutional order is the result of institutional choice and itself gives rise to institutional impact.[9] When choosing political institutions non-institutional factors may play an important role, such as the elite' power-maximizing strategies[10], cultural heritage, geographical location of the country[11], demonstration effect, etc. Institutional legacy from the Leninist past is also emphasized by some scholars.[12] Constitutional order is the core of institutional research. It refers to the arrangement of power at the central level of government. Institutional impact concentrates on the influence of political institution on society. Specifically, one may focus on the relationship between particular government types and consolidation of democracy[13], political stability[14], effectiveness of economic reform policies, protection of minority and human rights, representativeness of the political system, etc.[15] The three issue areas are intrinsically linked, but researchers may find it necessary to concentrate on one of them. Because a study of constitutional

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[9] Constitutional order is political institution itself. Also included in political institution is electoral law which may exert great influence on political process in nascent democracies but will not be included in our discussion here.

[10] A good example of the power-maximizing theory is Gerald M. Easter's discussion of the relation between the power position of the ruling elite at the time of transition and the political system chosen. Easter asserts that when the ruling elite is consolidated or reformed, a presidential system will be selected; but when it is dispersed, a parliamentary system will be the choice. See Gerald M. Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism: Post-Communist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS," World Politics, vol. 49, no. 2 (January 1997), pp. 187-190. Another good example is Barbara Geddes's observation that the greater the power of the communist elite during transition, the more likely a presidential system and a first-past-the-post Westminster electoral system will be chosen. See Barbara Geddes, "Institutional Choice in Post-Communist Eastern Europe," paper presented at the 1993 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 2-5.

[11] It is interesting to note that the more one moves north and west in the formerly Soviet-bloc, the more likely he is to see a nascent democracy choose a parliamentary system; and the more one moves south and east, the more likely he is to see a semi-presidential or presidential system chosen as the form of government. Thus parliament holds supreme power in Hungary and the Czech Republic, and in Estonia and Latvia. This is the western tier of the former Soviet bloc. In the central tier, such as Bulgaria and Russia, parliament and president compete for power, and their conflict may sometimes be violent. Finally the eastern tier of Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics all have highly centralized power in the hands of the president. The contrast among the three tiers is sharp. See Wu Yu-Shan, Kangheng huo hucong-liangan guanxi xinquan: cong qiansulian kan Taiwan yu dalu jian de guanxi (Balancing or bandwagoning--cross-Straits relations revisited: approaching the relations between Taiwan and mainland China in view of the former Soviet Union) (Taipei: Cheng-chung, 1997), ch.2.

order offers basic concepts and definitions of different forms of government, which then form the basis for discussion of institutional choice and institutional impact, the study of the institution itself is more important than studying either its origins or impact.[16] Actually any hypothesis concerning the origins of specific institutions (e.g., a demonstration theory explaining the adoption of parliamentary system in the Western tier of the formerly Soviet-bloc countries[17]) or their impact (such as asserting the lack of stability in post-socialist countries that have adopted a presidential system) cannot be formed without clear conceptualization of political institutions themselves (such as a tripartite classification of parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential systems). With this in mind, we will proceed to concentrate on the ROC's and the Russian Federation's constitutional systems as they operate and will touch on their origins and impact only when they are relevant to our study here.

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[12] Beverly Crawford and Arend Lijphart divide the institutional transition literature into two schools. The first school emphasizes the influence of the institutional legacies of the country's Communist past. The second school grants significant leeway to nascent democracies in designing their government structure. See Beverly Crawford and Arend Lijphart, "Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe," Comparative Political Studies, vol. 28, no. 2 (July 1995), pp. 171-199. A good example of the "legacies of the past" school is Patrick H. O'Neil's discussion of the liberal tendency in the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and its effect on the formation of the "reform circles." O'Neil's analysis shows institutional structure of the Hungarian communist regime determines the pattern of political transition and the resultant party system. See Patrick H. O'Neil, "Revolution from Within: Institutional Analysis, Transitions form Authoritarianism, and the Case of Hungary," World Politics, vol. 48, no. 4 (July 1996), pp. 579-603.

[13] Both Gerald Easter and Adam Przeworski consider presidential system more vulnerable to anti-democratic challenges than parliamentary system. See Gerald Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism," and Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). However, Donard Horowitz considers the British-style parliamentarism an "institutional villain," for it caused the failure of many nascent democracies. See Donald Horowitz, "Comparing Democratic Systems," Journal of Democracy, vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall 1990).

[14] Juan Linz, for example, asserts that presidential system may bring about conflict between congress and president, and the absence of obvious mechanisms to resolve it, thus work against stable democracy. See Juan Linz, "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?" in Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). This point is echoed by Chou Yang-Shan, "Zogntongzhi, yihuizhi, banzongtongzhi yu zhengzhi wending" (Presidentialism, parliamentarism, and political stability) Wenti yu yanjiu, vol. 36, no. 8 (August 1996), p. 52.

Triangular Perspective

Constitutional framework is designed to regulate state power. The original cause of constitutionalism in the West was nobles' and citizens' demand for a limited government so that the king could not abuse his power. In short, democracy stemmed from the conflict between the king the civil society for control of state power.

The essence of state power is the administrative power, which is always exercised by the head of government through an elaborate bureaucratic hierarchy. One can imagine administrative power not checked by an independent judiciary or a popularly elected legislature. In this case, there will still be a state, and the head of government (be he an ancient tyrant or a Joseph Stalin) can exercise unlimited power over the population, subject only to the technical efficiency of the bureaucracy.[18] Division of power is a modern phenomenon that embodies the rise of constitutionalism. It is not inherent in the definition of state. Even when division of power and checks and balances are securely installed, judicial decisions and laws passed by the legislature would still have to be implemented by the administrative organ of the state. When Max Weber talked about state as a monopoly of legitimate coercion, he was concentrating on the administrative power of the state. In short, the

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[15] In view of the multiple values involved here, to choose institution is actually to choose among conflicting values. See Bert A. Rockman, "Separation? Fusion? Or Hybridization? The Menu of Constitutional Choice," paper delivered at the Workshop on Institutional Choice, Taipei, August 23, 1997.

[16] See Arend Lijpart, "Introduction," p. 2.

[17] It is interesting to note that East European countries have a strong tendency to adopt Western European-style parliamentary system while formerly Soviet republics (the successor states) almost without exception adopted a presidential or semi-presidential system. For a demonstration effect explanation, see Wu Yu-Shan, "Ouzhou hougongchan shehui de zhengzhi zhidu bianqian."

[18] The modern totalitarian system is one in which the state's administrative power is not checked by any other state organs, nor by an effective constitution that sets the limit of state power vis-a-vis the society. See Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (New York: Praeger, 1963).

administrative power is the essence of state power, and the purpose of constitution is to regulate such a power.

The control over administrative power boils down to the control over government. Since government is always a bureaucratic hierarchy organized into various ministries or similar units, to control government is to control the ministers, or the cabinet, wherein resides the core of state power. The most important task of any constitution is to designate the state officials who have the power to control the cabinet, and to delineate the mechanisms of such control.

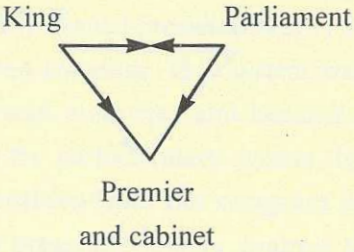
Since control over cabinet is the essence of state power, we should be able to define various forms of government in terms of how the cabinet is controlled. What follows is a typology of government. Type one is autocracy where the king exercises unlimited power over cabinet (the outer limit of state power may or may not be circumscribed by time-honored customary laws or privileges of the church). Type two is conflictual model in which the king and the parliament vie for control over the cabinet. Type three is parliamentary system with the king as titular state head, the result of parliamentary victory over the autocrat. Type four is a republic with a parliamentary system, and a titular president elected by the parliament. Type five is American style presidential system. Type six is semi-presidential system in which both the president and the parliament compete for control over cabinet.

In figure one we can see the king exercises absolute power over the cabinet without the interference from parliament. This is our starting point. The king may directly order the ministers, or he may appoint a prime minister and control the ministers through the premier. In any case, there is no question concerning the absolute power of the king, and the state power is held firmly in the hands of the king.

Type one: autocracy

In the West because the nobles and city residents suffered from the arbitrary power of the king under autocracy, they took opportunities of the king's weaknesses and forced him to agree on specific constraints on his power. The convening of a regular parliament that controls the government's budget is a most effective safeguard against the abuse of the royal power. With the parliament in place, it is only natural that conflict between the king and parliament will ensue concerning who controls the government. During this initial period of democratization, one finds numerous cases in which the king endeavored to preserve his prerogatives as the head of government, while the parliament wrestled with the monarch for control over the government, using its budgetary power as the ultimate weapon. In figure two we use the length of arrow to show the strength of the political actor from whom the arrow stems. The direction of the arrows shows the object of influence. We find here the cabinet under cross pressure from the monarch and the parliament, for it has to be responsible to both. A perfect example of this situation is the triangular relationship among Wilhelm I (1797-1888) of Prussia (from 1871 the Kaiser of the German Empire), his Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), and the Landtag.[19]

Type two: transition to democracy



After a turbulent period of transition, democracy was fully installed, and two types of parliamentary system emerged. For those countries that preserved monarchy, the king became a titular head, while the parliament rules supreme. The majority party in the parliament or a coalition forms the government which is solely responsible to the parliament. The king's role is reduced to a mediator among parliamentary parties when they fail to come up with a ruling coalition. From autocracy, transition to democracy, to parliamentary system with the monarch as titular head of state we observe the whole process of democratization.

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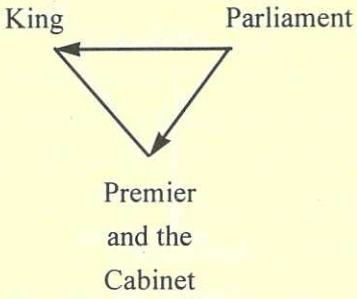
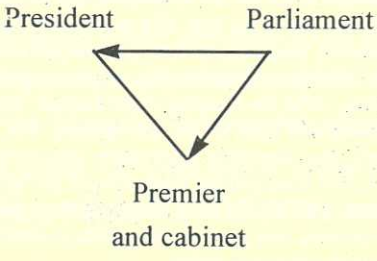
[19] King Frederick Wilhelm IV of Prussia issued a constitution in 1848 and set up a bicameral parliament. The upper house (Herrenhaus) was composed of nobles, while the lower house (Landtag) was elected popularly with the franchise limited to property-owners. The Landtag had the power to make law and vote on tax, but the ministers were responsible to the king. The king could also issue decrees as laws when the parliament was in recess. Obviously the 1848 constitution favored the king. In 1862 the Landtag dominated by the Progressive Party that represented the interest of liberals and capitalists from the Rhineland vetoed the government's military budget, to the dismay of the King and the Prussian Junkers. Wilhelm I even considered to abdicate. The King was able to turn the tide by appointing Otto von Bismarck as prime minister in September of that year, who advised the King to build up the military disregarding the Landtag's opposition. The successive military victories that ensued secured Bismarck's position. After the founding of the German Empire in 1871, the Prussian model became the constitutional order of the new country. The Reichstag had budgetary power but could not hold the Chancellor responsible, who only answered to the Kaiser. Bismarck through his skillful maneuvering made himself an "essential third" between the monarch and the parliament from 1871 to 1890. However, the death of Wilhelm I in 1888 and the 1890 parliamentary elections that gave the opposition an overwhelming majority dealt a fatal blow to Bismarck and forced him to resign.

Type three: parliamentary system with monarch as head of state



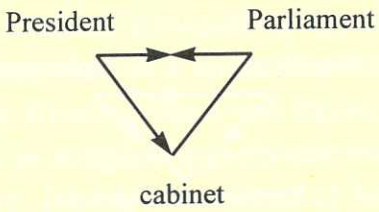
If for some reason monarchy could not be preserved, the parliamentary system would take another form. There the titular head of state (president) would be elected by the parliament but would have no real power. Like its monarchical counterpart, this republican parliamentary system rests the highest administrative power in the hands of the premier and the cabinet based on the balance of power among political parties in the parliament. The indirectly-elected president would have little ability to snatch power from the parliament because he himself was elected by the parliament and unlike the monarchs does not have job security. The president of this kind can only play the role of a mediator among parliamentary parties when they cannot form a government.

Type four: parliamentary system with president as titular head



The American presidential system is different from the European parliamentary system in that the highest administrative power rests in a popularly elected president who is then checked by an also popularly elected congress. This system was later adopted by many Latin American countries and became an alternative constitutional order to the parliamentary system. In the following figure we find the president and the congress hold a balance between them, but the president directly controls the cabinet and there is even no premier to go between the president and the ministers (or secretaries).[20] The congress basically respects the president's choice concerning the formation of the government. Neither the president, nor any of his ministers (or secretaries) is responsible to the congress. However, the congress retains the budgetary power and keeps a vigilant eye on the administration.

Type five: the presidential system



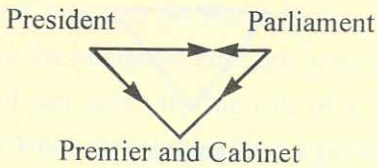
Now we can move to the semi-presidential system.[21] Originally not considered a category in its own, semi-

[20] Not all presidential systems are devoid of a premier. Take for example the South Korean case, where there is a premier whom the president can appoint and dismiss at will. Since the president is the head of government, and not he, nor the premier, nor the cabinet is responsible to the parliament, we consider the South Korean system a variant of the presidential system.

[21] Semi-presidential system is also called "presidential-parliamentary government system," or "dual-cephalic executive system." See Wu Tung-ye, "'Banzongtongzhi' zhengfu tixi de lilun yu shiji," Wenti yu yanjiu, vol. 35, no. 8 (August 1996), p. 38.

presidentialism was conceived as a third form of government by Maurice Duverger.[22] Previously one can find only two types of government in a republic: one is a presidential system in which the president holds supreme administrative power (type five); and the other one is parliamentary system in which the president is a titular head of state and the administrative power is in the hands of a prime minister who enjoys majority support from the parliament (type four). In a semi-presidential system the president is directly elected and holds substantial constitutional power. However, the government headed by the prime minister is responsible to the parliament.[23] In short, both president and parliament can exercise great influence on the premier and the cabinet, thus one cannot be sure who holds the ultimate administrative power. The relations among the president, the parliament, and the cabinet are shown in the following triangle.

Type 6: semi-presidentialism[24]



[22] "Semi-presidentialism" was coined by Maurice Duverger. In 1960 he talked about the constitutional order of the French Fifth Republic as containing elements of both parliamentary and presidential systems. In 1970 Duverger discussed semi-presidentialism for the first time, but limited its reference to France. In 1974 he included Weimar Germany, Austria, Iceland, Finland and Ireland as cases of semi-presidentialism. In 1978 he furthered included post-1976 Portugal. Thus toward the end of the 1970s, Duverger found seven semi-presidential systems around the world: France, Weimar Germany, Austria, Iceland, Finland, Ireland, and Portugal. However, with the democratization of the former Soviet-bloc countries, semi-presidentialism rapidly expanded. See Ernst Veser, "Semipresidentialism-Duverger's Concept: A New Political System Model," delivered at the Constitutional Choice Round Table, May 31, 1997, Taipei.

[23] Polularly-elected president, substantial presidential powers, and a cabinet responsible to parliament are the three main features of Duverger's semi-presidentialism. See Maurice Duverger, "A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government,"

Semi-presidentialism in its nature invites conflict between the president and the parliament, from the appointment of the prime minister to the passage and implementation of law. [25] The inherent conflict in a semi-presidential system revealed itself in the political turbulence of the Weimar Republic, the first historical case of semi-presidentialism. In both 1925 and 1932 Marshall Paul von Hindenburg was twice elected president of the Weimar Republic. Hindenburg was from the Junker landowning class of old Prussia, a war hero in WWI. His political inclination necessarily conflicted with both the Communists on the extreme left and Adolf Hitler's Nazis on the extreme right, the two political forces that dominated the Reichstag in the 1930s. Since the prime minister is held responsible to both the president and the parliament, he would have to cast his political allegiance to one of them and bear pressure from the other side. In March 1930 the Social Democrat Chancellor Hermann Muller was forced to resign under pressure from the Reichstag, and Hindenburg decided to appoint his favorate Heinrich Bruning as prime minister, disregarding opposition from the parliament. From that time on a series of president-appointed cabinets headed by Bruning, Franz von Papen, and Kurt von Schleicher survived an antagonistic parliament with Hindenburg's emergency powers. During this period of intense conflict Hindenburg dissolved the Reichstag three times (September 1930, July 1932, and November 1932), only to see the rapid expansion of the political influence of Hitler whom he detested. Finally in January 1933 Hindenburg was forced to appoint Hitler as

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[24] Actually there are three sub-types of semi-presidentialism: one with a strong president, one with a strong parliament, and one characterized by conflict between the two, as will be shown in the following discussion. All three sub-systems share the same figure presented here as for all of them the two arrows always meet between the two vertexes on the three sides of the triangle. The author wishes to thank an anonymous reader for bringing up this point.

[25] Horst Bahro, "Virtues and Vices of Semi-Presidential Government," delivered at the Constitutional Choice Round Table, May 31, 1997, Taipei.

chancellor.[26]

Structurally speaking, semi-presidentialism (type six) and transition toward democracy (type two) are remarkably similar.[27] On the one hand the head of state (a directly-elected president under semi-presidentialism and a king under democratic transition) does not need the parliament for his power (the "semi-president" is not elected by the parliament, and the king succeeds on the throne) but can dissolve the parliament (with or without conditions). On the other hand, the parliament and the president are almost inevitably locked in a rivalry over appointment and control of government. The history of Prussia and Germany from 1850 to 1917 and the political development of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1933 vividly demonstrate the similarities between these two types of government. Obviously imperial Germany was different from the Weimar Republic, for the former was in essence an autocracy while the latter was a democracy. However our triangular perspective does lead us to appreciate the structural similarities between the two cases, despite ostensible differences. In view of the similar political turbulence stemming from the conflict between the head of state and the parliament over composition of government in the two cases, one has to admit that structurally similar situations often lead to similar outcomes.

So far we have designated administrative power as the core of

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[26] What followed was a Hitler-manipulated parliamentary election in March 1933. The Nazis won 44 percent of popular vote and Hitler was again asked to form the government. Soon the Nazi-dominated Reichstag passed an enabling law to give the government dictatorial power. On August 2, 1934, Hindenburg died, one day after the parliament combined the positions of the premier and the president and bestowed that super power to Hitler. This measure was confirmed in a referendum held on August 19.

[27] This structural similarity is pointed out by Jean Blondel who refers to our type-two government as "the king and prime minister system" and considers that a form in a broader "dual leadership" category. See Jean Blondel, "Dual Leadership in the Contemporary World," in Arend Lijphart, ed., Parliamentary versus Presidential Government (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 163.

state power, and defined various government forms in terms of how the administrative power is controlled. More specifically, we consider the cabinet the main instrument for wielding administrative power, and treat control over cabinet the defining feature of any political system. This being the case, we can define autocracy, transition toward democracy, parliamentary system with monarch as titular head of state, parliamentary system with indirectly elected president as titular head of state, presidential system, and semi-presidential system in terms of the power relations among the head of state (monarch or president), the parliament, and the cabinet (with or without a premier).

By taking this triangular perspective, we find a president's power does not only reside in his control over the cabinet. His relation with the parliament is also of great importance. This being the case, the traditional understanding that semi-presidentialism is a system with a president whose power is less than his counterpart under the presidential system, but greater than an indirectly elected president under the parliamentary system is then highly questionable, for the traditional wisdom does not take into consideration how the president deals with the parliament. It is possible that a "semi-president" with limited control over the cabinet may nevertheless exercise great power over the parliament, thus making his overall power equal to or even greater than a president under a presidential system. If this is the case, the term "semi-presidentialism" is then highly misleading, for it conjures up in a reader's mind a president who is less powerful than an American-style president, while in fact this may not be the case. Since the most important game in town is control over government, and the main players are the president and the parliament, any leverage the president has with the parliament can easily translate into his control over the government, for the parliament would

certainly understand that, for example, when push comes to shove the president may dissolve it, and thus may respect the president's decisions concerning the composition of government.

In order to demonstrate the above point, in the following table we first assess the president's (or the monarch's) control over cabinet, and then assess his power vis-a-vis the parliament. We assign different points to different levels of control and power: 3 for high, 2 for medium, and 1 for low. We then add the two scores and come up with the head of state's overall control over government. Next we do the same kind of assessment and calculation for the parliament, and come up with an overall grade for its control over government. The results are as shown below.

Table 1 Control over Government under Different Systems

	Parliamentary system(type 3 and 4)	Semi-Presidential system(type 6)*	Presidential system(type 5)
control over cabinet by the head of state	1	2	3
Head of state's power vis-à-vis parliament	1	3	2
Head of state's overall control over government	2	5	5
Parliamentary control over cabinet	3	2	1
Parliamentary power vis-à-vis head of state	3	1	2
Overall parliamentary control over government	6	3	3

Low=1; medium=2; high=3

*structurally similar to type 2

The figures in the first row of table one substantiate the traditional wisdom that as far as direct control over cabinet is concerned, a president from the presidential system has greater power than a "semi-president," who in turn is more powerful than a titular head in a parliamentary system. However, once we take into consideration the power the head of state holds vis-à-vis the parliament, then the semi-presidential system manages to endow its head of state an overall score of 5, equal to the presidential system. This shows how a "semi-president" can be as powerful as a president under the presidential system. The other side of the coin is that as far as direct control over cabinet is concerned, parliament is strongest in a parliamentary system (3 points), and weakest in a presidential system (1 point), while semi-presidentialism gives it a medium score (2 points). However, when the parliament's power vis-a-vis the president is also taken into consideration, then parliament under semi-presidentialism can be as weak as under a presidential system (both got an overall score of 3 points). It is true that such assessment and calculation are not precise, but they do shed light on our point that if the whole set of triangular relations are taken into consideration, then one cannot safely assume that semi-presidentialism brings about a president whose power lies between the parliamentary system and the presidential system. Specifically, there might be cases of semi-presidentialism in which the constraints on the semi-president's power over cabinet are offset by his leverages vis-a-vis the parliament, so that his overall control over cabinet is as tight as under presidentialism. Whether it is true in any specific case has to be determined through empirical investigation.

Based on the above discussion one can imagine three types of semi-presidentialism. One is a president-dominated system, or imperial presidentialism, in which the "semi-president" is at least as

powerful as an American-style president and holds the premier responsible to him.[28] The second one is a parliament-dominated system in which the "semi-president" yields to the wishes of the parliament and the prime minister who commands the support of the parliament. The third type is a conflict model in which both the "semi-president" and the parliament want to exercise control over cabinet, which results in a series of confrontations that tend to paralyze the government.[29]

One caveat is in order here. The actual performance of a constitutional system is not entirely determined by the institutional arrangements, but may be influenced by the party system, social cleavage, personalities of political leaders, political culture, and many other factors, even though the institution does provide a framework with typical incentives that induce certain political behaviors. Thus a similar president-dominated semi-presidential system may lead to actual domination by the president, willing abstention by the president from exercising his constitutional power, or rampant conflict between the president and parliament.

In the following discussion, we will examine the semi-presidential system of the Russian Federation (RF) and the Republic of China (ROC). In both cases, the president is popularly elected and has substantial constitutional powers. And yet a government

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[28] This type and the third type are similar to what Matthew S. Shugart and John M. Carey would call a "president-parliamentary system," in which there is shared-or confused-responsibility over cabinets between president and assembly. The second type is what they call the "premier-presidentialism," in which the president has certain significant powers, but the cabinet is responsible only to the assembly. See Matthew Soberg Shugart ad John M. Carey, Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 15.

[29] For a more detailed typology of the "sub-types" of semi-presidentialism, and the social as well as institutional conditions that lead to different sub-types of semi-presidentialism, see Lin Chi-wen, "Banzongtongzhi xia de sanjiao junheng" (The triangular balance under semi-presidentialism), paper delivered at Conference on Political Institutions: Theory and Reality, Academia Sinica, Taipei, June 25-26, 1998.

headed by a prime minister is responsible to the parliament. Following Duverger's definition, both Russia and Taiwan have a semi-presidential system.[30] However, since the Russian system was set up in 1993 and has existed for four and half years, while the ROC's semi-presidential system was created with the 1997 constitutional amendments, and has had much less time to evolve, in the following section we will first discuss the Russian case, and then make comparison with the ROC's case.

Origins of Semi-presidentialism in Russia and the ROC

In both the Soviet Union and the ROC there was a Leninist party-state structure prior to democratization of the late 1980s. In that structure one finds a dual-leadership with the party general secretary/chairman taking supreme power, and the prime minister looking after day-to-day operation of the government. Dual-leadership in the party-state was transformed into semi-presidentialism through democratization. The political reform in the Soviet Union created an assertive parliament on both the union and republic levels. In the ROC similar reform brought about the first full election of the Legislative Yuan. Democratization also prompted politicians to champion for direct election of the president so as to enhance the latter's claim to more power. Through these measures semi-presidentialism gradually took shape. In the following discussion, we shall analyze the origins of semi-presidentialism in Russia and the ROC.

After WWII, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was composed of fifteen union republics, the largest one of which was the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected general secretary of the

[30] See Maurice Duverger, "A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government."

Communist Party of the Soviet Union and launched an unprecedented reform movement. Gorbachev's original intention was to restructure the Soviet economy to make it more competitive (perestroika). However, the resistance from the central bureaucracy and the conservatives in the party forced him to adopt political reform (glasnost' and demokratizatsia) as a way of mobilizing social support.[31] Gorbachev led the moribund Supreme Soviet to pass important reform laws that stipulated multi-candidate elections for the new Congress of People's Deputies[32], installed an indirectly-elected president of the union, and abolished the Communist Party's political monopoly. In March 1989 the Congress of People's Deputies was elected through competitive (though still not multi-party) elections.[33] One year later, Gorbachev was elected president.[34]

In the past, the general secretary of the communist party was the supreme leader in the Soviet Union. He ruled the country with his colleagues in the Politburo. The Supreme Soviet was merely a rubber stamp. The chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the state president were titular heads of state. On the other hand, the Soviet government was headed by the chairman of the Council of Ministers (premier). This was an important position and the premier was usually the second most powerful person in the party-state hierarchy. Although the constitution required the premier and

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[31] For Gorbachev's political reform, see Yu-Shan Wu, "The Collapse of the Soviet Union: A Crises and Sequences Approach," Political Science Review, no. 4 (December 1992), pp. 179-224.

[32] The new Congress of People's Deputies improved on the old Supreme Soviet in longer sessions, fewer members, more competent committees, and a less dictatorial presidium.

[33] There were 2,250 deputies in total. Among them one third were elected from districts, one third from nationalities regions, and the remaining third from social groups. The deputies then elected 542 members among them to form the Supreme Soviet. When the Congress was not in session, the Supreme Soviet performed its functions.

[34] Gorbachev was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet (now the permanent body of the Congress of People's Deputies) in March1989 when the new parliament was in its first session. He then got himself elected president by the parliament after that office had been created in 1990.

the Council of Ministers to be responsible to the Supreme Soviet and its Presidium, the actual line of surveillance went from the Politburo to the premier[35] After Gorbachev's political reform, both the parliament and the president were empowered. However, there was no change of the role of the premier. As a result, in the last two years of Gorbachev's rule, one finds a dual-leadership system, in which the president-cum-general secretary was certainly the dominant figure, but the government in its day-to-day work was directly led by the premier (Nikolai Ryzhkov and Valentin Pavlov). This was still not a semi-presidential system in Duverger's sense, for the president was not popularly elected, and the cabinet (the Council of Ministers) was not really responsible to the parliament (the Congress of People's Deputies). However, one does see semi-presidentialism in the forming.

When the Soviet system was transformed by Gorbachev, there were corresponding changes of the political systems on the republic level. Thus the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR was elected in March 1990, one year after the union Congress was elected. Following the union example, the 1,068 People's Deputies then elected a Supreme Soviet and chose Boris Yeltsin as its chairman. Ivan Silaev was elected chairman of the Russian Council of Ministers. At this time, Yeltsin only held limited power, even though he was the national leader of Russia. His power was circumscribed by the fact that Russia remained a union republic of the Soviet Union, albeit the largest and most powerful one, that Silaev was directly in charge of the Russian government, and the Communist Party still exerted great influence on the union and republic levels.

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[35] Thus in communist systems, one finds two persons-the party's general secretary and the government premier-leading the administration. This is certainly not a semi-presidential system, but it satisfies Jean Blondel's definition of "dual leadership." See Jean Blondel, "Dual Leadership in the Contemporary World,"

Up to this stage, both Gorbachev and Yeltsin were elected by the legislature. As they competed for legitimacy and prestige, Yeltsin took the bold step of pushing for a directly-elected president of Russia. That proposal was approved in a referendum held in March 1991. The Russian constitution was amended accordingly in May, and Yeltsin and his running mate Aleksandr Rutskoi were elected Russia's president and vice president on June 12. Direct presidential elections boosted Yeltsin's prestige. However, he was facing a very difficult situation posed by Russia's nascent semi-presidentialism. One the one hand the Russian parliament was eager to exercise its power as a popularly elected legislature. On the other hand the president had acquired substantial powers and would like to directly command the administration. A conflict between the president and the parliament over control of premier and cabinet seemed in the offing. The breakdown of the Communist Party at this point means not even the actions of the Communists were coordinated.

It turned out that the putsch of August 19 was a blessing for Yeltsin. His brave actions to defend democracy made him a national hero, while the indecisiveness of Gorbachev foretold his political demise. Yeltsin was able to use the national crisis in his favor, arguing for extraordinary powers to save Russia. The parliament complied, granting him law-making power and allowing him to take the premier's position himself. The inherent conflict in a semi-presidential system between the president and the parliament was defused through unilateral concessions by the parliament.[36] The rapid unfolding of events caught everyone by surprise. After the December 1 referendum by the Ukrainians that voted yes on

[36] For a discussion of Russia's political development at this stage, see Hsu Hsiang-t'ao, "Eluosi de zhengzhi fazhan: 1990-1996" (The political development of the Russian Federation: 1990-1996) Wenti yu yanjiu, vol. 35, no. 12 (December 1996), p. 33.

independence, Yeltsin decided to bury the Soviet Union. He collaborated with the Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and the Byelorussian Supreme Soviet Chairman Stanislau Shushkevich and signed the Belovezha Accords on December 8 that spelled the end of the Soviet Union.

Now we can move to the Republic of China. The origins of semi-presidentialism can be found in the 1947 constitution. Even though it is claimed that the ROC constitution embodies the ideas of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the country, on nationalism, democracy, and national well-being, and his blueprint for government structure (the five-power doctrine, or wuquan xianfa), in reality the 1947 constitution was a compromise between the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) and the opposition parties. Since the very beginning the ROC's constitutional order has been subject to different interpretations. Some characterize it as a parliamentary system, because the administration (the Executive Yuan) is responsible to the parliament (the Legislative Yuan), and the president cannot promulgate laws and issue mandates without the counter-signature of the premier (the president of the Executive Yuan) or of the premier and the ministers and commission chairmen concerned. Others claim that because the Executive Yuan has the right to ask the Legislative Yuan to reconsider its position on important policies, and the Legislative Yuan can uphold its original position by a two-thirds majority, thus forcing the premier to accept the parliament's stance or to resign, the interaction mode between the administration and the parliament shows the Executive Yuan is independent of the Legislative Yuan, which violates the cardinal principle of parliamentarism. Another deviation from the norms of parliamentarism is article 75 which stipulates that no member of the Legislative Yuan shall concurrently hold a government post. This shows that the constitution framers were aiming at creating a system

of separation, and not of fusion.[37] In this way, the 1947 ROC constitution has more features of presidentialism. There are still others who claim that the constitution reflects the spirit of the "five-power doctrine" of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and cannot be readily subsumed under either parliamentarism or presidentialism. This shows that there is ambiguity as to whether the administration is really responsible to the parliament, and one can easily expect that the president and the parliament may compete for control over the cabinet.

Whatever the features of the 1947 constitution, they did not translate into political reality, for the civil war on mainland China forced the government to flee to Taiwan and ushered in a protracted period of mobilization for suppressing Communist rebellion. The Temporary Provisions for the mobilization period were aimed at setting up a strong presidency to lead the nation at a time of national crisis, and the parliament was "frozen" in its 1947 shape for no elections could be held in areas lost to the Communists.[38] This means the legislature was incapacitated. Of even greater importance is the fact that the KMT in Taiwan led by Chiang Kai-shek gained a position that it had not enjoyed on the Chinese mainland: it virtually monopolized political power and successfully disciplined its members in a way only a Leninist party could do. With Chiang Kai-shek (and from 1975 his son Ching-kuo) acting as the President-

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[37] Bert A. Rockman, "Separation? Fusion? Or Hybridization? The Menu of Constitutional Choice."

[38] The "Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion" stipulate that the president can take emergency measures, set up mobilizational agencies, and restructure central government. The president can serve unlimited terms. He can also promulgate rules governing the election of additional members to the National Assembly, the Legislative Yuan, and the Control Yuan.

[39] For a discussion of the KMT's transformation when it moved to Taiwan, see Yu-Shan Wu, Comparative Economic Transformations: Mainland China, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Taiwan, pp. 139-144; and Hung-mao Tien, The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1989).

cum-KMT Chairman, the ROC constitutional system was turned into a quasi-Leninist party-state structure.[39]

From 1949 when the ROC government was reinstalled in Taiwan to 1988 when President Chiang Ching-kuo passed away, the inherent conflict between the president and the parliament in the 1947 constitutional order was by and large averted through the internal coherence of the KMT party and the unquestionable line of command stemming from the two Chiangs. The president of the Executive Yuan (the premier) became the number two leader in the party-state's hierarchy. There was dual leadership, with the president assuming the dominant role, while the premier taking care of day-to-day operation of the government.[40] This situation quite resembled the Soviet system, in which the general secretary of the Communist Party was the supreme leader, and the chairman of the Council of Ministers acting as the general secretary's chief lieutenant.

After Chiang Ching-kuo passed away, there was internal power struggle in the KMT. Vice President Lee Teng-hui became president following constitutional provisions. There was consensus in the party on Lee's succession and transition of power in that respect went smoothly. However, whether Lee should also assume the role of the KMT's chairman became a major political issue. Without assuming party chairmanship, Lee had to share power with Premier Yu Kuo-hwa, the KMT's Secretary General Lee Huan, and Chief of the General Staff Hau Pei-tsun. Thanks to the help of the reform wing in the party and in the parliament (who also had great influence in mass media), within two week's of Chiang Ching-kuo's

[40] There was a short period of time (1975-1978) when President Chiang Kai-shek died, while his son Ching-kuo was the premier and yet held supreme power. The then President Yan Chia-kan was reduced to a titular head of state. That example shows the most important position to hold is chairman of the party, not president of the nation. However from that time on, there has never been any case in which the positions of party chairman and president of the ROC were not held by the same person.

death Lee was elected acting chairman of the KMT.[41] From that time on, Lee applied a strategy similar to that of Gorbachev's in the Soviet Union which called for political reform to mobilize social support against his conservative opponents in the party.[42] Lee was successful in creating mounting pressure, both inside and outside the party, on the incumbent premier who was always his major political rival and forced the premier to resign.[43] He then awarded premiership to his ally at the time. New schism inevitably developed between Lee and the new premier, and the same scenario repeated itself. From May 1989 to February 1993 Lee managed to force resignation of three premiers: Yu Kuo-hwa (May 1989), Lee Huan (May 1990), and Hau Pei-tsun (February 1993), exactly the three KMT heavyweights who competed with Lee for party leadership in 1988.

Lee's success consolidated his control over the KMT. However, he achieved victory only with democratization of the whole political system. Thus there were elections of the Legislative Yuan in 1992 and 1995, of the National Assembly in 1991 and 1996, and direct presidential elections in 1996. In all the elections on the central level, the ruling KMT scored victories, grasping majorities in the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly, and reelecting Lee Teng-hui to presidency.[44] However, the KMT's margins of victory continued to shrink, while the major opposition

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[41] Lee was formally elected the KMT's chairman at the 13th Party Congress held in July 1988.

[42] See Yu-Shan Wu, "Nationalism, Democratization, and Economic Reform," paper presented at the 1993 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 2-5.

[43] For the case of Yu's fall, see Yu-Shan Wu, "Marketization of Politics: the Taiwan Experience," Asian Survey, vol. 24, no. 4 (April 1989), pp. 397-398;

[44] The DPP's failure to secure electoral victory on the central level has been attributed to the fact that Taiwan is a "crisis society," and that the DPP has been upholding a dogmatic stance on the issue of Taiwan independence. See Yu-Shan Wu, "Moving towards the Center: Taiwan's Public Opinion and Mainland Policy in Shift," paper presented at the Workshop on Cross-Strait Relations, the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, August 21-22.

party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), gained an increasingly larger share of vote (it captured 33 percent of popular vote in the 1995 parliamentary elections). It is possible that the DPP will become the ruling party, or at least join a ruling coalition in the very near future. The New Party that split from the KMT in 1993 also captured 13 percent of popular vote in 1995, and made itself a powerful competitor. With the rise of the opposition, the Legislative Yuan has grown more and more assertive. Democratization also brought about the end of the period of mobilization and the abolition of the Temporary Provisions in May 1991 that had been providing extraordinary powers to the president. One might expect the rise of an assertive Legislative Yuan and the removal of the president's extraordinary powers (in essence the revival of the 1947 constitutional order) would tilt the power balance towards the parliament. However, this did not happen.

From 1993 to 1996, Lee Teng-hui consolidated his power in the KMT. He forced the resignation of Premier Hau Pei-tsun in February 1993 and replaced him with Lien Chan. The New KMT Alliance that was closely associated with Hau in the parliament split from the KMT in August and formed the New Party. The president now faced no serious challenge from within the party. The challenge to him from outside the party, however, was mounting. The December 1992 Legislative Yuan elections brought about an assertive parliament, and the DPP found much less reason to continue supporting Lee in his fight against the KMT's conservatives as the latter had been more or less subdued.[45] Thus one finds Lee's institutional power as president waning (removal of extraordinary powers, surge of parliament), while his power in the KMT rising. This is the natural outcome of his strategy to defeat the

[45] See Kuo Cheng-liang, Minjindang zhuanxing zhi tong (The DPP's agony of transition) (Taipei: Commonwealth, 1998), p. 8.

conservatives in the party by implementing democratic reform. As long as the KMT maintains majority in the parliament, and keeps party discipline, Lee's role as the KMT's chairman guarantees his supreme power in the nation. This political situation also keeps the inherent tension in the 1947 constitutional order between the president and the parliament in check.

Lee however was not satisfied with the status quo. He wanted to push for direct presidential elections. This move resembled Yeltsin's strategy in 1991 when he was competing with Gorbachev for popular mandate. Direct election would further strengthen Lee's position and make it possible for him to ask for substantial powers for the president, thus enhancing his institutional power. However, direct election of the president was contrary to the KMT's original position on this matter. In order to preserve legitimacy of the ROC's claim to represent whole China, the KMT campaigned hard for an American-style electoral college to choose the president (delegated direct election, or weirenzhixuan). This formula actually provided direct election of the president, but without creating the impression that the president was elected only by the people of Taiwan (he or she would still be elected by a National Assembly presumably representing the whole of China).

The KMT won a landslide victory in the National Assembly elections of 1991 with weirenzhixuan against a DPP committed to Taiwan independence and direct presidential elections (69.1 percent to 23.2 percent). Lee however directed the KMT to make a turnabout on this issue once the National Assembly was firmly in the KMT's control. Through the adoption of the Additional Articles 11 through 18 in May 1992 and their revision in July 1994, the National Assembly determined to abandon its original power to elect the president and vice president and choose direct elections for the next president.[46] In March 1996 the ROC's first direct

presidential elections took place amid missile scare and international attention.[47] Lee and Lien Chan fully took advantage of this situation and won a landslide victory. Neither Lin Yang-kang (teamed up with the former premier Hau Pei-tsun) nor Chen Li-an was able to encroach on Lee's KMT support, and the DPP's Peng Ming-min was trapped in his dogmatic position on Taiwan independence (see table 2). As it turned out, the 1996 presidential elections strengthened Lee's institutional position, for now he was directly elected. They also made the ROC system a perfect case of semi-presidentialism with a popularly elected president, substantial presidential powers, and an administration responsible to a popularly-elected parliament.

Table 2 The ROC Presidential Elections of 1996

Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage
1. Lee Teng-hui and Lien Chan	5,813,699	54.00
2. Peng Ming-min and Hsieh Ch'ang-ting	2,274,586	21.13
3. Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun	1,603,790	14.90
4. Chen Li-an and Wang Ch'ing-feng	1,074,044	9.98

Sources: 1997 Shijienianjian (Taipei: CNA, 1996), p. 88.

[46] The Republic of China 1998 Yearbook (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1998), p. 79.

[47] For the impact on the PRC's military exercises on Taiwan's presidential elections, see Christopher H. Achen, Yung-Ming Hsu and Su-Feng Cheng, "The Impact of the Straits Crisis on Taiwan's Presidential Election: China's Coercion Backfires," paper delivered at the 1997 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., August 28-31, 1997.

Conflict between President and Parliament: Russia (1992-1993)

In both the Russian Federation and the Republic of China, one finds democratization brought about a parliament in which the opposition played an important role, and a directly elected president holding substantial powers. In Russia the Congress of People's Deputies was competitively elected in March 1990 and a powerful president was popularly elected in June 1991. In the ROC the Legislative Yuan was elected in December 1992 for the first time since 1947, and the nation held its first direct presidential elections in March 1996, electing into office a powerful president.[48] Those elections and the constitutional stipulations on the administration's responsibilities toward the parliament made the two countries perfect cases of Duverger's semi-presidentialism. As such the two systems were also subject to the tension inherent in a semi-presidential regime. In Russia in 1992-1993, and in Taiwan in 1996-1997, conflict arose between the president and the parliament to the extent that the Russian president ordered tanks to shell the Congress of People's Deputies, and the ROC Legislative Yuan refused to recognize the premier appointed by the president. Both cases led to a major change of the constitution. The Russian referendum approved the new 1993 constitution that expanded the presidential powers, and the National Assembly in Taiwan passed critical constitutional amendments that dramatically changed the arrangement of power to the interest of the president. A new era was then ushered in. In the following we shall deal with the two cases one by one.

With the extraordinary powers in his hands, President Yeltsin

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[48] There were supplementary elections of additional members to the Legislative Yuan, starting in 1969. However they were outnumbered by the "senior members" who were elected on the Chinese mainland in 1947-1948. See Hung-mao Tien, The Great Transition, ch. 6.

directly led the Russian government to embark on an unprecedented economic reform, starting on January 2, 1992. He followed the advise of reform economists (such as Yegor Gaidar) and Western scholars (such as Jeffrey Sachs) to launch a "shock therapy,"[49] designed to stabilize the Russian economy, set free prices, privatize state enterprises, liberalize foreign trade, and restructure the financial sector.[50] At this initial stage of reform, it was possible for Yeltsin to dissolve the Congress of People's Deputies that after all had been elected in the Soviet era and replace it with a more reform-minded parliament.[51] However, the Congress had just backed Yeltsin in his fight against conservative Communists and Gorbachev, and shown great enthusiasm for economic reform, so Yeltsin decided to concentrate on implementing the "shock therapy," and contended himself with one year of extraordinary powers.[52] The Soviet system as modified in 1989-1991 was retained.

It turned out that the "shock therapy" delivered more shock than therapy. From January 2, 1992, the Russian government removed most of price controls that had been in place for decades. In order to contain the ensuing price rises draconian austerity measures were taken. However, since many state enterprises held monopoly positions on the market, they simply cut production and raised prices (which was now within their power) to make a fortune. As a result, consumer prices rose by more than four times, while

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[49] For "shock therapy," see Ben Slay, "Rapid versus Gradual Economic Transition," RFE/RL Research Paper, vol. 3, no. 31 (8 April 1994), pp. 31-42.

[50] For a discussion of the Russian economic reform, see Wu Yu-Shan, Eluosi jingji gaige zhi yanjiu: 1992-1994 (A study on the economic reform in the Russian Federation: 1992-1994), National Science Council Research Project, 86-2414-H-002-023, 1996.

[51] Michael McFaul, "Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Russia," paper delivered at the international conference on Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Trends and Challenges, August 27-30, 1995, Taipei.

[52] Silvana Malle, "Privatization in Russia: Options and Transaction Costs," in Robert W. Campbell, ed., The Post Communist Economic Transformation (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1994).

GDP downed by 16 percent in the first quarter of 1992. Ordinary people suffered tremendously from the economic reform, and People's Deputies started to severely criticize the government. Led by the Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, the parliament openly opposed price reform and privatization. Since many of the parliamentarians were managers of state enterprises and state farms, and a significant portion of them were Communists, the conflict between the president and the parliament was aggravated, combining differences in policy preference and clash of basic political and economic philosophies.

In April 1992 Khasbulatov and his colleagues demanded the resignation of the government, while Yeltsin found firm backing from the West and international lending institutions. A compromise was reached in June in which Vladimir Shumeiko, Georgii Khizha and Viktor Chernomyrdin were appointed deputy prime ministers to dilute the authority of the chief reformer Gaidar. Grazhdanskii soyuz (Civic Union), a powerful faction in the parliament, was instrumental in bringing about this change.[53] The pressure from the Congress did not abate, however. In July, Director of the Central Bank Georgii Matiukhin was replaced by Viktor Gerashchenko, the parliament's choice.[54] Gerashchenko immediately increased loans to state enterprises, a move severely undermined Gaidar's stabilization program. For his part, Yeltsin appointed Gaidar premier in July, but then the Congress retaliated by not confirming Gaidar's appointment on December 9, when Yeltsin's extraordinary powers expired. Yeltsin then blasted the Congress as a "Communist

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[53] "Civic Union" represented the interest of state enterprise managers. It was headed by Arkadii Vol'skii and Nikolai Travkin.

[54] The Economist, 25 September 1993, p. 60.

[55] Yeltsin's decision to declare emergency rule was cancelled after his talk with the Chief of the Constitutional Court Valerii Zor'kin. See Richard Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 385.

parliament." A showdown seemed imminent.

A last-minute compromise was reached between Yeltsin and the Congress.[55] Chernomyrdin would now be nominated prime minister, and the Congress was willing to extend its consent.[56] Once an energy minister, and then head of Gazprom, Russia's natural gas monopoly, Chernomyrdin was considered representing the interest of the huge state sector and was favored by a broad spectrum of deputies. His nomination was confirmed on December 14 with a comfortable margin (721 for, 172 against). The new prime minister was clearly a compromise between the president and the parliament. His appointment showed neither Yeltsin nor the Congress could unilaterally decide the head of government.

The inability to appoint his favorite to head the Russian government prompted Yeltsin to seek popular support for amending the constitution. Based on the four official drafts issued in August 1990, October 1991, March 1992, and November 1992, Yeltsin in April 1993 announced a new draft that greatly expanded the president's power.[57] The need to amend the constitution became more acute as Yeltsin and the Congress confronted each other again over the issue of referendum. At the Seventh Congress of the People's Deputies in December 1992, Yeltsin managed to get parliamentary approval to hold a referendum in next April. The parliament then backed out on March 20, 1993, and threatened to impeach Yeltsin. An emergency rule was then declared by the

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[56] After the Congress of People's Deputies vetoed Gaidar's appointment, Yeltsin let the 16 factions in the parliament to nominate 18 candidates, among whom Yeltsin picked five as final candidates. The Congress then voted on them. As it turned out, the top three candidates were: Yurii Skokov, 637 for, 257 against, 25 absent; Viktor Chernomyrdin, 621 for, 280 against, 24 absent; Yegor Gaidar, 400 for, 492 against. Yeltsin calculated that there would be no hope for Gaidar to run for prime minister as the votes against him were more than those for him. So the president decided to nominate Chernomyrdin as prime minister.

[57] This move was vehemently opposed by Valerii Zor'kin on the ground that the constitution had been amended many times since April 1992, and Yeltsin had had sufficient power to execute his duties.

president on March 20, which was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court three days later. On March 28, the Congress failed to carry a motion to impeach the president, and a referendum was conducted on April 25. The results of the referendum showed that 58.7 percent voters were in support of Yeltsin, 53 percent were for economic reform, and 67.2 percent would like to have an early parliamentary election. Yeltsin was greatly encouraged by the referendum and determined to take decisive actions against the parliament.

In 1993 the Russian economy continued to deteriorate. The Congress still fought hard against the government's austerity program. It increased the budget to 22 percent of GDP, which doubled the agreed figure between the government and the Central Bank. Yeltsin criticized the parliament's budget as "super inflationary" and destined to "destroy Russia." In order to get the Congress off his back once and for all, Yeltsin vowed on August 22 to hold early parliamentary elections and on September 1 he suspended Vice President Rutskoi and First Deputy Prime Minister Shumeiko from office for their sympathy toward the parliament.[58] This was followed by Rutskoi claiming himself to be the legitimate president of the Russian Federation, and Yeltsin's counter move to dismiss Rutskoi and terminate the power of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet. An armed conflict ensued, with supporters of the parliament attacking Ostankino television tower and troops loyal to Yeltsin shelling the White Palace where the parliament was located with tank fire. On October 3 the parliamentarians' resistance broke down, and both Rutskoi and

[58] According to Yeltsin, he was encouraged by the Polish President Lech Walesa to dissolve the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet in 1993. See Boris Yeltsin, trans. Li Chuifa, Zongtong biji (Notes of the president) (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1995), p. 165.

Khasbulatov were arrested. Five days later Zor'kin was forced to resign as head of the pro-parliament Constitutional Court. Yeltsin later announced that next presidential elections would be held in 1996, not June 1994 as promised earlier.

On December 12 of 1993, a referendum on the new constitution and parliamentary elections were held simultaneously. In a typical case of split voting, 58.4 percent of the Russian voters endorsed the constitution that greatly expanded Yeltsin's presidential powers, while the same voters failed to deliver majority seats in the lower house of parliament (now renamed State Duma, Gosudarstvennaia Duma) to pro-government parties. Even though Gaidar's Russia's Choice gained 70 seats and emerged as the largest party in the State Duma, the main opposition parties (Vladimir Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation led by Gennadii Zyuganov) managed to capture 112 seats (see table 3).[59] Under these circumstances, Gaidar announced his resignation as deputy prime minister in January, and the State Duma granted pardons to those involved in the putsches of August 1991 and October 1993.

The referendum and the parliamentary elections created a new political environment for Russia. On the one hand, Yeltsin's presidential powers were greatly expanded. On the other hand, he faced a parliament as tough to deal with as the previous one. The basic semi-presidential framework did not change, only tilted toward the presidential side (see below). Even with that the State Duma still competed with the president over control of government. Thus when it came to a change of premier in 1998, Yeltsin collided head-on with the parliament.

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[59] For an analysis of the 1993 elections and the resultant political situation, see Pi Ying-hsian, "Eluosi de xinguohui yu xinzhengfu" (Russia's new parliament and new government), Wenti yu yanjiu, vol. 33, no. 3 (March 1994), pp. 37-49.

Conflict between President and Parliament: Taiwan (1996-1997)

A semi-presidential system fully emerged in the ROC after the direct presidential elections of March 1996, and almost immediately the president came into conflict with the parliament over the choice of prime minister. Since the constitution of 1947 stipulates that the administration (the Executive Yuan) is responsible to the parliament (the Legislative Yuan) and that the president of the Executive Yuan (the Premier) shall be nominated and appointed by the president of Republic with the consent of the parliament, it is only reasonable for the premier to resign when the parliament is reelected.[60] This was the rationale for Lee to force the resignation of Hau Pei-Tsun in February 1993. Then the DPP was highly supportive of replacing Hau with Lien Chan, for Hau held an uncompromising anti-independence position. This time, however, the situation is different.

The December 1995 parliamentary election was a major setback for the KMT, as its vote share dropped from 53 percent of 1992 to an all-time low of 46 percent, though it was still able to capture 85 seats and maintain a three-seat majority in the Legislative Yuan. The DPP was able to garner 33 percent of popular vote and capture 54 seats. The New Party that split from the KMT in 1993 made a smart debut, capturing 13 percent of vote and 21 parliamentary seats. Under these circumstances, the DPP and the New Party began talking about a "grand reconciliation" (dahejie), and the KMT was under great pressure.

President Lee decided to nominate Lien Chan as premier again, but he gave the opposition the impression that this was only a

60 However, when the Legislative Yuan was elected in December 1989, the then premier Lee Huan did not resign, but waited until Lee Teng-hui was reelected by the National Assembly in March 1990 and then handed in his resignation.

temporary measure. The presidential elections would be held in March 1996, and it is reasonable for the newly-elected president to nominate his own premier. In order not to reshuffle the government too frequently, Lien Chan should be kept in office and form a caretaker government. Then President Lee won a landslide victory in the presidential elections, garnering 54 percent of popular vote, with Lien Chan as his vice-presidential running mate. After the elections, the Vice President-Elect Lien submitted his resignation as premier, and Lee decided not to subject him to the consent of the Legislative Yuan, arguing that Lien had already been confirmed as premier by the parliament (zhuowuyongyi). The opposition naturally felt betrayed, and refused to recognize Lien as premier. When Lien tried to go to the Legislative Yuan for an official report, demonstrators outside the parliamentary building stopped him from getting in. The opposition also raised the legal question of whether Lien could serve as vice president and premier concurrently. They submitted the case to the Council of Grand Justices which later handed down a decision questioning the appropriateness of Lien's taking two jobs, but did not declare it unconstitutional. The parliament found it impossible not to deal with the government headed by Lien, for the KMT still held a slim majority in the house, and President Lee refused to change his mind. The stalemate went on for more than one year. In August 1997, after a series of crimes that shocked the society, and several anti-government mass demonstrations in Taipei, Lien Chan finally stepped down. On September 1, he was replaced by Vincent Siew, a bureaucrat-turned-legislator.

As in the case of the Russian Federation, the president's inability to appoint the prime minister (or to appoint the prime minister legally) became a central issue in the conflict between the president and parliament. And again as in Russia, this inability

prompted the president to seek rewriting of the constitution. In Russia Yeltsin was unable to convince the opposition in the Congress of People's Deputies to go along with his constitutional restructuring, and an armed conflict ensued. In Taiwan, Lee found himself much better positioned than his Russian counterpart, and he was able to get the constitution amended more or less according to his design.

The Russian Congress of People's Deputies held the power to amend the constitution, and the only way to bypass it was through a referendum. In the ROC, there is a specialized body, the National Assembly, that is in charge of amending the constitution, and prior to 1996, electing the president and vice-president. This means for Lee to amend the constitution he had to amass the necessary three-fourth votes in the National Assembly, which in turn means he had to come to terms with the DPP. The latest National Assembly elections were held in March 1996, through which the KMT captured 54.8 percent of seats, the DPP 29.6 percent, and the New Party 13.8 percent. It was obvious that Lee had to collaborate with the DPP in order to get the necessary votes. The DPP was most interested in abolishing the National Assembly and Taiwan Province altogether, for these two bodies had long been symbols of Chinese unification.[61] The DPP also wanted to abolish local elections below the county level, for there the KMT traditionally held great advantages. In order to get the DPP's cooperation , the KMT was willing to "streamline the Taiwan provincial government and assembly" (euphemism for abolishing the Taiwan Province as an administrative and self-governing body). Here the KMT and the DPP found common ground.

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[61] The DPP's position on national identity has been for Taiwan independence since the passage of an "independence platform" in October 1991. See Yu-Shan Wu, "Moving towards the Center."

The KMT's blueprint was a French-style semi-presidential system, the major difference between which and the current order is the president's expanded power to appoint prime minister without parliamentary consent. For its part, the Legislative Yuan would be able to cast no-confidence vote on the Executive Yuan, while the president would then be able to dissolve the parliament. The basic ideas of the KMT's constitutional restructuring were put on the negotiating table at the National Development Conference (NDC, guofahui) that was held in December of 1996. The DPP was willing to accept the KMT's semi-presidentialism, provided that the elections on the provincial level (meaning the gubernatorial election and the provincial assembly election) were to be suspended, together with the National Assembly elections (the seats would be allocated among political parties based on their vote shares in other elections), and the elections for rural township, urban township, and township-level municipality offices. The DPP expected to gain political benefits from incapacitating the Taiwan Province and the National Assembly, for these two are symbols of a unified China, and from abolishing grassroots elections which had always been dominated by the KMT. It was on these terms that the KMT and the DPP reached consensus at the NDC. The marginalized New Party opted to leave the NDC at the last minute.

There has always been a conflict between "idealism" and "realism" in the DPP. The idealists want to establish a new nation, shed whatever political connections Taiwan has with the Chinese mainland, and refuse to operate within the constitutional framework of the ROC, while the realists are more willing to compete with the KMT for political power in a liberalized and democratized political environment. The Formosa faction led by Hsu Hsin-liang represents the realist approach. For Hsu and his colleagues it is worthwhile to cooperate with Lee Teng-hui in exchange for tangible political

gains. Hsu was elected chairman of the party after the miserable performance of the DPP's presidential candidate Dr. Peng Ming-min in the March 1996 presidential elections. Peng, a pro-independence ideologue who managed to turn the presidential election into a referendum on independence, received only 21 percent of popular vote, well below the DPP's average vote share. After the debacle of the idealists, the realists had their chance, and Hsu led the DPP to the negotiating table of the National Development Conference. He signed the deal with the KMT on the grand swap of endorsing semi-presidentialism for the abolition of five elections.

After the NDC, a National Assembly session was convened in May 1997 to put the KMT-DPP consensus reached at the NDC into constitutional amendment. However there was opposition to the consensus in both the KMT and the DPP. On the KMT side, all those with vested interest in the continuation of the five elections rallied around James Soong, the Governor of Taiwan, and fought against the NDC initiatives. On the DPP side, those who were for establishing a presidential system and those who abhorred cooperating with the KMT raised strong opposition against Hsu's grand swap. Ideological differences, factional politics, and personal interests were all involved in the tough bargaining process during the National Assembly's session in the summer of 1997. There were several times when the whole endeavor looked destined to fail, and yet the last-minute intervention by President Lee saved it. Also contributing to the survival of the NDC initiatives in the negotiating process was the fact that the oppositions from the KMT and the DPP sides were antagonistic to each other that their actions could not be coordinated. Actually the surge of Soong's influence during the process caused the opposition opinion in the DPP to wane for fear that Soong might gain political benefits by wrecking the deal (i.e. by preserving the Taiwan Provincial Government that he was

heading).[62] Ultimately the successful maneuvering by President Lee and the cooperation by the mainstream faction in the KMT and the realists in the DPP managed to overcome tremendous obstacles to amending the constitution. Though not to the satisfaction of either side, a French-style semi-presidential system was created and embodied in the Additional Articles of the ROC constitution.

The President-parliament-cabinet Triangular Relations in Post-1993 Russia

The 1993 constitution significantly expanded the Russian president's power at the expense of the parliament. This became the single most important reason for Russia to maintain its political stability in the years that followed. Since 1993 Russia experienced two parliamentary elections (December 1993 and December 1995) and one presidential election (June-July 1996). Both the 1993 and the 1995 State Duma were dominated by the opposition, the first one by the nationalists and the second one by the Communists. However, Yeltsin was able to beat the Communist challenger Gennadii Zyuganov in the presidential elections. The result is for the presidency and the parliamentary majority to fall into different hands. This potentially conflicting situation did not lead to open explosions of the 1993 sort because the parliament had been incapacitated by the new constitution. In March 1998 Yeltsin decided to sack premier Chernomyrdin who had gained domestic and international recognition as Yeltsin's successor and constituted a threat to the president, and replace him with an inexperienced youngster, Sergei Kiriyenko. The State Duma attempted to resist the president's whim, but to no avail. The result of this conflict had already been predetermined by the framers of the 1993 constitution.

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[62] Kuo Cheng-liang, Minjindang zhuanxing zhi tong, pp. 176-177.

Thus the 1998 political turbulence served to highlight the imbalance between the power of the president and that of the parliament. Russia's semi-presidential system is thus a "super-presidential" type. The December 1995 elections saw Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Communist Party, the two largest opposition parties in the State Duma, trading places (see table three). Compared with the 1993 elections, the LDP's vote share dropped from 22.3 percent to 11.2 percent, while the Communists' vote share surged from 12.4 percent to 22.3 percent. Because only those parties that crossed the 5 percent vote share threshold could take part in distributing the 225 seats for proportional representation and only four parties managed to do so, the Communist Party and the LDP gained disproportionately. The Communists' 22.3 percent vote share was translated into 44 percent of PR seats, while the LDP's 11.2 percent vote share was awarded with 22.2 percent of PR seats. Thanks to this distortion brought about by the 5 percent threshold, the Communist party and the LDP were able to gain a total of 208 seats. If one adds those with the seats gained by other leftist parties, one finds the opposition bloc commanding 238 seats, more than half of the 450 seats in total. This was a significant gain for the opposition compared with the 1993 elections, where a less distorting distribution of PR seats gave the LDP and the Communist Party a total of 112 seats, and the opposition bloc 168 seats, falling far short of the 225 seats needed to form a majority in the State Duma. In short, with the continuous deterioration of the Russian economy, the opposition was able to gain significant ground in the parliament.

Table 3 Comparing the 1993 and 1995 State Duma Elections

Party	Vote share of 95	Party-list seats of 95	Single-mandate seats of 95	Total seats of 95	Party-list seats of 93	Total seats of 93
Leftist parties						
communist Party	22.30	99	58	157	12.40	48
Women of Russia	4.61		3	3	8.13	
Communists-Workers' Russia	4.53		1	1		
Agrarian Party	3.78		20	20	7.99	33
Power to the People	1.61		9	9		
Nationalist parties						
Liberal Democratic Party	11.18	50	1	51	22.92	64
Congress of Russian Communities	4.31		5	5		
Reform Parties						
Our Home is Russia	10.03	45	10	55		
Yabloko	6.89	31	14	45	7.86	23
Russia's Democratic Choice	3.86		9	9	15.51	70
Bloc of Ivan Rybkin	1.11		3	3		
Forward, Russia	1.94		3	3		
Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko	1.06		2	2		
Six other parties	1.39		3	3		

Sources: Robert W. Orttung, "Duma Elections Bolster Leftist Opposition," Transition, vol. 2, no. 4 (23 February 1996), p. 7.

With the parliament under the control of the opposition, there is only one way to solve the inherent tension in a semi-presidential system, namely for an opposition political leader to replace Yeltsin as president.[63] This scenario was widely expected right before the March 1996 presidential elections[64], for the results of the December 1995 parliamentary elections had vividly shown the Communist Party's popularity among the Russian voters who were disgruntled with the dismal economic situation in the country.[65] When the campaign began in early 1996, the Communist candidate Zyuganov was way ahead of Yeltsin in opinion polls. And yet through a masterful campaign strategy that stressed Yeltsin was the only hope to stop a Communist restoration, dogmatism and intransigence on the part of Zyuganov, and active support from the business world and the West, Yeltsin was able to garner 35.3 percent of popular vote in the first round held on June 16.[66] Zyuganov traced behind by 3.25 percent (see table 4). Yeltsin then actively courted the support of General Aleksandr Lebed who finished a strong third with 14.5 percent of the vote. Lebed was promised the position of Secretary of the Security Council and saw his rivals Federal Security Service

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[63] One finds this kind of situation in Poland. When President Lech Walesa was accompanied by Solidarity premiers, such as Jan Krzysztof Bielecki from January to December of 1991, and Hanna Suchocka, from July 1992 to May 1993, the relationship between the president and the premier was relatively smooth. However, when Walesa was forced to "cohabit" with a leftist premier backed by parliamentary support, such as Waldemar Pawlak from October 1993 to February 1995, and Jozef Oleksy from March 1995 to November of that year, there was full of tension and conflict between the president and the parliament. The November 1995 presidential elections were a turning point, for Wa??sa was defeated by Aleksander Kwasniewski, the candidate of the Alliance of the Democratic Left which was also the senior partner in the ruling coalition in the parliament Sejm. Kwasniewski then enjoyed much better relationship with Premier Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz who was from the same political party. See Yu-Shan Wu, "Economic Reform under Different Political Contexts: Poland and the PRC," paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Washington, D.C., March 28-April 1, 1994; and Wu Yu-Shan, Yuanli shehui zhuyi, ch. 5.

[64] For example, see Jerry F. Hough, Evelyn Davidheiser, and Susan Goodrich Lehmann, The 1996 Russian Presidential Election (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1996), ch. 7.

(heir to the feared KGB) head Mikhail Barsukov, chief of the President Security Service Aleksandr Korzhakov, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and seven top generals closely associated with Grachev sacked.[67] As it turned out, Yeltsin was able to defeat Zyuganov (53.8 percent to 40.8 percent) in the second round of presidential elections on July 3 by absorbing support for Lebed and Grigorii Yavlinskii (who received 7.3 percent of popular vote in the first round) (see table 5).[68]

Table 4 Russian Presidential Elections: First Round

Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage
1. Boris Yeltsin	26,665,495	35.28
2. Genndii Zyuganov	24,211,686	32.03
3. Aleksandr Lebed	10,974,736	14.52
4. Grigorii Yavlinskii	5,550,752	7.34
5. Vladimir Zhirinovskii	4,311,479	5.70
6. Svyatoslav Fedorov	699,158	0.92
7. Mikhail Gorbachev	386,069	0.51
8. Martin Shakkum	277,068	0.37
9. Yurii Vlasov	151,282	0.20
10. Vladimir Bryntsalov	123,065	0.16
11. Against all candidates	1,163,921	1.54

Sources: Rossiiskaya gazeta, 22 June 1996; cited from Richard Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 393.

[65] The Communists led the party-list voting in 62 of Russia's 89 regions. See Robert W. Orttung, "Duma Elections Bolster Leftist Opposition," Transition, vol. 2, no. 4 (23 February 1996), p. 7.

Table 5 Russian Presidential Elections: Second Round

Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage
1. Boris Yeltsin	40,208,384	53.82
2. Gennadii Zyuganov	30,113,306	40.31
3. Against both candidates	3,604,550	4.83

Sources: same as table 4.

With the president and the parliament in collision course, there would be inevitable conflict on control over the government. In this respect the 1993 constitution greatly expanded the president's power, both with the premier, and with the parliament. We have mentioned that ever since the direct election of Yeltsin as president Russia has had a semi-presidential system. The significance of the 1993 constitution is that it tilted the balance of power further

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[66] Zyuganov actually had a good reason to be dogmatic. Unlike in many East European countries where the Communist regimes had been considered puppets of Moscow and never enjoyed much legitimacy, Russia was the core of the Soviet Union and many Russians were nostalgic of the super-power status and stable economy that the Soviet system provided. As a result, the resurgent Communist Party of the Russian Federation was proud of its heritage and appealed to those voters who treasured the Soviet past, such as the pensioners, unpaid workers, and residents in rural towns. On March 17, 1991, 75.4 percent of eligible voters took part in a referendum in Russia, among them 71.3 percent voted for preserving the Soviet Union. See Richard Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 389-390.

[67] Peter Rutland, "Russia: The Purge of the Generals," OMRI Analytical Brief, vol. 1, no. 201 (27 June 1996). Also dumped was Yeltsin's "spiritual mentor," Oleg Soskovets, a deputy prime minister and the second most senior minister in his government. See John Thornhill and Chrystia Freeland, "Showdown in the Kremlin Dark," Financial Times, 21 June 1996 (on internet).

[68] Because in the presidential elections "Winner takes all," the Russian voters were forced to vote for a person who had a chance to win, and it turned out that for the voters in the middle neither Yeltsin nor Zyuganov was their favorite, but those who could not accept a Communist president outnumbered those who could not accept a second term of Yeltsin. See Wu Yu-Shan, "Yieerqin houshi kanqiao, zhidu bang damang" (The electoral system helped Yeltsin to catch up), China Times, 15 June 1996, p. 11. For a similar opinion, see Yitzhak M. Brudny, "In Pursuit of the Russian Presidency: Why and How Yeltsin Won the 1996 Presidential Election," Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 30, no. 3 (September 1997), pp. 255-275.

towards the president, so that the post-1993 system is semi-presidentialism dominated by the president (or super-presidential system, svepkhprezidentskaya sistema), while the pre-1993 system was one in which the president and the parliament competed and conflicted in a stalemate.

Specifically, the 1993 constitution grants the president three kinds of power that are important from our triangular perspective. The first kind is executive in nature, including the power to determine the basic guidelines of the state's domestic and foreign policy, form and head the Security Council, form the administration of the president, exercise leadership of the foreign policy, and issue decrees and directives (ukazy i rasporyazhenia) as long as they do not contravene the constitution and federal laws. The second type of power has to do with presidential control over government, including the power to appoint with the consent of the State Duma the head of the government (predsedatel' pravitel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii, the premier), appoint and remove from office the deputy prime ministers and federal ministers at the proposal of the premier, accept or reject the resignation offered by the government, adopt a decision on the dismissal of the government, and chair sessions of the government. The third type of power has to do with the president's dealings with the State Duma when the two conflict over the composition or policy of the government, including the power to dissolve the parliament when it rejects for three times the candidates for premier submitted by the president, when the parliament expresses no-confidence in the government for a second time within three months, and when the parliament refuses to give confidence in the government after the latter submitted a motion of confidence to the parliament. Besides the three kinds of power just mentioned, the Russian president can also appoint and dismiss with the consent of the State Duma director of the Central Bank, appoint with consent

of the Federation Council justices of the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, and Superior Court of Arbitration, and general procurator, appoint and remove plenipotentiary representatives of the president, and appoint and remove the high command of the Armed Forces (vysshee komandovanie), etc. These are the powers that one would expect a head of state to have, and whether these are real, or formal powers depends on the three kinds of presidential powers outlined above. In short, whether the president has power over the government determines the whole nature of the constitutional order.

If we compare the Russian president and the U.S. president, we will find the latter has greater power over the administration. The critical point is under the semi-presidential system of Russia there is still a prime minister directly controlling the government and is responsible to the parliament. Here one finds an alternative power base. However, the Russian president does have several powers his American counterpart does not have. Under a typical presidential system, the president and the parliament (or congress) may easily enter into a deadlock, with neither side capable of imposing its will on the other side. The cause is secured tenure. In the case of Russia, once a deadlock is formed between the administration and the legislature, the president can simply dissolve the parliament. This is indeed the greatest threat to the parliament.

The 1993 constitution mentions three occasions on which the president can dissolve the parliament. They are when the State Duma rejects for three times the candidates for premier submitted by the president, the State Duma expresses no-confidence in the government two times within three months, and the State Duma fails to pass the motion of confidence submitted by the government. On the first occasion, the president's power to dissolve the parliament guarantees his ability to appoint his favorite premier,

disregarding the balance of power among political parties in the parliament. According to Article 111 of the constitution, after three rejections by the State Duma of candidates submitted for the head of the government of the Russian Federation, "the president of the Russian Federation appoints a head of government of the Russian Federation, dissolves the State Duma and schedules new elections" (Prezident Rossiiskoi Federatsii naznachaet Predsedatelia Pravitel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii, raspuskaet Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu i naznachaet novye vybory). Here one finds the constitution does not leave the president the option not to dissolve the parliament and appoint a new premier. The pressure on the State Duma under these circumstances are understandably even greater than if the president has the option to back out.[69] Here one finds the president capable of forcing his choice for premier on a reluctant parliament, as will be demonstrated in the following discussion of the appointment of Sergei Kiriyenko as premier in 1998.

On the other two occasions (no confidence in the government raised by the State Duma or raised by the government), the president has the choice of either dismissing the government or dissolving the parliament. Because the president can pretty much determine the composition and policy of the government, the parliament's expression of no-confidence in the government is in fact a challenge to the president himself. The president's power at this juncture to dissolve the parliament then acts as a strong deterrent against the parliament passing a no-confidence motion, or failing to pass a confidence motion submitted by the government. In this way, the parliament will be forced not to challenge the president's policy and even forced to endorse his policy against the parliament's own will.

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[69] See Konstitutsia Rossiiskoi Federatsii and "Article 111 Sets Duma, Yeltsin on Collision Course," Russia Today (on internet), 17 April 1998.

Besides various checks on the State Duma, the constitution divides the parliament into the State Duma and the Federation Council, thus diluting the legislative power of the State Duma.[70] The constitution also abolishes the position of vice president, obviously taking the lesson of Aleksandr Rutskoi. This leaves the premier to carry out the duties of the president when the latter is unable to do so. However, since the president has great power over the premier (including firing him and the entire cabinet), this arrangement is much safer from the president's point of view then to have a vice president whose tenure is secure.

With the president and the parliament antagonistic to each other, and with the constitution granting great powers to the president over the government at the expense of the parliament, it is natural that there will be continuous conflict between the administration and the legislature, but the parliament will not really challenge the government by, of example, passing a motion of no-confidence.[71] On the other hand, because the parliament has the budgetary power, Yeltsin is willing to compromise on his policy positions after bargaining with parliamentary leaders.[72] In this context, Premier Chernomyrdin served a very useful function. Until March 1998, he was a mediator whom both the president and the State Duma could accept. This is terribly important for a premier serving under a

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[70] The new Russian parliament, Federal'noe Sobranie, is composed of two chambers, the Federation Council, Sovet Federatsii, and State Duma, Gosudarstvennaia Duma. The former is composed of representatives from the various administrative units of the Russian federation, while the latter is composed of delegates half of whom elected on party-lists and half of whom elected from single-member districts.

[71] In January 1997 the State Duma required Yeltsin to step down for his poor health, but to no avail.

[72] In June 1997 the administration and the parliament quarreled over tax and budget, and Yeltsin considered dissolving the State Duma. The crisis was over after the State Duma made certain concessions. In October the State Duma threatened the government with a no-confidence vote, and Yeltsin swiftly responded with a counter threat of dissolution. Yeltsin then promised to hold a roundtable talk with parliamentary leaders, and the crisis subsided.

semi-presidential system, for he is in fact responsible to both the president and the parliament. Chernomyrdin was first appointed premier in December 1992, when the Congress of People's Deputies refused to accept Yegor Gaidar as premier. After the 1993 constitution was promulgated and a new opposition-dominated State Duma was elected, Chernomyrdin kept his job while Gaidar was forced to resign. When Yeltsin began his campaign for presidency in early 1996 there was another wave of purge, but Chernomyrdin survived that.[73] After Yeltsin was elected president, he again nominated Chernomyrdin as premier, and the State Duma approved the veteran with delight.[74] In March 1997 Yeltsin fired the whole cabinet except Chernomyrdin. Chernomyrdin had been considered a symbol of stability and continuity while Yeltsin continued reshuffling the government. Gradually Chernomyrdin was recognized Yeltsin's successor. In view of the president's poor health, it was widely considered possible that Chernomyrdin might succeed Yeltsin before the end the president's current term. Naturally Yeltsin felt threatened, and began thinking of removing the veteran premier.[75]

On March 23, 1998, after Yeltsin again returned from his

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[73] For example Anatolii Chubais (Russia's major architect of privatization) was on the original Gaidar team when the Russian economic reform started. Chubais was fired in January 1996 to tone down the Yeltsin administration's image of radical and ruthless economic reform. Another resignation was handed in by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, whose pro-Western image hurt Yeltsin's chance of winning over the support of the nationalist voters.

[74] Chernomyrdin was nominated premier right after Yeltsin was sworn in on August 9, 1996. Next day he won the approval of the State Duma. Russia Today (on internet), 24 April 1998.

[75] The catalyst might be Chernomyrdin's visit to Washington, D.C. where he was warmly welcomed by the U.S. Vice President Albert Gore. Both Gore and Chernomyrdin were considered possible successor to the current president in their respective countries. See CNN Interactive (on internet), 10 March 1998. For other explanations of Chernomyrdin's dismissal, see "When Boris Banged the Table," The Economist, 28 March 1998, p. 20°F"Tycoon Berezovsky Endorses Kiriyenko," Russia Today (on internet), 26 March 1998 and Andrei Bagrov, "Yeltsin Threatens to Kick Berezovsky Out of Russia," RIA-Novosti Daily Review (on internet), 16 April 1998.

illness, the president sacked Chernomyrdin together with the whole cabinet. On March 27, Yeltsin nominated a 35-year-old, inexperienced energy minister Sergei Kiriyenko as premier, and required the State Duma to accept him.[76] The opposition naturally protested strongly, and Yeltsin threatened the parliament with dissolution. A constitutional crisis ensued. In a president-dominated semi-presidential system, the president actually has the power to appoint his own choice as premier, regardless of the parliament's preference. In the past, Yeltsin had been willing to reach a compromise with the State Duma and kept Chernomyrdin in power, but now he had a strong reason to replace the veteran premier and he did not hesitate to exercise the presidential power on this matter. The Communists were not steadfast in its opposition to Kiriyenko. In fact Zyuganov made the proposal that a coalition government be formed with Communists taking certain portfolios. From the parliament's point of view the new government should reflect the balance of power in the legislature. However, from Yeltsin's point of view, the cabinet is the president's staff and a coalition government is out of the question.[77] Backed by Yeltsin, Kiriyenko rejected the Communists' proposal, and forced a showdown. On April 10, 17

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[76] Kiriyenko is from Nizhnii Novgorod, son of a Jewish father and a Russian mother. He graduated from a railroad engineering school in 1984 and helped set up Garantiya bank in Nizhnii Novgorod. Later Kiriyenko became the President of the oil company NORSI. This was the time when Boris Nemtsov was reforming the economy of Nizhnii Novgorod, and making the successful experience there a model for the whole nation. Kiriyenko was considered a capable administrator by Nemtsov, who later brought him to Moscow in March 1997 to become a deputy energy minister. In November of that year, Kiriyenko took the post of energy minister when Nemtsov was forced to give it up. Nemtsov, Chubais and Chernomyrdin competed for influence in the expectation that Yeltsin may soon be unable to perform his duties as president. In the reshuffle of March 1998, Yeltsin fired Chernomyrdin and Chubais, but kept Nemtsov in the cabinet. See Financial Times, 28-29 March 1998, p. 7. For the possible reasons to nominate Kiriyenko, see International Herald Tribune, 28-29 March, 1998, p. 1; and Chrystia Freeland, "Geek in the Kremlin," Financial Times, 28-29 March, 1998, p. 7.

[77] "Communists Want Coalition Government," Russia Today (on internet), 25 March 1998; "Kiriyenko Stands Firm against Duma," Russia Today (on internet), 16 April 1998.

and 24 the State Duma voted three times on Kiriyenko's nomination (see table 6). The Communists and their allies were able to hold their ground until the last minute, when a combination of Yeltsin's threat to dissolve the parliament and his promise to provide extra luxuries for the parliamentarians managed to persuade enough of them to switch side.[78] This outcome is highly expectable in that the president held superiority from the very beginning, for the 1993 constitution grants him the right to dissolve the State Duma and appoint a new premier after three rejections. The parliament lost the battle way before it was started. Yeltsin won what he was unable to win at the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies in December 1992, i.e., to appoint his favorite as premier no matter what the parliament thinks. In a sense, the 1993 constitution was designed to make Yeltsin a victor in exactly this kind of battle with the parliament.

Table 6 Votes on Kiriyenko's Nomination

Date of Vote	For	Against	Abstained after taking ballots
April 10	143	186	5
April 17	115	271	11
April 24	251	25	39

[78] For detailed accounts of the three votes, see "Duma Mulls Voting on PM Nominee," Russia Today (on internet), 15 April 1998; "Yeltsin Wins Duma Speaker's Backing for PM," Russia Today (on internet), 14 April 1998; "A Man without Qualities," The Economist, 18 April 1998, p. 46; Larisa Aidinova, "Who is Seleznev Saving?" RIA-Novosti Daily Review (on internet), 20 April 1998; Alexander Batygin, "Duma's Survival Is in Its Own Hands," RIA-Novosti Daily Review (on internet), 16 April 1998; "Yeltsin Insists on Kiriyenko," RIA-Novosti Daily Review (on internet), 20 April 1998; Chrystia Freeland, "Duma Bows to Yeltsin's Choice of PM," Financial Times (on internet), 25 April 1998.

The year 1998 witnessed not one, but two changes of premier in Russia. Chernomyrdin was sacked in March and replaced by Kiriyenko, but the collapse of the Russian ruble on the exchange market in mid-August and the prospect of an imminent financial crisis brought about a reversion of Yeltsin's mind.[79] He then decided to bring back Chernomyrdin to replace Kiriyenko, a reversion of his decision made five months before.[80] It is only natural that the State Duma would protest strongly to Yeltsin's precarious personnel policy, and would use this opportunity to wrest concessions from the ailing president.

So the president and the parliament were set in collision course again over who should be the new prime minister. At first Yeltsin was as adamant as before, believing he would ultimately prevail over the State Duma. After firing Kiriyenko, he swiftly appointed Chernomyrdin as acting prime minister on August 23. The Communists and their allies in the Duma wanted to negotiate with the president for greater power in deciding the composition of the cabinet (they have a say on the appointment of the prime minister but can not interfere with the choice of other cabinet members).[81] In exchange, they were willing to confirm

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[79] After the Russian ruble was attacked and plummeted, Kiriyenko allowed it to fluctuate between 6 and 9.5 rubles to the dollar until the end of the year, which amounted to a major devaluation. This decision ran counter to Yeltsin's August 17 pledge to defend the ruble. Kiriyenko further imposed a 90-day moratorium on repaying government debt and then implemented a forced rescheduling. Those measures upset the IMF and the World Bank and made them reluctant to release further funds to Russia. See RFE/RL NEWSLINE, vol. 2, no. 157, Part I, 17 August 1998; Robert Lyle, "Russia: Camdessus To Brief Board On Talks With Chernomyrdin," RFE/RL, 28 August 1998.

[80] Yeltsin obviously wanted to take advantage of Chernomyrdin's experience in economic reform. That confidence, however, was considered misplaced as Chernomyrdin's record could hardly be described as staunchly reformist. See Yuri Zhigalkin and Matthew Frost, "Russia: Currency Crisis Endangers Reform Process," RFE/RL, 28 August 1998.

[81] The president would retain his power to fill three key posts -- the defense, foreign and interior ministries. In exchange, Yeltsin would have agreed to Duma approval of most Cabinet appointments for the first time.

Chernomyrdin's appointment. A deal to that effect was struck on August 30 between the negotiators from both sides.[82] The draft, which was not made public, would also have obliged both sides to maintain a political truce. The Duma would not try to vote the government out of power until parliament's term ends in late 1999, while Yeltsin would not use his right to dissolve the legislature--although he apparently would not lose this power.

However, the Communists reneged at the last minute because there was no firm guarantee Yeltsin would abide by the agreement.[83] As a result, Chernomyrdin's nomination was voted down by a wide margin (94 for, 253 against) on August 31, sending the Russian markets to a tailspin.[84] The Wall Street was also jolted. Following his pattern in the past, Yeltsin re-nominated Chernomyrdin, only to see his candidate defeated in the Duma again, this time with 273 delegates voted no, and 138 voted yes. Tremendous pressure was on Yeltsin to reach a compromise with his Communist rivals, now backed by the Liberal Democrats and the Yabloko party.

Unlike the last confirmation process, this time the Duma was in a much stronger position. It is not that the Communists and their allies had changed the constitutional framework, for Yeltsin could still re-nominate Chernomyrdin for a third time and force the parliament to yield to his will like in April. However, the very nature of the Russian financial crisis at the moment brought about such a pressure on Yeltsin that he simply could not afford holding the political situation in suspension for any longer while fighting an attrition war with the Duma. When the financial crisis hit in August

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[82] "Russian Government, Opposition Sign Deal Aimed at Taming Crisis," CNN Interactive (on internet), 30 August 1998.

[83] "Communists Say They Will Block Confirmation of Russian Premier," CNN Interactive (on internet), 31 August 1998.

[84] "Communists Say They Will Block Confirmation of Russian Premier," CNNfn (on internet), 31 August 1998.

the ruble was trading at just over six to the dollar. It was 17 rubles to the dollar prior to the second confirmation and soon became 20 rubles to the dollar after Chernomyrdin was defeated again on September 7.[85] Yeltsin needed to immediately dissipate the speculation that the political stalemate in Moscow would linger on. Failure to do so would invite a financial crisis whose proportions were sure to destroy whatever achievements brought about by seven years of economic reform. Furthermore, a third nomination of Chernomyrdin might well trigger the dissolution of the Duma and plunge the whole country into deep social unrest, which would exacerbate the economic crisis. Put in a nutshell, the financial crisis added to the parliament's leverage against the president.

Yeltsin did not surrender. He made a compromise by nominating Yevgeny Primakov on September 10, the acting Foreign Minister and a widely-liked politician, as prime minister. This decision was embedded in Russia's financial crisis and triggered by Chernomyrdin's own choice not to be re-nominated again for fear of sending Russia to yet another upheaval.[86] On September 11, the Duma swiftly confirmed Primakov's appointment by a 317:63 margin.[87]

Primakov's nomination did not change the structure of Russia's constitutional order. In essence the parliament only has a delaying power as far as the appointment of the prime minister is considered. That power is no match for the president's appointing power under most circumstances, but the time at which Primakov was appointed was extraordinary. The fact that Yeltsin nominated

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[85] "Chernomyrdin Loses again in Russian Parliament," CNN Interactive (on internet), 7 September 1998.

[86] "In Compromise, Yeltsin Nominates Primakov," CNN Interactive (on internet), 10 September 1998.

[87] "Primakov Confirmed as Russian Prime Minister: Economy Awaits Action," CNN Interactive (on internet), 11 September 1998.

Chernomyrdin two times before making a partial compromise suggests the president still holds great powers in determining the composition of the government.

What Does the Future Hold for the ROC in View of the Russian Experience?

There are a lot of similarities between the Russian and Taiwanese case of semi-presidentialism. A Leninist past, democratic transition, assertive parliament, direct election of president, substantial presidential powers, premier heading the cabinet, failure by the president to appoint premier (or to appoint legally), resultant rewriting of the constitution, etc. There are also significant differences between the two cases, the most important of which is the KMT's staying power as the majority party in the parliament, and the resultant suppression of inherent tension in Taiwan's semi-presidential system.[88] It can even be argued that the KMT is an independent power base separated from the three triangular actors (the president, the parliament, and the premier).[89] However, that difference may not exist for long. Even though the KMT has won a comfortable majority in the December 1998 Legislative Yuan elections (123 out of a total of 225 seats), it is unrealistic to assume that the KMT will continue holding majority in the parliament forever. If the president and the parliamentary majority belong to different political parties, how would the premier be chosen? What would be the division of labor between the president and the premier? Do the similarities between the Russian Federation and the ROC mean that the operation of Taiwan's

[88] This is a direct result of the huge difference in economic performance of the two countries. The economic miracle of Taiwan has offered the strongest support for the continuation of the KMT's rule, while the persistent miserable economic performance was the primary reason for the Communist Party to lose power in the first place, and for the reform parties to be the minority in the parliament.

[89] The author wishes to thank an anonymous reader for this point.

constitutional order will evolve in a similar direction as Russia's?

In order to answer these questions, one has to look into the ROC constitution with its 1997 Additional Articles. Again we can take a look at the president's power from a triangular perspective. As in the Russian case, there are three kinds of presidential power. The first one is direct executive power. Here one finds the ROC president can issue emergency orders (by resolution of the Executive Yuan Council and subject to ratification of the Legislative Yuan in ten days), determine major policies for national security and establish a National Security Council and a subsidiary National Security Bureau, and mediate between different branches of government (Yuans) should disputes arise among them. The second type of presidential power has to do with control over government, including the power to appoint the president of the Executive Yuan (the premier); appoint with consent by the National Assembly the grand justices; the president, vice president and members of the Examination Yuan; and the president, vice president and members of the Control Yuan. The third type of power has to do with the president's dealings with the Legislative Yuan. Here one finds the president can dissolve the Legislative Yuan within ten days following the passage of a no-confidence vote on the government.

When compared with the presidential powers held by the Russian president, one finds there are great similarities, but in general the ROC president is less powerful. As far as the executive power of the president is concerned, the Russian president can determine the basic guidelines of the state's domestic and foreign policy, form and head the Security Council, exercise leadership of the foreign policy, and issue decrees and directives, while the ROC president can only issue emergency orders under great constraints and determine national security policy. Concerning the president's control over the government, the Russian president can appoint with

the consent of the State Duma the head of the government, appoint and remove from office the deputy prime ministers and federal ministers at the proposal of the premier, accept or reject the resignation offered by the government, adopt a decision on the dismissal of the government, and chair sessions of the government. The ROC president does hold the power to appoint the premier without consent of the parliament, but it is unclear whether the president can remove at will the premier, and the president cannot chair sessions of the government. Finally, one can compare the two presidents' powers vis-a-vis the parliament. There the Russian president is also more powerful, for he can dissolve the parliament when it rejects for three times the candidates for premier submitted by the president, when the parliament expresses no-confidence in the government for a second time within three months, and when the parliament refuses to give confidence in the government after the latter submitted a motion of confidence to the parliament. The ROC president can dissolve the Legislative Yuan only when it passes a vote of no-confidence on the government.

Even though the ROC president in general is not as powerful as his Russian counterpart, the two constitutional systems clearly belong to the same kind of president-dominated semi-presidentialism.[90] Institutionally speaking, the most important feature of this system is the ability of the president to determine the premier, disregarding the political balance in the parliament. In the Russian case, after the parliament rejects for three times the candidates for premier submitted by the president, the latter has to dissolve the parliament and appoint the premier. This means the parliament actually only has a delaying power as far as choosing the

[90] This is why Ya-Li Lu calls the core of the new constitutional structure imperial presidency. Ya-Li Lu, "The Transformation of the Role of the President in Taiwan's Constitutional Evolution," paper delivered at the Institutional Choice Workshop, Taipei, August 23, 1997.

premier is concerned. When push comes to shove, the president can overwhelm the parliament with his favorite choice of premier, as the appointment of Kiriyenko demonstrated. Obviously when the country is under extreme crisis situation, the parliament can the best use of its delaying power, and force the president to make a compromise, as shown in Primakov's appointment. This does not annul the basic power balance between the president and the parliament.

In comparison, the ROC constitution gives the president the outright power to appoint the premier, without consent of the parliament. This was the very reason for President Lee to amend the constitution in 1997. Also this is the only major area where the ROC president holds advantage over his Russian counterpart. If the ROC president can exercise this power freely, then he certainly does not need to confront the parliament over the latter's rejection of his candidate for premier, and resort to threat of dissolving the parliament to have his will, as in the case of the Russian Federation. On September 1, 1997, President Lee appointed Vincent Siew as premier to replace Lien Chan. This was the first time when the president exercised his newly acquired power to appoint the premier without the consent of the parliament. Institutionally speaking, the ROC president stands a better chance to determine who should be the premier than his Russian counterpart, even though both presidents hold great appointing powers when compared with other "semi-presidents." In sum, we can characterize the constitutional system of the Russian Federation and the ROC as president-dominated semi-presidentialism.

Yeltsin deliberately chose a semi-presidential system with a strong president, knowing the parliament might be controlled by the opposition, and he would need extra powers to keep the government under his firm control. Lee also amended the ROC constitution in

the expectation that the DPP might control the Legislative Yuan in the near future, and he would then need extra powers to make sure the government is led by a premier of his choice. In both cases, a sense of political crisis of the incumbent president prompted the amendment of the constitution. In short, semi-presidential system is prone to conflict between the president and the parliament over control of government, as the experience of Russia in 1992-1993 and the ROC in 1996-1997 demonstrate. The addition of extra presidential powers to the original constitution was considered necessary to redress that inherent problem in the president's favor. In a sense, the 1993 Russian constitution and the 1997 Additional Articles to the ROC constitution were rearguard actions against the possibility of a French-style "cohabitation."

Besides providing extra power to the president, the semi-presidential system with a dominant president is attractive in that it relieves the president of direct responsibility while offering him the ultimate power. In a presidential system, the president holds supreme power, but is also subject to all kinds of scrutiny and criticism. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister is directly responsible to the parliament, and he is subject to harsh interpellation and possible vote of no-confidence by the parliament. In a president-dominated semi-presidential system the president can make final decisions without being held responsible for them. He can actually severely criticize the government for its incompetence and wrongdoing and build his own image at the expense of the government, though the president may be the ultimate decision-maker. Thus whenever Yeltsin reshuffled the government, he always started with severe criticism of it; and there were also numerous times when Lee criticized the government for policies that clearly bore his imprint.[91] The convenience of enjoying ultimate power without bearing corresponding responsibility proves very attractive

for emergent democracies to opt for this type of system.

This being the case, one cannot safely predict that because the ROC president has great institutional power to appoint the premier, he would then be able to do so in real politics. President Lee appointed Vincent Siew with ease because at the time of appointment the KMT still held majority in the Legislative Yuan. What then will be the case if the majority party in the parliament is not the president's party, or if there is no majority in the parliament? Would the constitutional provision that the president can appoint the premier without parliamentary consent be sufficient in itself to provide the president the real power when facing an opposition majority in the Legislative Yuan?

The case of the French Fifth Republic is pertinent here. The 1993 Russian constitution is strikingly similar to the Gaullist constitution of 1958, for the Russian framers took the French system as their major reference. If one carefully compares the presidential powers stipulated in the two constitutions, one finds the French president enjoys even greater power than his Russian counterpart, particularly because the French president can appoint the premier without consent of the parliament (National Assembly).[92] However the French have developed a constitutional practice for the president to appoint the leader of the majority party in the parliament as premier, even when the president and the presidential majority are of different political parties (hence "cohabitation"). This is the case because it is recognized that no president can exercise power without the support of a majority party in the National Assembly, and that the president cannot appoint who does not enjoy parliamentary confidence.[93] The experience of the

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[91] This system also gave rise to Lech Walesa's criticism of a series of Solidarity governments while he was the president.

[92] See Wu Tung-ye, "'Banzongtongzhi' zhengfu tixi de lilun yu shiji," pp. 45-48.

three "cohabitations" so far shows that the president would have to take a secondary role when cohabiting with an "opposition" premier.[94] This makes the French system an interesting one in which the president holds ultimate power and appoints his favorite as premier (and dismisses him at will) when the parliament supports the president, but takes a secondary role and appoints an opposition leader as premier when the presidential party loses majority in the parliament. In short, the constitutional stipulation that the president can appoint premier as he wills is not sufficient to uphold the president's appointing power in real politics. Here one clearly sees the non-institutional factors come into play.

What then will the future hold for Taiwan? Will the president-dominated semi-presidentialism give the president a free hand in appointing his favorite as premier, and thus guarantee the president's control over government (the Russian solution)? Or will the French experience apply in which the president's appointing power and his control over government hinges on the composition of the Legislative Yuan? In the beginning section we also talk about a third possibility in which the president and parliament threaten and conflict with each other, and paralyze the government (the Weimar model). All the three cases (the French Fifth Republic, the Russian post-1993 system, the Weimar Republic of inter-war Germany) are examples of semi-presidentialism. The French president yields to the majority of the National Assembly. The Russian president overwhelms the State Duma. The Weimar president conflicts with the Reichstag. With a system similar to that

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[93] See Ezra N. Suleiman, "Presidentialism and Political Stability in France," in in Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 151.

[94] The three "cohabitations" are Francois Mitterrand cohabiting with Jacques Chirac (1986-1988), Francois Mitterrand with Edouard Balladur (1993-1995), and Jacques Chirac with Lionel Jospin (1997-).

of the German, French, and Russian precedents, the ROC is not guaranteed political stability by the extra powers granted to the president with the constitutional amendments of 1997. A host of non-institutional factors will come into play to determine the ultimate outcome. As a result, Taiwan's constitutional future remains uncertain. This does not mean that institutional arrangement does not matter. It does in that it sets the parameters within which political actors interact, and it predetermines a finite number of outcomes that may emerge from this arrangement. By selecting a particular institution, constitutional framers opt for a predetermined set of possible outcomes, but the actual operation of the system remains to be defined by the interaction of both institutional and non-institutional factors.