

IN SEARCH OF IDEOLOGY

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The elections of the federal State Duma and the President are approaching. And the main political question – the question of power – is rising in its bitterness. There is no answer for this question, and it is continuing to cause certain problems as a result.

Although the election campaigns will start soon, neither their topics nor the agenda are very clear right now. There is less than one year left before the State Duma elections, yet it is still unclear what the strategy of the main political forces will be, particularly that of the ruling ‘United Russia’ party. Will it provide the voters with a liberal program imposed by the Russian government, or with a conservative com-

munity-focused one? Who will they take as the main opponents, the Communists or Liberals? All these questions remain unanswered.

Second, the current political regime is not likely to continue as it is now. Many problems are becoming more evident, particularly that of political responsibility and the problem of merging power and property.

Third, the existing power is ideologically uncertain and it is not clear who will determine the future ideology that the country will come to live by. The country had such an ideology in the 2000s. It was defined by the phrase, ‘sovereign democracy.’ But today, even the word ‘modernization,’ which seemed to provide a kind of consensus for different people – both the supporters of mobilization economy leaning toward the Soviet experience, and the extreme liberals – can no longer serve as a symbol of unification. Dmitry Medvedev tried to express this modernization consensus, but the government, represented by the Minister of Finance, made it clear that that consensus has no foundation and should be reconsidered.

So **the question of a new ideological consensus is evident. But it is still unclear what the foundation for it may be.** These are the reasons for the appearance of numerous reports by different expert centers. Just a year ago it might have been said that manifests by expert think-tanks were able to compensate for the lack of distinct political programs within parties. But today everybody sees that this is no longer the case. Any manifest from a think tank is still

just an offer to one or another political force. And it can only be a concrete person, not a party, who can implement this offer and turn it into reality. Party program is not a set of certain suggestions; it is a commodity, which can be sold on political market. Of course, this product can be bought or rejected. Nevertheless, until President Medvedev stamps the report by the Institute of Contemporary Development, the program by the Institute of Contemporary Development is nothing more than a suggestion, not an ideology on Medvedev’s behalf, let alone a workable plan.

The authorities should decide who they will be ready to work with in the future, with what political force.

These forces are few, and most of them amount to more or less the same thing. Nevertheless, much depends on this choice. First of all, the legitimacy of power depends on it. If, conditionally speaking, ‘United Russia’ chooses the slogan of one or another political think tank for its campaign, then certain bureaucratic circles will no doubt gain some extra immunity against criticism. This is what Vice-Premier Alexey Kudrin spoke about. However I think what he meant was not the ‘United Russia’, although the public learned from his words that the Russian government is interested in its legitimacy. It is still unclear when the ‘United Russia’ makes its choice, but this is what is going to happen, because only then the political pattern will become more or less clear. ■

Exclusively for RJ

The Strategy-2020 Civil Initiative Foundation is an international social-scientific centre, which was established in follow-up to the ‘Strategiya 2020’ Forum, and aims to provide intellectual support for the modernisation policy that the country’s leadership has declared. The Foundation is headed by **Mikhail Remizov**. Its key experts include **Vyacheslav Inozemtsev** and **Boris Mezhuev**. In April 2011, the Foundation pub-

lished a document entitled ‘Hunting for the Bears’, which was received as a political report. The authors state the necessity of confrontation between the people’s party (‘United Russia’) and the ruling party (the liberal establishment), and also discuss the political culture of Russian reformism.

