

Politics are local, but will a worldly view help?

Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

The Mess Made in Moscow by the Idaho Republican Party finally got cleaned up last weekend in Boise.

The state central committee elected Steve Yates its new party chairman, after a court ruled last week that former chairman Barry Peterson had not been anointed for another two years by this city's convention of confusion.

The contrast between the incoming state chairman and the outgoing one could not be more stark.

It's likely that will lead to some changes in how the party and its two warring wings operate during the rest of this campaign season and for the next two years.

It is not likely that its political positions will be changing much, however.

Peterson, elected two years ago to the chairmanship, was then owner of a hardware store in Mountain Home. At the time, he was seen as something of a peacemaker. One of his backers told of Peterson advising him - as a basketball referee - to call fewer technical fouls and instead seek less confrontational ways of resolving disputes because "contention breeds contention."

Still, Peterson lost his chairmanship after one of the most contentious and technicality-filled state conventions in memory. He was seen to be on the side of the so-called tea party delegates, while Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter was regarded as leader of the "establishment" wing of the party. Each side accused the other of violating party rules. Every indication is that both were right.

New chairman Yates has a more worldly background than Peterson.

He and three other men constitute DC International Advisory, which advises politicians around the world and companies seeking to do business internationally. Yates speaks from his time as deputy assistant to Vice President Dick Cheney for national security affairs from 2001 through 2005, meaning he was involved in diplomacy or crises in 11 countries, including China (he's fluent in Mandarin Chinese), according to the DCIA website.

He appears regularly on Fox News and has advised the presidential campaigns of Rudy Giuliani and Newt Gingrich, his website says.

There is no indication he knows anything about hardware.

We'll see whether international experience will be any better for Idaho state politics than local experience was.