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Let The Seeds Grow

“Of all the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Moldova will be the first that manages to make a serious breakthrough on economic development. It will take about 10 to 15 years, given the current circumstances.”

This seems like a pretty debatable position, doesn't it? But a discussion along these lines took place at the international economics school from which I recently returned. Strange as it may seem, this point of view was not expressed by my fellow students, but by people with a lot more experience, including former Georgian Economic Reform Minister Kakha Bendukidze (who was the author of his country's main liberal reforms) and Andrei Illarionov, who was economics adviser to then-Russian President Vladimir Putin from 2000 to 2005 and who is now a fellow at Washington's Cato Institute.

And the reason for their optimism is the very same parliamentary form of government that everyone in the country is now cursing at the top of their lungs. Moldova was the first CIS country to carry out a constitutional reform and create a parliamentary republic and, after parliamentary institutions have matured in some 10 or 15 years, the experts say, Moldova will be the first CIS country to begin serious economic development.

I won't make various economic pronouncements such as that parliamentary government facilitates economic development and the creation of a competitive market, especially since I am not an economist. But all you have to do is look at a map of the world and see that the majority of developed DEMOCRATIC countries are parliamentary, rather than presidential, republics.

It is even more depressing to listen to such predictions at the same time that the liberals in parliament are calling for a referendum on returning direct presidential elections. Of course, most Moldovans support this idea, because it seems like the fastest way to make some decisions. But I think that if we had strong, competing political parties, each with its own, reputable mass media, we would settle a lot more than we would by going back to a system of turning out once every four years to vote for a president.

It seems stupid to return to the point that we started from. It would make a lot more sense to think of ways of simplifying the procedure by which parliament elects a president by, for example, allowing it to do so with a simple majority like they do in Germany. That would enable us to avoid political collapses such as we are experiencing now.

And those who argue that parliamentary government will just mean a continuation of the one-party monopoly that we have seen for the last eight years are wrong. Over the last eight years, the new institutes of parliamentary government have only begun taking root. But we already see some new and fairly serious players – players who even under unfree circumstances managed to deprive the Communists of their previous position.

P.S. Once again, hello everyone! I have finally returned home and to the Internet. We'll be meeting here more often.

-- Natalia Morari, blogging for [RFE/RL's Moldovan Service](#)

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