

State of the Nation Liveblog

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Welcome to MT's liveblog of President Dmitry Medvedev's annual state of the nation address. He delivered the speech in the Bolshoi Kremlin Palace to members of the Federation Council and other officials. It aired live on two state-controlled television channels.

Medvedev made the speech as a lame duck president. The biggest questions ahead of the address: What would be said about his role in the administration of now-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin after Putin's anticipated presidential win in March and what would be said about his own legacy as president?

1:55 p.m. — We're signing off from this brief liveblog of Medvedev's speech, which lasted about an hour. If you just arrived here, you'll find a number of speech highlights below. If you were following the blog live, thank you for joining us.

We will have a news analysis of the speech on our home page this evening.

Update: See the Moscow Times news [article](#) about this address.

1:40 p.m. — State-controlled newswire RIA-Novosti is carrying [an article](#) quoting political analysts who say Medvedev's promises of political reform could break up the opposition.

Financial daily Vedmosti is running a headline drawn from the end of Medvedev's speech. "Medvedev: I believe in every one of you, and I know that everything will work out for us," [the headline reads](#).

1:18 p.m. — Channel One is airing a police melodrama. That is a sharp contrast with the TV programming after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's live call-in show last week, when the 4 1/2 hour call-in show was followed by the airing of extensive clips.

1:15 p.m. — The state of the nation address is followed by a news program. The program devotes about two minutes to covering the highlights of Medvedev's speech. It then goes to coverage of Moscow's snowy weather and next to disaster coverage.

1:12 p.m. — The anthem ends, and Medvedev says to the audience, "Good-bye. Happy New Year."

1:10 p.m. — Medvedev concludes his speech: "Everything will work out for us," he says of the country's plans.

The audience applauds, and they begin to stand up. Strains of the national anthem begin, and the audience continues to stand up and remains standing as shortened instrumental version of the anthem is played. Medvedev remains standing behind the podium.

1:08 p.m. — "The global [economic] depression could continue for a few years," Medvedev warns. Meanwhile, "the competition for minds, for ideas, for resources will only heighten," he says.

"But even in these difficult conditions, we don't have the right to stop the country's development," Medvedev says.

1:08 p.m. — The president says he has tried to modernize the country and make it a better place to live. Modernization of the country has only begun, he says.

1:06 p.m. — The customs union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia is mentioned for a second time in the president's speech. (He earlier had also discussed relations with the European Union and visa negotiations with the United States.)

1:00 p.m. — "Hateful people." That's the president discussing ultra-nationalist and fascist trends in the country. He says Russians must do a better job of raising their children. He also discusses the massive internal immigration in the country.

The camera flashes to a handful of the audience members who are dressed in ethnic garb: a man in a traditional Northern Caucasian hat and a man with Buddhist robes.

12:59 p.m. — Cultural development is perhaps the most important aspect of a modernization program, Medvedev says. He advocates supporting the traditional school system and innovative forms of educational programs.

12:58 p.m. — "All of the state's social obligations will be fulfilled," Medvedev promises. By those obligations, he says, he means pensions, support for large families, medical insurance and cultural programs.

12:55 p.m. — Moscow as a global financial center: Medvedev says that project is continuing.

12:54 p.m. — The immediate future will be a challenging time, the president says. The next president will need to advance the country's development.

12:50 p.m. — Medvedev proposes addressing the issue of "public television" — currently, the government controls most of the country's freely available television channels. He says there could be a TV channel where neither private owners nor the government has full control over editorial decisions.

12:47 p.m. — Two months ago, Medvedev proposed "a more open government," he says, and [expounds](#) on that topic.

Putin, Matviyenko and Patriarch Kirill are seated together in the front row of the audience. To one side of them, next to Putin, is former Kremlin chief of staff and now State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin. To the other side, seated next to Patriarch Kirill, is Kremlin aide and political tactician Vladislav Surkov.

12:45 p.m. — The government must pay more attention to supporting teachers, parents and others who in turn support the development of families and increase the country's population, Medvedev says.

12:40 p.m. — The president is again discussing anti-corruption efforts. He then talks about private-public partnerships and the government's relationship with ordinary citizens.

"Citizens will have easier access to the government," he says, recommending that the government use Internet technologies to increase that access. Medvedev is well-known for his love of Internet and social networking technologies.

12:38 p.m. — Medvedev mentions "the decentralization of power" in the government.

12:36 p.m. — The TV camera zooms in on elections commission chief Vladimir Churov after Medvedev says that presidential elections must be honest and fair. It stays on Churov's face, which is taut and worried, for many long seconds.

12:34 p.m. — Medvedev is proposing what he is calling significant changes to the political system. He names a number of measures, such as registering parties more easily and decreasing the number of signatures needed for a candidate to get a spot on the ballots.

12:27 p.m. — The president is now discussing social benefits. He promises that pensions for military service personnel will annually increase 2 percent more than the rate of inflation.

12:25 p.m. — Medvedev is talking about his much-touted battle against corruption. He notes that officials are now forced to declare their incomes and assets.

12:21 p.m. — Gennady Zyugavov, head of the Communist Party, is seated next to the LDPR's

Zhirinovskiy. Zyuganov is quickly scribbling notes in a notebook, while his neighbor is leaning back in his chair with his lips clenched.

12:16 p.m. — The president notes that half of all regions are covered by the Glonass satellite positioning system, which is Russia's equivalent of Europe's Galileo system or the United States' GPS system.

12:16 p.m. — Medvedev says of his undertaking a modernization plan during his presidency, "I am sure that it was the right decision."

12:14 p.m. — "More than 6 million children were born in the past four years. This is a record for the country," Medvedev announces while discussing the country's demographics at length.

(To note, we had typed this quote earlier as "in the past year," but he actually said the 6 million children were born over the course of four years.)

12:11 p.m. — "Russia has become the sixth-biggest economy in the world," Medvedev says to applause in the Kremlin hall. The president also notes that the country has a low level of national debt.

In the audience, the camera pans to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, head of the Liberal Democratic Party. Vladimir Churov, chairman of the Central Elections Commission and the person who oversaw the controversial State Duma elections, is seated behind him.

12:09 p.m. — The president [opens his speech](#) by talking about deserved criticism and unfair criticism, in an apparent reference to the recent massive protests over the State Duma elections. He says the country "won't allow provocateurs" to disturb the country.

12:04 p.m. — Medvedev walks into the hall, his arms swinging at his sides, and proceeds directly to the podium. He is greeted by applause.

12:01 p.m. — The other half of the tandem, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, has entered the packed hall in the Kremlin ahead of President Dmitry Medvedev's speech. The assembled officials applaud and stand up for his entrance, which he is making with Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill.

The Georgiyevskiy Hall, an ornate gold-and-white room in the Kremlin, is packed with State Duma deputies and other political figures.

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