

Caucasus 'Part of Russia'

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The  **Moscow Times**

Senior Kremlin aide Vladislav Surkov dismissed speculation Friday about the possible secession of the volatile North Caucasus from Russia, calling the region “an integral part” of the country, Interfax reported.

The first deputy chief of the Kremlin staff made the statement at a meeting with leaders of local youth groups in Grozny. Surkov, whose father was an ethnic Chechen, also met with representatives of United Russia’s local branch the same day.✕

(MT)

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