Our previous text analyzed the results of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Korea in hot pursuit. However, a closer look, especially the analysis of the origin of those deputies who were elected, allowed us to make a series of additional findings.

Among the articles devoted to the election results, the author was repeatedly faced with statements to the effect that "the ruling party has lost popularity in favor of the People's Party, with its central views." This is a typical example of a non-professional analysis.

Yes, this appears to be the case on the surface. The Democratic Party has maintained its number of seats and Saenuri lost about the same amount of seats as Ahn Cheol-soo’s party gained. Given that Ahn used centrist rhetoric, it is easy to imagine that sympathies moved towards him, but in reality, the picture is more complex, and if you look closely at the results of the election, it becomes clear that each of the three former party leaders, including Ahn Cheol-soo, suffered defeat, and his chances in the presidential race have decreased substantially.

The Saenuri situation is simpler. They have lost the parliamentary majority, and their former leader, Kim Moo-sung, resigned. As per tradition, this is the very least that those who are responsible for defeat should do. It remains unclear who will now be able to lead the party and prove himself to be a serious politician. "Hawks" such as Chung Mong-joon have carved themselves marginal niches, and good managers such as the current mayor of Seoul and a moderate leader feel relaxed in this niche and have no intention of leaving it. In this regard, a number of interlocutors of the author believe that Park Geun-hye’s circle will intensify their efforts to win over the current UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, when he leaves office.

Now, back to the Democratic Party. As we remember, the split within it was caused by dissatisfaction with the former leader, Moon Jae Ying, who has promised to resign if his party loses. In fact, he had already done so, shifting the direct preparation of elections to Kim Chong-in, but, in many ways, the election outcome demonstrates its serious political defeat, and here it would be apt to diverge from current affairs, and give our readers a short lecture on the history of the Democratic Party.

The traditional base of the Democrats was the Southwestern region, in particular, the Jeolla Province. At the same time, its core electorate was in the Southern areas around the city of Gwangju, which had a long tradition of resistance to the military regime. President Kim Dae-jung, the first representative of the democratic camp in the government, was himself a native of these areas and that is why, when he came to power during the economic crisis of 1997, the members of his faction also accompanied him to the top.

However, Kim wanted to go beyond protectionism and regionalism, and wanted his party to be potentially able to earn points outside its elected regions too. To this end, he made a team, raised and appointed a successor, Roh Moo-hyun, who came from the south-eastern region, which was previously considered a conservative stronghold. As a result, even before the election of 2002, several factions had been formed within the ruling party, two of which are now the most important to this story: The "Old guard" of Kim Dae-jung and the young reformers, who were grouped around Roh Moo-hyun.
In 2002, Roh Moo-hyun won the elections. Not so much a democrat as a populist, he began to quite actively dispatch with competitors from the opposing faction, and after some time he created a new political party, that he started to openly support. As a result, when this was used as grounds for impeachment, both conservatives and "old Democrats" spoke out in support thereof. However, a new parliamentary election came, the impeachment failed, after which the "old" party of Kim Dae-jung’s supporters virtually ceased to exist. Meanwhile, the young reformers secured their positions, while Mr. Moon Jae-in, is now mostly known for being the Head of Roh Moo-hyun's administration.

When in 2007 the Conservatives returned to power, and Lee Myung-bak became a conservative president instead of an economic one, the Democratic Party (the name changed, but the overall idea remained the same), naturally, started to attract everybody, who was unsatisfied with the existing ruling party. Representatives of different factions found themselves back in the same camp. But it is clear that the Cheol group was dissatisfied with the fact that the key positions were held by Mun Jae-in and his followers. With the infusion of new members to the party headed by Ahn Cheol-soo, the situation has not changed as a whole. As a mere formality, the management became a little more collegial, but the union of the candidates was insufficient to cause conservative candidate, Park Geun-hye, to suffer defeat. And when, in the hope of removing Moon from the post of leader, Ahn began to gather all the discontented members around him and Cheol's faction happily joined him. And it was they who made up a significant number of politicians and members of Parliament, who, together with him went over to the People's Party.

And now let's go back to the results of the elections. The People's Party wins in a strictly delineated region - Gwangju and South Jeolla Province. Outside this region, they have only a few votes. Ahn Cheol-soo takes one seat in Seoul, and the party gains another somewhere else. This has the following meaning: first, Moon Jae-in suffered a very serious defeat. He has more or less lost his basis. That region, which has always been the mainstay of the Democratic Party, voted in favor of the People's Party precisely because the most famous and widely popular politicians were its members. This was a very painful blow, if you add to this the fact that in Seoul or other regions, people voted not so much for Moon, but against the Conservative Party. And given the fact that in terms of seats the party was at the same position, personally for Moon, this situation is likely a defeat. Perhaps this party operative will be able to somehow turn the situation to his advantage, but he will have to work for it.

Second, it turns out that the People's Party won, but Ahn Cheol-soo lost. Yes, the new party declared itself a major force, but, judging by where and how people voted for it, it is not Ahn Cheol-soo's centrist party, but a party of the Jeolla faction. If everything had developed according to Ahn's plans, which presented the People's Party as the "third force", he should have expected success in Seoul or other regions, where the people, tired of the traditional regionalism, would vote for any new political organization. But this didn’t happen! And here the question arises, will the situation turn out that the regional leaders will try to "squeeze out" Ahn's party, at best, leaving him in the post of ceremonial leader, or will it be the case that, to stay in power, Ahn will have to substantially change his image and ideology, moving from that role of the "third force" he was going to play, because some experts consider the region that voted for him the preserve of radical leftists. Therefore, we cannot say that Ahn won.

In other words, it turned out that the People's Party "snatched" votes from the Democrats who, in turn, "snatched" about the same amount of votes from the Conservatives. This more complex model shows how complicated Korean political games may be, which we will continue to follow with interest.

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