

Georgian government withdraws “foreign agents” bill after two days of NATO-backed protests

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After two days of Western-backed protests in Tbilisi, Georgia’s ruling “Georgian Dream” party has withdrawn a “foreign agents” bill that was viewed by the US and the EU as a threat to their interests. Georgia, a country of 3.7 million in the southern Caucasus, is regarded as strategically important in the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, which has destabilized the entire region.

The protests that began on Tuesday saw violent clashes between the police and demonstrators and the arrests of dozens of people. The bill, titled “On Transparency of Foreign Influence,” was intended to force organizations such as media outlets and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to disclose whether they are backed by foreign money. Under the proposed legislation, organizations that receive more than 20 percent of their funding from abroad could be labeled “foreign agents.”

Similar anti-democratic measures were passed in Russia and intensified in June of last year, amid fears that Western governments, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, would ratchet up their support for so-called “civil society” groups and institutions.

Such organizations have been heavily funded by both the United States and the EU since the fall of the Soviet Union, and played a prominent role in staging the so-called Georgian “Rose Revolution” in 2003 and the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” in 2004. In reality, no revolutions took place, and both cases merely marked the installation of US and NATO friendly regimes hostile to Moscow.

In 2014, Ukraine’s Western-funded “civil society” allied with the country’s far-right neo-Nazi groups to undemocratically bring down the Russian-backed government of Viktor Yanukovich and install a NATO puppet regime.

While the bill that the Georgian government sought to

pass this week constituted an attack on democratic rights, there was nothing progressive about the political orientation of the protests in the country’s capital. In class composition and political outlook, they resemble those of 2003 in Georgia or 2004 and 2014 in Ukraine: they are rooted predominantly in layers of the middle class and led by the country’s pro-Western opposition. Protesters have been waving EU, US and Ukrainian flags and, from day one, the demonstrations were endorsed by US and EU officials.

The withdrawal of the bill is an indication of the intense pressure exerted by NATO and the pro-Western opposition on the Georgian government.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—all NATO and EU members who have played a prominent role in escalating the war in Ukraine and promoting anti-Russian sentiment—condemned the draft law.

“We call on the Parliament of Georgia to responsibly assess the real interests of the country and refrain from decisions that may undermine aspirations of Georgia’s people to live in a democratic country which is advancing towards the EU and NATO,” the chief diplomats of each country wrote in a statement on the situation.

US State Department spokesman Ned Price made clear that the US viewed the bill as part of a larger struggle tied to the conflict in Ukraine and Washington’s ongoing proxy war against Russia.

“Parliament’s advancing of these Kremlin-inspired draft laws is incompatible with the people of Georgia’s clear desire for European integration and its democratic development,” Price stated.

On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky threw his support behind the protesters, thanking them for waving the Ukrainian flag.

“We want to be in the European Union and we will be.

We want Georgia to be in the European Union, and I am sure it will be,” Zelensky stated. “We want Moldova to be in the European Union, and I am sure it will be. All free peoples of Europe deserve this.”

The French-born Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili has opposed the bill from the beginning and called for “a quicker and shorter path” into both NATO and the EU for Georgia. He described the introduction of the bill as part of a plot hatched in Moscow.

“Clearly, Russia is not going to let go very easily, but Russia is losing its war in Ukraine,” Zourabichvili said in an interview with CNN.

The ruling Georgian Dream has likewise supported the country’s integration into the EU and NATO, but it has at the same time tried to maintain good relations with Moscow. In contrast to Zourabichvili, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, who is also the chair of Georgian Dream, supported the bill and called protesters part of the “radical opposition.” Since 2012, the party has pledged to “normalize” relations with Moscow over the breakaway region of South Ossetia.

In 2008, then-Georgian President and darling of the United States, Mikheil Saakashvili, set off a disastrous war with Russia, after he initiated an artillery barrage on the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali. At least 162 civilians were killed.

The Georgian Orthodox Church, which plays a prominent role in Georgian society and politics, has likewise supported the “foreign agents” bill, as the institution views Western encroachments on its territory by other religious organizations and LGBTQ groups with hostility.

Amid the ongoing NATO-backed war in Ukraine, the protests in Tbilisi and the efforts by NATO against the bill make clear that the imperialist powers will not accept attempts by the Georgian Dream party to balance between Moscow and the West. They expect complete obedience to their plans to subjugate Russia and the entire former Soviet Union.



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