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Kremlin Politics: Putin-Medvedev Divorce? It's Only a Matter of Time

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Putin regards Medvedev as "too soft with Barack Obama and the European leaders," writes Panorama's Moscow correspondent Cristina Giuliano. She quotes, among others, Russian political scientists Alena Ledeneva of University College London: "Medvedev might even resign, maybe not immediately, but as soon as the economic situation will stabilize a little".

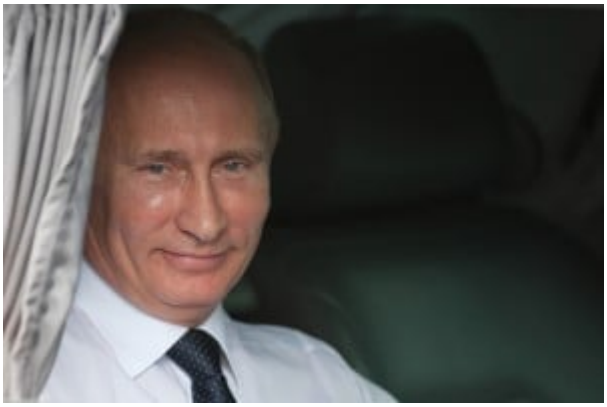
Medvedev originally fell out of favor with the Siloviki—Kremlin's strong men, whom The Saker refers to as "Eurasian sovereignists"—during the 2011 Libya crisis, when Western intervention led to the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi.

A Russian documentary film on the Libya crisis openly accused him of "treason" for his compliant, pro-Western handling of the crisis, and supine acceptance of its outcome.

Among the first Siloviki to point the finger at Medvedev were Evgeny Primakov, former prime minister and head of Russia's foreign secret services, and Vladimir Chamov, Russian ambassador to Libya at the time of the crisis, removed for objecting to the very toppling of Gaddafi.

Retired general Leonid Ivashov said during the Libya documentary: "Unfortunately Russian presidents cannot be prosecuted for treason".

Putin's comeback as President was especially cheered by the Siloviki during the 2013 Syria crisis. Had Medvedev been there, another area under Russian influence would have been "sold out" to the West.



How the US reacted to Russia stop playing balls with an ever-expanding West we learned last year: by organizing a coup next to Russian borders, and turning Ukraine into a neo-Nazi killing ground.

And, as we have recently reported, there are signs that Russia has stopped believing in the essential goodwill of the West. The offensive carried out by the rebels in Mariupol on Sunday was followed by Putin describing the Ukraine army as a "NATO legion aimed at restraining Russia."

In this rapidly deteriorating climate, a pro-Western prime minister is simply not the right man for the job. With the likely demise of Medvedev, the West has again done its cause yet another disservice.

Is a possible rebel takeover of the whole of Donbass what a tough Russian prime minister would like to force upon the West? If so, exciting times lie ahead

Panorama also mentions "a series of scandals with the Medvedev government: from bed time affairs and corruption that have ensnared former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdjukov, as well as Education Minister Dmitry Livanov's troubles. His dismissal has been requested even by the staid Academy of Sciences.

According to *Panorama's* source, "Medvedev himself has tight relationships with the West. And the West plays on them to advance its desires. All of this cannot please Putin's men."

Who will take over? Rumors abound.

A much-talked about candidate is Alexei Kudrin, a semi-liberal, and former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Other rumors point to Dmitry Rogozin, the current Deputy Prime Minister, and a hardliner.

Or maybe Andrej Vorobiov, born 1970, current governor of the rich Moscow region. *TIME*recently described him as the rising star in Putin's United Russia party.

Medvedev's eventual resignation could follow what *Panorama's* source calls: "a sortie à la Yeltsin, because in Moscow we don't wash our dirty laundry in public".

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