Tomorrow's Affairs
Analysis of today
Assessment of tomorrow

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Putin's pre-election investment - $50 for loyalty until the end of the war

Bill Browder was right when he said that Vladimir Putin was probably the wealthiest person on the planet.

He has so much wealth, which could allow him to buy power and security in Russia and the loyalty of influential figures in the West, including some politicians.

The forthcoming presidential elections in Russia, which will last for 3 days, from March 15 to 17, are an opportunity for Putin to test the strength of his corrupt potential again.

The result of the election is not in question. But for Putin, it represents a significant test of the effectiveness of domestic resources necessary for him to continue the military invasion of Ukraine.

Happy and satisfied

Judging by public appearances, Putin is better off than one year ago. He is now happy and satisfied because things are going well in many areas.

Even though the Russian army has been suffering significant losses in Ukraine, he is satisfied. However, the army is no longer retreating, which is important to Putin.

Republican conservatives continue to block US aid to Ukraine successfully, and Donald Trump is on his way to winning the nomination and a possible victory in the presidential elections, something which will leave Ukraine permanently without American help and assistance.

> Moscow's most renowned and expensive restaurants remain full throughout the week

The economic sanctions of the West have been in force for 2 years. However, they have not made life unbearable for the ruling class, which remains comfortably. in the bubble of luxury, fake news and like Vladimir Putin himself, in an informational vacuum.

Moscow's most renowned and expensive restaurants remain full throughout the week. These restaurants cater to Putin's golden million, who help him control and run Russia.

The death toll is insignificant

The Russian president can radiate satisfaction in public appearances because he believes that for waging a difficult war, internal resources are still in good condition.

He does not care how many Russian soldiers will die in Ukraine. Essentially, he only cares about the well-being of those domestic and interior forces providing Russian security domestically.

Russian people do not know the actual number of casualties, and they do not care either.

For them, something else is more significant, and Putin knows their interests well and is skilfully using it in the period leading up to the presidential elections.

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Shortly after the forthcoming election, Russian pensions will be increased by 7.5%. That increase will amount to approximately 1,500 to 2,000 rubles ($15 to $20) for the average pension (about 3 - 4 extra kilograms of beef).

Yet, this increase is important to the average Russian person. Many are passionate about the forthcoming presidential elections because of the 5,000 rubles ($50) lottery for all Russian people who participate in the presidential elections.

Surely, Vladimir Putin could comfortably pay 1 million times such 5,000 ruble wins to Russian voters, providing that the combined value of such 1 million wins is less than the price of an

upscale house in Rublevka neighbourhood outside Moscow, an area where wealthy Russians live.

Permission to continue the war

However, even ordinary Russians understand that a voluntary vote (not rigged) is vital to Putin.

It is a message to the Kremlin to continue the war. Many are willing to send that message just because they could get an additional 5,000 rubles.

Millions of Russians are willing to participate in the election charade just because there is a chance of winning a prize of 5,000 rubles. People are generally struggling and looking for shortcuts and cheating tricks to survive.

Five thousand rubles is not much in Russia. It is the value of a round-trip taxi tariff from the centre of Moscow to the Sheremetyevo International Airport and back to the centre of Moscow. However, this can also pay for one month of utilities. To the average Russian, this is a sufficient amount.

Those 20-30 thousand brave people who attended Alexei Navalny's funeral in a city like Moscow with 15 million residents represent a drop in the ocean

Participants in this pre-election game have surrendered to the Kremlin and the authorities. They did so decades ago, but today, their loyalty to Putin is more important than ever, and he is ready to pay for it.

Those 20-30 thousand brave people who attended Alexei Navalny's funeral in a city like Moscow with 15 million residents represent a drop in the ocean.

It seems that the West has overestimated the effect of its sanctions against the regime in Russia, particularly expectations that they will lead to decisive political pressure on Putin.

It was a wrong assumption. Russian people will not revolt for free. The forthcoming elections confirm that they do not need freedom but an additional 5,000 rubles or $50.

This suggests that if someone offered twice as much as Putin, they would cash in on their lack of concern for freedom.

One hundred dollars instead of $50 from Putin is more likely to persuade Russian people to abstain from voting. It is an equally convincing Russian reality.