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Russian Spy Agency Accuses U.S. of Plotting Election Unrest in Georgia

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Protesters in Tbilisi, Georgia rally against the "foreign influence" law. **Mikhail Yegikov / TASS**

Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) accused the United States of weaponizing European election observers to discredit next month's elections in Georgia and spark pro-Western street demonstrations.

"The U.S. State Department intends to use a new tool to interfere in Georgia's parliamentary elections on Oct. 26 in order to prevent the victory of Georgian Dream," the SVR said in a statement published Wednesday, referring to the South Caucasus nation's ruling party, which has been accused of cozying up to Moscow in recent years.

The Russian spy agency claimed that U.S. authorities were conspiring with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) democratic institutions division ODIHR to declare Georgia's upcoming elections unfree and unfair.

"Washington's intention is obvious and no longer surprising: give an excuse to Georgia's pro-Western opposition to launch mass protests with the aim of seizing power in the country

by force," the SVR's statement said. "This demonstrates the final transformation of the ODIHR into a mouthpiece for the U.S. authorities' dishonest games."

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ODIHR, which is headquartered in Warsaw, Poland, announced Thursday that its observers will hold a press conference to open their mission to Georgia's parliamentary elections.

Georgian Dream has faced growing criticism from both the domestic opposition and the country's Western allies over what they describe as a pivot toward Russia. In May, Georgia's parliament passed a controversial "foreign influence" law that critics compared to similar legislation passed in Russia more than a decade ago.

The ruling party insists that it remains committed to joining the European Union, which is enshrined in the country's constitution. Meanwhile, Georgia's opposition has vowed to revoke the "foreign influence" law if they win enough seats in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Russia's SVR in July accused the U.S. of plotting "regime change" in Georgia after its elections in October, but it did not provide any evidence for the claims. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller at the time called the allegations "completely false."

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