

Expert: Time of Real Power for Igor Dodon

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A government formed by socialists came to power in Moldova in 2019. It is time to remember how Igor Dodon conquered the government Olympus.

For a long time the leader of the socialists positioned himself Russia-friendly politician, but calling himself “pro-Moldovan”. Interestingly, Dodon always denied the status of “pro-Russian”: like, these are the tales of his opponents, and he acts only in the interests of Moldova. Nevertheless, thanks to Russia’s support in 2014, the PSRM, headed by Dodon, won the parliamentary elections. On the eve of the vote, Igor Dodon met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russian state-funded television channels told about Dodon, which certainly influenced the vote of the pro-Russian part of the Moldovan residents. Later Igor Dodon spoke a lot about the need to strengthen relations with Russia, protect the status of the Russian language and abandon European integration and cooperation with NATO.

In November 2016, Dodon was elected President of Moldova. He made his first official international visit to Moscow in January 2017 at the invitation of Vladimir Putin. Following the meeting, Dodon promised to cancel the Association Agreement between Moldova and the EU in the near future and stop Moldova’s movement to NATO.

Subsequently, in 2017-2019, Dodon and Putin met repeatedly in Moscow. As a result, the trade turnover of Moldova and Russia increased significantly, the issues of wine and fruit delivery from Moldova were resolved. A large number of Moldovan companies entered the Russian market.

The Russian language topic became one of the trump cards for Dodon and the socialists. The President of Moldova spoke very negatively about the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova on the Russian language. He wrote on his Facebook page that he strongly condemns

"...another anti-people, anti-constitutional decision of the Constitutional Court. The provisions of this Law, adopted by the Supreme Council of the Moldavian SSR in 1989, are the cornerstone of the national consensus in the multi-ethnic Moldovan society. The Moldavian language as the state language and the Russian language as the language of inter-ethnic communication is the formula on which the building of the Moldovan statehood was built",

Dodon emphasized.

According to him, any attempts to destroy this historical consensus can lead to the most irreparable consequences. Dodon publicly stated that he intends to return the Russian language its status of the language of international communication after the parliamentary elections. The President also strongly opposed the law adopted in January 2018 prohibiting the retransmission of Russian news and analytical newscasts in Moldova.

However, at the end of the day, the above and many other Dodon's statements have not been implemented. As the President himself rightly pointed out, the main reason is the lack of real power levers of the head of state.

The situation has changed dramatically in 2019. With the consensus of influential international partners (Russia, the US and the EU) in June 2019, after another political crisis, the infamous oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc, who managed the situation in the country, was expelled from Moldova. With the active participation of international partners, primarily Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak, a coalition of the

Party of Socialists and the ACUM bloc was formed. In fact, there was a reset of the political system in Moldova.

However, bringing together ideologically irreconcilable adversaries, the coalition proved unsustainable. The struggle for control over the justice sector led to the resignation of Maia Sandu's government on November 12. Two days later, supported by the Democratic Party, a new government of Moldova was formed, proposed by the socialists. The majority of the government is former advisors to the President Dodon. It should also be noted that on November 4, socialist Ion Ceban was elected mayor of Chisinau. Thus, the Party of Socialists, and hence their leader Igor Dodon, received almost all the power in Moldova.

Now it is time of real power for Igor Dodon. Experts who have closely followed the situation in Moldova suggest that now the President can be expected to fulfill a wide range of pre-election promises. The head of state will try to further exploit the image of the most pro-Moldovan politician in Moldova. However, as it should be understood, this does not imply a radical rejection of contacts with the West rather the opposite. Anyway, after a record-setting appointment within 48 hours of a new 'technocratic' government now is the moment of truth for the President of the country. So, this act of the protracted Moldovan political drama will put everything into place.