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No News, Bad News

Russian presidential elections are approaching. They do not present any surprise since there is no real competition. The outgoing President Putin has the certainty of being elected and as a result of the change in the Constitution that led to the 6-year presidential term already in force during the previous election, he will remain in office until 2024. With four presidential mandates (2000-2004 / 2004-2008 / 2012-2018 / 2018-2024) and one as Prime Minister 2008-2012, the Putin era is expected to reach a record length of quarter of century.

If he will be tempted to get elected president for life like his Chinese colleague Xi Jinping, another constitutional change will be needed. With a parliament, already controlled through 75% of the seats by United Russia's faithful deputies (339 out of 450), and an opposition of 105 deputies, more formal than substantial, it will not be difficult to pass such an amendment. The topic has not yet emerged, but the timing of the Chinese constitutional change that taking place during the same month makes us reflect.

In the Russian political debate, open criticism to Putin is absent and no issues that might overshadow the President are raised. All seemingly alternative candidates, even on television, in advertising and on social networks, understand that it is not rewarding to criticize a leader who has a 70% popularity in the polls and they will have to settle for percentages that can reach 3% in the best case.

All the attention is therefore concentrated not on issues, not on politics, but on voting turnout. In fact, there is fear of a large abstention, due to the absence of competition and political passion. For the President to be elected by 70% of the voters, if the voters are few, it is not considered a success. The abstention could give space to a silent opposition and allow the interpretation that the will of the non-voting Russians as against Putin.

So the appeals are multiplied in different and imaginative forms, some even provocative "sex and voting are for adults only" to mobilize the interest of the Russians in an election campaign without much momentum.

Even the polls do not give room for illusions and present apart from the opposition candidates of the historical parties, Communist and Liberal Democratic, however considered as System Parties, very low percentages for all independents:

- Vladimir Putin UNITED RUSSIA – 69%
- Pavel Grudinin COMMUNIST PARTY – 14%
- Vladimir Zhirinovskiy LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY – 12%
- Ksenia Sobchak INDEPENDENT – 2%
- Sergei Baburin UNION OF ALL THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE – 1%
- Grigory Yavlinsky INDEPENDENT-YABLOKO - 1%
- Maxim Suraykin INDEPENDENT COMMUNISTS OF RUSSIA – 0.5%
- Boris Titov INDEPENDENT PARTY OF GROWTH – 0.5%

The only candidate who could present some discomfort due to his popularity limited to some big cities of Russia, Alexey Navalny, was excluded from the competition.

With good reason for some, while for others fabricated on purpose,.

In any case, even Navalny did not exceed the 10%.

What in the West is assumed as “absence of democracy”, in Russia is interpreted as “stability”,.

You may like it or not, but Russians like Putin.

His speech to the Federal Assembly at the beginning of March has been of historical significance both for the contents and for the announcements in the field of defense and weaponry: nuclear missiles of unlimited thrown, supersonic missiles unequalled in the world as impregnable as a “meteorite” “and a submarine drone that moves at intercontinental distances.

With his now famous phrase pronounced that day:

“now you will listen to us”

has started a new era in which Russia wants to place itself again in the international scenario as a Superpower, without wishing to threaten anyone, but without allowing to be threatened.

Certainly was a speech in addition to the world audience , mainly addressed to the Russian people a few weeks before the vote, to point out that the lack of alternative that often criticizes his leadership, in truth “ from his point of view” is the real strength of Russia: there is no alternative to Putin and it is better for the Russians to be like this.

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