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Photo by the Presidential Press and Information Office

“Operation Successor” Completed

The final moves in Russia’s “Operation Successor” provided a quick and fitting end to the contentious two-year process of producing a successor government to the Putin presidency. President Dmitry Medvedev’s first official act after his inauguration on May 7th was the appointment of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister on May 8th, which was quickly approved in a special session of the Federal Assembly. The new composition of the federal power structures, including the Presidential Administration and the Government, was announced soon thereafter on Monday, May 12.

The break-neck pace of appointments and the carefully choreographed debut of the Government and Presidential Administration indicate that the endgame of the transition process was planned well in advance as part of a clearly designed strategy developed by Putin and Medvedev.

A Delicate Balance of Power

Three weeks ago, President Putin convened a commission headed by then-presidential economic advisor Igor Shuvalov to come up with a plan for ensuring a smooth transition of personnel between the Government and the Presidential Administration. As a result, the announced transitions, while introducing significant structural and personnel shifts between centers of power and influence, preserve the minimum necessary balance of power between competing clans. These changes and the pursuit of internecine parity clearly indicate that the political diarchy predicted by some, in which two leaders compete for

responsibilities and the right to place allies in power, does not exist at least for the time being.

Clear evidence of this is the swap of Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Government Apparatus Sergei Naryshkin with Head of the Presidential Administration Sergey Sobyenin; each simultaneously took the post of the other.

Staffing the Presidential Administration

An interesting feature of the new Presidential Administration is that it does not include any new Medvedev clan members in top positions, with one exception – Konstantin Chuichenko, former head of Gazprom’s legal department (and a close friend and university classmate of Medvedev), was named head of the critically important Presidential Control Directorate. Nevertheless, all the former Putin officials retaining their posts in the Kremlin are friendly to Medvedev. Below Sergei Naryshkin, Vladislav Surkov remained the only first deputy head of the Presidential Administration, responsible for internal policy. Alexander Beglov, former head of the Presidential Control Directorate, became deputy head of the Administration responsible for personnel and document circulation, which some say makes him Medvedev’s version of Putin “Grey Cardinal” Igor Sechin, or even a figure on the level of long-time Putin security confidante Viktor Ivanov. Arkady Dvorkovich, who has worked closely with Medvedev on the National Projects, was also promoted to be the chief economic advisor to the new President, thus replacing Mr. Shuvalov.

From the Kremlin to the White House

At the same time, Shuvalov, who was considered a close ideological ally of Medvedev, moved out of the Kremlin to become First Deputy Prime Minister responsible for external economic relations, WTO negotiations and technical regulations. This is a logical continuation of his previous work as the international economic representative of the Kremlin (including as Russia's "sherpa" to the G8).

An important aspect of balancing the power scales was the move of former Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Igor Sechin, a key figure in the ruling clans, who became a Deputy Prime Minister responsible for industry and the energy sector (excluding the military-industrial complex). The military-industrial complex falls within the purview of Sergei Ivanov, who remained a Deputy Prime Minister and is responsible for the development of dual-purpose innovation technologies.

Managing the Security Clans

While the ministries of defense, interior and foreign affairs remained intact, the security clans, who have lately elevated both the visibility and intensity of their scrambling for power, were subjected to particularly fine-tuned reshuffling. FSB Head and powerful Sechin-allied silovik Nikolai Patrushev was appointed Secretary of the Security Council and replaced by St. Petersburg and former FSB Deputy Head Alexander Bortnikov. Since the unveiling of Medvedev as successor in December 2007, Bortnikov has been considered the most acceptable figure for Medvedev in the FSB's top tier. Alexander Konovalov, another university classmate of President Medvedev and former presidential envoy to the Volga Federal District, became Minister of Justice, replacing Vladimir Ustinov, another significant (though considerably weakened recently) member of the Sechin siloviki group. Ustinov was subsequently appointed the Presidential Representative to the Southern Federal District. It also seems likely that another key member of the Kremlin siloviki clan, Deputy Head of Administration Viktor Ivanov, who was responsible for personnel issues under President Putin, will not retain his present position in Medvedev's Presidential Administration.

On the other side, Viktor Cherkosov, notoriously opposed to Sechin, lost his powerful post as head of



Photo by the Presidential Press and Information Office

the Federal Service for Drug Prevention, moving to a less influential position as the head of the Federal Agency for the Supply of Armaments, Military and Special Equipment and Material Resources (Rosoboronpostavka), which is perceived by some as a demotion. It should be noted that all these changes occurred literally simultaneously, thus leaving no time for the competing parties to interfere in the transition or for conflicts to ignite.

All of the leading figures from the security clans have been transplanted into new administrative environments without the structures, ties and reporting lines to which they were previously accustomed.

Economics and Finance Portfolios

The economics and finance bloc remains in place, with significant figures such as Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin and Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabiullina retaining their posts. On the other hand, Dmitry Kozak, prominent liberal and Putin's go-to man for the powder-keg Northern Caucasus region, merely kept his position as Regional Development Minister even though many analysts expected him to be elevated to the status of Deputy Prime Minister.

Among significant structural changes in the economic ministries, while the Trade portfolio was transferred from the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to the Industry Ministry, MED did regain the functions related to land and real estate issues previously removed from its jurisdiction (except for utilities, which resides at the Ministry of Regional Development). The Industry and Energy Ministry was reconfigured into the Industry and Trade Ministry, headed by Viktor Khristenko, and the Energy Ministry spinoff is now headed by Sergei Shmatko, former president of state nuclear engineering company Atomstroieksport.

Structural Changes

On May 15, three days after the Cabinet appointments, Prime Minister Putin announced the composition of the Government's Presidium, a subset of 15 ministers who will be chiefly responsible for running the government. The Presidium will meet weekly, with additional ministers brought in to participate in Presidium discussions on an as-needed basis. The full Russian Cabinet is likely to meet on a monthly schedule.

Additionally, a presidential decree on the new system of power legally reinforced the de facto situation in which federal services and agencies are directly governed by their "parent" ministries. This puts a definitive end to Dmitry Kozak's administrative reform efforts of 2004, which attempted to create three separate and independent tiers of responsibility – ministries, services and agencies. Consequently, some of the key services and agencies from the previous government were abolished by the presidential decree and their operations subsequently merged into the structure of the relevant ministries (Rosenergo, Rosprom, Rosstroj, Roszdrav, Roskultura, etc).

The New Lineup

Prime Minister Putin's New Government

VIKTOR ALEKSEYEVICH ZUBKOV	First Deputy Prime Minister (agriculture)
IGOR IVANOVICH SHUVALOV *	First Deputy Prime Minister (international economic policy, WTO)
ALEXEI LEONIDOVICH KUDRIN	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance (finance, tax)
ALEXANDER DMITRIYEVICH ZHUKOV	Deputy Prime Minister (National Projects, Sochi Olympics)
SERGEI BORISOVICH IVANOV	Deputy Prime Minister (military-industrial complex)
IGOR IVANOVICH SECHIN *	Deputy Prime Minister (energy and industry)
SERGEI SEMYONOVICH SOBYANIN *	Deputy Prime Minister (Cabinet Administration)
SERGEI VIKTOROVICH LAVROV	Minister of Foreign Affairs
ANATOLY EDUARDOVICH SERDYUKOV	Minister of Defense
RASHID GUMAROVICH NURGALIYEV	Minister of the Interior
TATYANA ALEKSEYEVNA GOLIKOVA	Minister of Public Health and Social Development
ALEXEI VASSILYEVICH GORDEYEV	Minister of Agriculture
DMITRY NIKOLAYEVICH KOZAK	Minister of Regional Development
IGOR YEVGENYEVICH LEVITIN	Minister of Transportation
ELVIRA SAKHIPZADOVNA NABIULLINA	Minister of Economic Development
IGOR OLEGOVICH SHCHEGOLEV *	Minister of Telecommunications and Mass Communications
ALEXANDER ALEKSEYEVICH AVDEYEV *	Minister of Culture
ANDREI ALEKSANDROVICH FURSENKO	Minister of Education and Science
YURI PETROVICH TRUTNEV	Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology

* New appointment

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Presidium Members

VLADIMIR PUTIN	Prime Minister
VIKTOR ZUBKOV	First Deputy Prime Minister
IGOR SHUVALOV	First Deputy Prime Minister
ALEXANDER ZHUKOV	Deputy Prime Minister
SERGEI IVANOV	Deputy Prime Minister
IGOR SECHIN	Deputy Prime Minister
ALEXEI KUDRIN	Deputy Prime Minister (Minister of Finance)
SERGEI SOBYANIN	Deputy Prime Minister
TATYANA GOLIKOVA	Minister of Public Health and Social Development
ELVIRA NABIULLINA	Minister of Economic Development
ALEXEI GORDEYEV	Minister of Agriculture
SERGEI LAVROV	Minister of Foreign Affairs
RASHID NURGALIYEV	Minister of the Interior
ANATOLY SERDYUKOV	Minister of Defense
DMITRY KOZAK	Minister of Regional Development

The New Lineup (continued)

Prime Minister Putin's New Government

VIKTOR BORISOVICH KHRISTENKO	Minister of Industry and Trade
SERGEI IVANOVICH SHMATKO *	Minister of Energy
ALEXANDER VLADIMIROVICH KONOVALOV *	Minister of Justice
SERGEI KUZHUGETOVICH SHOYGU	Minister of Civil Defense, Emergency Situations and Disaster Relief
VITALY LEONTYEVICH MUTKO *	Minister of Sports, Tourism and Youth Policy

President Medvedev's New Administration

SERGEI EVGENYEVICH NARYSHKIN *	Head of the Administration
VLADISLAV YURIEVICH SURKOV	First Deputy Head of the Administration
ALEXANDER DMITRIEVICH BEGLOV	Deputy Head of the Administration
ALEXEI ALEXEEVICH GROMOV	Deputy Head of the Administration
NATALYA ALEXANDROVNA TIMAKOVA	Press Secretary to the President
MARINA VALENTINOVNA YENTALTSEVA	Head of Presidential Protocol

Aides to the President

ALEXANDER SERGEEVICH ABRAMOV	Regional policy, State Council
SERGEI EDUARDOVICH PRIKHODKO	Foreign policy
DZHAKHAN REDZHEPOVNA POLLYEVA	Speechwriting
ARKADY VLADIMIROVICH DVORKOVICH	Economic policy
LARISA IGOREVNA BRYCHEVA	Head of the State Law Directorate
KONSTANTIN ANATOLIEVICH CHUICHENKO *	Head of the Presidential Control Directorate

Advisors to the President

MIKHAIL IVANOVICH TRINOVA *
MIKHAIL YURIEVICH ZURABOV
YURI KONSTANTINOVICH LAPTEV
VENIAMIN FEDOROVICH YAKOVLEV
LEONID DODODZHONOVICH REIMAN *

Presidential Representatives to the Federal Districts

VLADIMIR VASILIEVICH USTINOV *	Southern Federal District
GRIGORY ALEXEEVICH RAPOTA	Volga Federal District
ILYA IOSIFOVICH KLEBANOV	North-Western Federal District
GEORGY SERGEEVICH POLTAVCHENKO	Central Federal District
PYOTR MIKHAILOVICH LATYSHEV	Ural Federal District
ANATOLY VASILIEVICH KVASHNIN	Siberian Federal District
OLEG ALEXANDROVICH SAFONOV	Far Eastern Federal District

* New appointment

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