

Medvedev Says Political Reforms Will Make Government Stronger

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President Dmitry Medvedev speaking at a meeting of the State Council on Tuesday.

In a speech Tuesday to the Cabinet and the country's governors, President Dmitry Medvedev said reforms he initiated to ease rules for registering political parties and to reinstate direct gubernatorial elections will strengthen and improve government.

Laying out policy priorities to the State Council, Medvedev echoed many of the same themes mentioned by President-elect Vladimir Putin in his address to the State Duma earlier this month, including a call to improve Russia's business climate rating, to create more and better jobs, and to improve conditions for families with multiple children.

He also touched on the hot-button issue of corruption, saying additional measures would be taken to combat large-scale corruption. He said the measures included implementing oversight over officials' expenses, new punishment for corruption offenses, and the formation of "special structures" for investigating corruption cases.

"We announced a war on corruption, we know our enemy, and here we will not back down,"

Medvedev said, Interfax reported.

Regarding political reforms that he has sponsored and that the opposition has called for, including direct elections of governors and less strict rules for registering political parties, Medvedev said they would not lead to "chaos" and would improve government.

"Democracy is no longer a curse word. Its prestige has been restored, and the prospects [for it] in our country are guaranteed," he said.

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