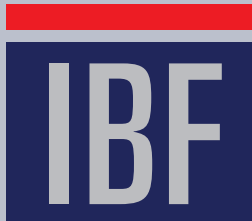


Meaningless elections



It's going to be a bad year for incumbents, is the message voters are hearing in many countries. Some political pundits are predicting major upheaval at the polls, as current politicians pay the price for the bad decisions they've made in the past. Instead of showing how much elections can matter, though, this year's balloting in the CR and other countries will likely show exactly how little elections can matter. Some familiar faces will disappear, to be sure, and there might be a flip-flop of the parties in power, but the major political and economic trends will likely continue, no matter who comes out on top. The trends are toward higher taxes, only superficial cuts in spending, increasingly institutionalized corruption and a refusal to address the real causes of the crisis. Instead of bringing dissatisfied voters a feeling of relief, the meaningless elections will eventually only increase their level of frustration.



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