



By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

Putin's election victory must not be left to chance



Nothing must be left to chance and jeopardise the new election of Vladimir Putin as the President of Russia. He has been making final preparations for his triumphant and historic assumption of the office of Russian president for the fifth (de facto sixth) time.

He will become one of the longest-serving Russian rulers in history, outlasting most monarchs and even Josef Stalin. However, the entire election process must be closely monitored and managed.

Broad and, if possible, unanimous support in the presidential elections in March has numerous advantages for Putin.

It is necessary because it will be a confirmation of the correctness of his decision from 2 years ago to invade Ukraine and thus suppress all the dilemmas and discontent that still exist in the country.

Also, the Russian leader needs broad support in the elections as a form of justification before his own political, military and business elite, with whom he has a complex relationship.

The support of his subjects is a necessary means for Putin to continue to control his immediate environment.

Risks that must be mitigated

The greatest danger to his plan to surpass his role model, Stalin, regarding the longevity of rule might be setbacks and failures by the Russian army in Ukraine.

If anything could damage Putin's forthcoming new presidential status, it would be the Ukrainian army's reclaiming at least some of the territory previously occupied by Russia.

Russians will be desperate if the Russian army ("magnificent and undefeated in history", as they believe) is forced to retreat. Putin's new role as territory gatherer and undefeated leader of Russia will then be weak.

Putin requested his apparatus and lackeys from the Russian media to intensify fake news and propaganda

As a way to protect against this risk, Putin requested his apparatus and lackeys from the Russian media to intensify fake news and propaganda in 2 principal directions.

One is directed at the Ukrainian people and soldiers, where, by means of increased distribution of fake news and propaganda, attempts are being made to discourage the Ukrainian people from intensive fighting before the elections in Russia next March.

The second, equally extensive and demanding, is directed towards the West, with the principal goal of discouraging providing further assistance to Ukraine as much as possible.

Lavrov and messages of intimidation

Sending Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister, to the **session of the UN Security Council** this week was part of the efforts towards the West, tasked with delivering fake news and alternative reality at a high international forum.

It was a carefully designed propaganda move, where Lavrov replaced Vasily Nebenzya, Russian current and permanent representative to the UN, on stage.



Putin sent Sergey Lavrov to the UN because he has the powers to spook, frighten and intimidate

Moscow knows that the world is tired of unpolished rhetoric and Ambassador Nebenzya, and that it was time for someone who would attract attention to speak at the session of the Security Council. Lavrov was the right choice, particularly 2 months before the Russian presidential elections.

Putin sent Sergey Lavrov to the UN because he has the powers to spook, frighten and intimidate. His appearance at the Security Council was supposed to convince Western politicians to hold off any action until Putin is elected president again.

In addition to employing Lavrov as a heavy propaganda tool, the Kremlin has discovered new means of disseminating the rumour among the Western public that Moscow has been debating the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Both Lavrov's skill at intimidation and rumours of allegedly reconsidering the use of nuclear weapons are focused on the same goal - to deepen divisions in the West over continued support for Ukraine.

Such techniques have often been successful and have had the desired effect on Moscow. A new wave of their us is under way, and this time, the stakes could not be higher - a convincing victory for Putin in the elections taking place for the first time in an atmosphere of war.