Twitter Thread by Jens Siegert

Jens Siegert
@jenssiegert

Navalny's return, his arrest and the protest. A first quick thread

1. Navalny in Germany had rot make a difficult choice: to stay in exile and become insignificant or to return to stay significant (and may be even rise more), but under risk for his freedom and life. /2

2. I can't imaging that Navalny and his team thought that his return and even his arrest might provoke a „revolutionary situation" in Russia like we've seen in Ukraine earlier or Belarus now. he's a too experienced politician for such a misjudgment. He's playing the long game./3

3. He had to wage his wishes and the risk. His preferred the possibility of a rather long imprisonment to the perspective of insignificance in evil. He's more than 20 y. younger than Putin. The next medium-term goal will be „smart voting" in the Duma elections next September. /4

4. Nobody can with certainty predict the tipping point of political developments. No revolutionary moment was ever predicted.Lenin did not know that he will succeed, when he returned to Russia in 1917. What he knew was that there is a crises. There is a multiple crisis in…/5

…Russia now, too. No really worrying for Putin. But worrying enough to be afraid of an upcoming challenger to try to not let become him too strong. So far Putin's strategy was to use only as much force as needed. This is a strategy that demand first certain skills…/6

…(which are increasingly lacking in the Kremlin) and it come at one point to a natural end, because only force is left. /7

5. For any political contender there are two main problems. First: People almost never prefer a contender to a ruling politician, because they find him so much better and more likeable. A contender has always to wait for mistakes. That s/he can do is to raise enough…/8

…pressure to make mistakes more likely. That's what Navalny, quite skilfully, is doing all the time. Second: No contender knows the right time to call for the final attack in advance. S/he has to guess and to try. This most probably includes many times to fail, to try…/9

…again, to fail better and so on. All this by the threat of exhaustion and disappointment of his followers and, even more important, this, who will follow him only, when they smell her/his victory coming. The dilemma is that this people are the deciding one./10

6. Navalny has one more important disadvantage. In Russia a deep crisis of trust (in politics in general and politicians particularly) is pre failing for many years now. Its not likely to end soon. Putin until recently managed to stay aside of it. But now it seems, he's…/11

…been drawn into it, too. But a Soviet heritage still supports his case: the „double thinking". Most people in Russia don't trust the state institutions and those who are in charge. But they believe that only the state is the only hope that's left./12

The state today is Putin and he will remain the state until its over. /13

7. What has Navalny achieved so far?
First: He's build the first and only nationwide network of supporters except of those the Kremlin controls.
Second: This network is working without his direct involvement.
Third: The poisoning and the return have both boosted his …/14

…name recognition, partly even his popularity. He's now undoubtely the number two politician in the country.
Forth: He seems to mobilise even people, who are not content with his political agenda or opinion, but with his approach of being Putin's contender./15

If he and his supporters will be able to translate this into something that can be, with some plausibility, declared a victory of his „smart voting" campaign in the Duma election in September, he would be even stronger. If he still will be alive. /end