

From the Archive: Yeltsin Recommends Putin to Nation

August 10, 1999

The  **Moscow Times**

The full text of President Boris Yeltsin's televised speech dismissing Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin and naming Vladimir Putin as his replacement:

Dear Russians,

Today I have signed a decree on elections to the State Duma. They will be held on Dec. 19. This is exactly the date set out by the Constitution and the law.

The start has now been given for the elections marathon. It will be a very complicated and responsible time. And that is why I ask you to assess, with special attention and even with passion, how the participants in the political race behave themselves. I have promised that the Duma elections will be an honest fight and I am sure that your choice will be that of discerning and upstanding people.

One should not forget that exactly within a year there will be presidential polls.

And now I have decided to name a man who in my opinion is capable of uniting society, based on the broadest political forces, to ensure the continuation of reforms in Russia. He will be able to unite those who will renew a great Russia in the 21st century.

He is Security Council secretary and director of the Federal Security Service Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

Today I have made a decision to sack the government of Sergei Vadimovich Stepashin. In accordance with the Constitution, I have asked the State Duma to confirm Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin as chairman of the Russian government.

I am sure that he will be very useful to the country working in this post, and the citizens of Russia will be able to assess Putin's business and human qualities. I have confidence in him. And I want those who go to polls next July to be confident in him as well and to make their choice. I think he has enough time to show himself.

I know Vladimir Vladimirovich very well. I watched him for a long time when he worked as a first deputy mayor of St. Petersburg. Over the last few years, we have been working side by side. In all posts he has acted confidently and strongly, achieving good results. Vladimir Vladimirovich has great experience of government work.

To lead the government is a heavy burden, a serious challenge. He will cope, I am sure. And Russians will support him.

I thank Sergei Vadimovich Stepashin for his good work. He has managed to create a strong team, to keep a stable political and economic situation in the country. I am sure Sergei Vadimovich will support his successor and his friend.

Russia is entering a new political era. In one year, for the first time in the country's history, the first president of Russia will transfer power to a fresh, newly elected president. In any case, he will be your president, respected Russians, he who has won in honest and clean elections.

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