

Ousted Yanukovych 'Joins' Putin Administration

March 31, 2014



Putin and Yanukovych at the 6th Russia-Ukraine Intergovernmental Commission in the Kremlin in December.

Update: This was a spoof article for April Fool's Day. Read more [here](#).

Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych has accepted a position in President Vladimir Putin's administration as an adviser on the country's affairs with Ukraine, according to a source close to the Kremlin.

The official's surprise announcement comes at the height of tensions between Russia and Ukraine over Russia's recent annexation of the Crimean peninsula last month.

"We need to understand how the bandits who seized power in Kiev think," the source said Monday. "We thought Viktor Fyodorovich [Yanukovych] could give us insight about how to deal with this new crowd."

The source added: "The illegal coup in Kiev put an experienced professional on the street. We

reserve the right to rectify this violation of Mr. Yanukovich's fundamental right to employment."

A Kremlin spokesman refused to comment on whether Yanukovich had been offered a job. But the appointment was indirectly confirmed by an official in the presidential property department, who said Yanukovich was expected to move into a Kremlin-owned estate.

Yanukovich, whose whereabouts remain murky after he fled Kiev under pressure from opposition protesters in late February, has not made any public comments about a new job.

Although the West has recognized the acting Ukrainian government, voted in by parliament after Yanukovich's ouster, Russia maintains that the new authorities obtained power illegally.

Yanukovich, for his part, has warned of dangerous elements among the new authorities.

After days of speculation regarding his whereabouts, Yanukovich resurfaced in Russia on Feb. 28 requesting protection from "extremists."

At a news conference in Rostov-on-Don in early March, he reiterated his unwavering support for Russia, which likely swayed the Kremlin's decision to hire him, according to the source.

"The usurpers who seized power will try to shift the responsibility on me," Yanukovich said. "And perhaps even on Russia. I will never agree to this."

Yanukovich told reporters last week that every Ukrainian region should hold its own referendum, a statement that was denounced as an attempt to exacerbate strife and political rifts within the country.

The Kremlin property department official said that Yanukovich would be housed in an estate on Moscow's posh Rublyovskoye Shosse from April 1.

"We are expecting a shipment of art work and vintage furniture smuggled out of the Mezhyhirya residence at any moment," said the official, who sought anonymity so he could speak candidly. "We are closely following Mr. Yanukovich's instructions for the interior design of his home, which will be free of any orange, a color he finds hideous."

The property manager also said that an enclosure would be constructed to accommodate a few exotic pets for Yanukovich, who abandoned the animals at his private zoo at his former Mezhyhirya estate outside Kiev before fleeing Ukraine.

The residence was taken over by opposition protesters, journalists and members of the general public after it was found abandoned in late February. Many of Yanukovich's belongings — among them a botanical garden, a petting zoo and a replica pirate ship — have been subject to intense scrutiny for what many see as exorbitant costs at taxpayers' expense.

Among the animals at his new Rublyovskoye residence will be pheasants, peacocks and at least one ostrich, the property department official said.

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