

Chernomyrdin Is Laid to Rest

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An honor guard attending a portrait of Viktor Chernomyrdin during a memorial ceremony in Moscow on Friday. **Mikhail Metzel**

President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin paid their respects to veteran politician Viktor Chernomyrdin, who was buried at Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery on Friday.

The political tandem praised Chernomyrdin's efforts to stabilize society during post-Soviet reforms.

The longest serving prime minister in post-Soviet Russia, Chernomyrdin died Wednesday at the age of 72.

"The sentiment in society was hard... He did everything he could to calm society and at the same time solve urgent economic problems," Medvedev said during the state-organized funeral.

The ceremony was aired live on the state-owned Vesti 24 news channel.

Chernomyrdin played a decisive role in supporting former President Boris Yeltsin during some of the darkest moments of the 1990s, negotiating for the lives of hundreds of hostages with a Chechen warlord and even holding the reins of power while Yeltsin underwent heart surgery in 1996.

The former mechanic also will go down in history for his creation of Gazprom, which holds 17 percent of the world's natural gas reserves. The gas behemoth is by far the Kremlin's most powerful economic tool in its global political plays.

At Novodevichy Cemetery, Chernomyrdin was buried next to his wife of nearly 50 years, who had died in March. Russian media, citing medical officials, reported that he had died from a heart attack.

See "[Viktor Chernomyrdin: Life in the Lens](#)," a photo gallery of Chernomyrdin's two decades in Russian politics.

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