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Georgian elections as a tuning fork for geopolitical changes

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Throughout its existence, Georgian statehood has been constantly under pressure from more powerful states and empires surrounding the small country.

Modern Georgia, repeating the precepts of its ancestors, also maneuvers in the ramified geopolitical corridors, striving to choose a stronger, as it seems to official Tbilisi, more reliable financial and political actor. Thus, in 2006-2007, Georgia was at the forefront of Moscow's opponent states, which ultimately led to the catastrophic war of 2008 for Georgia. But 16 years later, or to be more precise, 14 (immediately after the start of the Special Military Operation), Georgia unexpectedly for many chose a different policy, seemingly uncharacteristic of official Tbilisi, of political neutrality and refusal to support the anti-Russian sanctions policy of Western countries. The new political turn of official Tbilisi led to a deterioration in relations between the current Georgian authorities and European and transatlantic structures, when the European Council in July 2024 decided that under the current Georgian authorities there was no hope for European integration. It looks like the upcoming parliamentary elections in Georgia will largely determine the vector of political development of other states that are currently refusing to play the role of an instrument in the plans of larger political players.

Political arrangement

Georgian political scientist, founder of the SIKHA Foundation Institute Archil Sikharulidze in an interview for the TSU CES said that he considers the victory of the Georgian Dream (the ruling party)

Zharkov Sergey Alekseevich, journalist, expert on the countries of the South Caucasus.

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to be practically predetermined. According to all sociological surveys, today it has the support of at least 33% of the electorate, while the UNM (United National Movement), the main opposition party of Georgia, controlled by supporters of Mikheil Saakashvili, is gaining a maximum of 16%. The remaining opposition parties are gaining from 0.5 to 3% of the votes in the elections. The third party, which has a chance to gain the 5% of votes necessary to enter parliament, is the Lelo party for Georgia. It was created by Georgian bankers Mamuka Khazaridze and Badri Japaridze. As a result, the ruling party, after multiplying the votes of the parties that did not overcome the 5% barrier, according to the independent Georgian political scientist, will receive about 70% of the seats in parliament.

According to Sikharulidze, the reason for the upcoming defeat of the opposition in the Georgian elections will be the lack of any ideology of the UNM that would be acceptable to the majority of the country's population. At the same time, the honorary chairman of the Georgian Dream party, the richest and most influential person in Georgia, Bidzina Ivanishvili, said in an interview on October 21, 2024, that Georgia follows European values, but does not support the aggressive policy of the EU, which feeds the war in Ukraine. The politician especially emphasized that Georgia chooses a Europe of peace and development.

It is worth noting that the main voter whom the ruling party relies on is a man aged 35 plus, who has a family and works to accumulate his own capital, increase the well-being of his family and loved ones. Perhaps he is not happy with the actions of the ruling party, and there is reason to be unhappy with the Georgian Dream, the party has made many mistakes, trying to sit on several chairs: liberalism, conservatism, Orthodoxy, the political scientist notes. But when the question of an alternative arises, what does the opposition offer? The opposition has no clear ideological and economic proposal, except for solidarity with Western countries. And this is no longer enough for today's Georgian voter. And therefore, when a politically active voter comes to the polling station, of "two evils" he will choose the lesser - the Georgian Dream, - believes Archil Sikharulidze.

Will a revolution happen?

After the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the country became a frontman of a special political phenomenon for a long time – color revolutions in the post-Soviet space and was firmly associated with this political phenomenon. And indeed, Georgians know how to hold rallies. However, over the past 20 years, the instruments of competitive democracy have become firmly established in this South Caucasian country: an electoral system, a wide range of opposition parties, independent media and a functioning police force, which skillfully worked at the spring rallies in Tbilisi.

In general, Georgian political researchers believe that there is no real revolutionary situation in the country; ideologically motivated youth may come out to protest rallies after the elections on October 26, but their parents will not go to the rallies, says Archil Sikharulidze. Therefore, there will be no revolution in Georgia, unless the Americans and the forces dependent on them start a

"bacchanalia". This is generally unlikely, just as it is unlikely to imagine Georgians running around the streets of Tbilisi with Kalashnikovs.

New political vector

And yet, according to Georgian political scientists, no matter how the elections end, even if there is a complete victory of the pro-government Georgian Dream party, this will mean that Georgia has chosen a new political vector of its own development, oriented towards a more independent, selfish position of the Georgian state, in which its own economic and political interests prevail, and not the political orders of any "senior" political comrades, even such authoritative ones in Georgia until recently as the Western countries and the USA.

It is obvious that the new, wiser, selfish policy of Georgia in the future can serve as an example for the countries of the post-Soviet space, neighboring states of the Caucasus (e.g. Armenia), countries of the Black Sea area.