

Putin Gets Chinese Peace Prize for War

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BEIJING — The sponsors of a Chinese peace prize said Tuesday that they plan to hold a ceremony awarding this year's honor to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin despite being ordered not to by the government.

Putin was awarded the prize for starting a war in Chechnya in 1999, the organizers said. "He became the anti-terrorist No. 1 and the national hero," said a statement on the prize's web site. ❏ Qiao Damo, head of the China International Peace Research Center, said the Dec. 9 ceremony to award the Confucius Prize would go ahead. That's despite what Qiao said were orders from the Culture Ministry to cancel the ceremony because permission wasn't given to publicize the award and the group had illicitly changed its name.

Putin did not comment about the honors Tuesday.

The award's sponsors are professors and academics who say they are independent of the government. ❏ The group hastily launched the prize last year in an apparent attempt to counter the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize that went to jailed Chinese dissident writer Liu Xiaobo.

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