

Medvedev Cites Putin Relationship as Reason He'll Keep His Job

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev walking as he gives an interview to NTV host Vadim Takmenyov in Moscow on May 23. The interview was aired Sunday night. **Ekaterina Shtukina**

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said that his personal relationship with President Vladimir Putin is an indication that he will not be dismissed.

Medvedev, speaking in an interview aired on NTV television late Sunday, sought to lay to rest speculation that his time might be short in a Cabinet facing criticism from lawmakers and analysts impatient with its efforts to boost economic growth.

He said that he feels grateful to Putin for inviting him in 1999 to move to Moscow from St. Petersburg, where he was teaching law at a university, noting that he would never have come to Moscow if it weren't for Putin.

Medvedev, who served as president from 2008 to 2012 after being anointed by Putin for the position, described his relationship with Putin as "good and companionable."

"If it were otherwise, we would have a different government now," Medvedev told Vadim Tekmenyov, host of the "Central Television" program.

He acknowledged, however, that ministers are not assured of holding onto his post forever.

"I am a more seasoned soldier than many of my colleagues. I tell them, 'Guys, you hold still and work because sooner or later you all are going to be dismissed. That is life,'" he said.

Appearing laid back and friendly, Medvedev avoided going into detail about his own future, saying only that every politician should be ready to leave politics for good one day. "Many decent people have not been able to survive," Medvedev said.

While Medvedev is seen as having little chance of becoming president again, with many Russians viewing him as a politically weak figure, he remains a powerful player within the ruling elite, according to a recent study by Minchenko Consulting, an influential think tank.

Medvedev, who has said that he doesn't regret deciding not to run for a second term as president in favor of Putin, also avoided making any political statements Sunday.

Asked whether he was watching the politically tinged embezzlement trial of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Medvedev said that he was following the case but not "actively."

The NTV interview, which also showed highlights Medvedev's daily routine, mirrored a similar interview that the television channel broadcast with Putin last year.

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