

Putin, Medvedev Bicker Over Blast

By [Natalya Krainova](#)

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Channel One deputy head Kirill Kleimyonov, left, speaking to Putin and channel director Konstantin Ernst. **Alexei Druzhinin**

President Dmitry Medvedev took an indirect dig at Prime Minister Vladimir Putin over the Domodedovo Airport blast, stating Thursday that officials should not speak of the attack as being "solved" yet — as Putin had done hours earlier.

Putin made his [statement](#) during a surprise visit to state-controlled Channel One television late Wednesday.

Asked by a program host, Kirill Kleimyonov, about any "clues" in the investigation of the last week's bombing, which killed 36, Putin said the investigation had progressed much further.

"Not 'clues.' We can take it that on the whole the case has been solved," the prime minister said, his web site reported.

Putin, who said he "dropped by" to congratulate the channel's head, Konstantin Ernst, on his

birthday, also shared his views on terrorism, the Russian film industry, restrictions on air guns, and his own work schedule.

Medvedev said Thursday that it was "unacceptable when someone announces ahead of all investigative procedures and the indictment that a crime has been solved," Interfax reported.

You must "work, but not make publicity for yourself," Medvedev said during a meeting with Federal Security Service chief Alexander Bortnikov and Investigative Committee head Alexander Bastrykin. He did not mention any names.

Alexei Mukhin, head of the Center for Political Information, said Medvedev wanted to "prove that he is an independent politician" to prevent himself from becoming a "lame duck" ahead of the 2012 presidential elections.

"The active presidential campaign Putin has been conducting in the past year has attracted the attention of influence groups inside the country," Mukhin said.

This is not the first time Medvedev has indirectly rebuked Putin. In December, he spoke against Putin voicing his stance on jailed oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky ahead of a court ruling. Khodorkovsky, whom Putin has called a criminal, was convicted shortly thereafter.

Bortnikov also told Medvedev during the Thursday meeting that the FSB has arrested several people who have information about the masterminds of the attack. He did not identify those detained, but said relatives of the suicide bomber who carried out the blast are also under suspicion.

The Investigative Committee [announced](#) Saturday that the suspected suicide bomber at Domodedovo was a 20-year-old male from the North Caucasus, but gave no further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Media reports said earlier that the blast could have been organized by the same terrorist group that unsuccessfully prepared an attack in downtown Moscow on New Year's Eve.

Five people were arrested and five more put on a federal wanted list in connection with the failed December blast, the National Anti-Terrorist Committee said Saturday.

The committee identified the suspects, but denied the link between December's attack plot and the Domodedovo blast.

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