'Russian Kenneth Starr' Dead at 62

March 20, 2011

Ilyukhin

Viktor Ilyukhin, a hard-line Communist lawmaker who earned the nickname "the Russian Kenneth Starr" for his judicial attacks on high-ranking officials, including two presidents, died in Moscow on Saturday. He was 62.

The cause of death remained unestablished Sunday, with an autopsy pending at a state hospital, Interfax said. A party spokesman called the death "strange" and said the Communist Party would request an independent autopsy.

A Penza region native who worked as a senior prosecutor in the Soviet Union, Ilyukin hit the media spotlight in 1991 when he opened a treason case against President Mikhail Gorbachev. The case failed, and Ilyukhin was sacked two days later.

Rebels behind the 1993 putsch attempt reinstated Ilyukhin as a state prosecutor, with him immediately opening a case against President Boris Yeltsin.

Ilyukhin was elected to the Duma the same year and continued his campaign against Gorbachev and Yeltsin, working in a public commission investigating Gorbachev's "anti-

constitutional activities" and spearheading a near-successful attempt to impeach Yeltsin in 1999. His activities earned him a comparison to Starr, the U.S. special prosecutor whose investigation into Bill Clinton led to the U.S. president's impeachment in the late 1990s.

Ilyukhin, who was serving his fourth consecutive term in the Duma, was also an outspoken critic of President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Just last month, Ilyukhin said in an interview with The Moscow Times that Putin had "created a mockery of a law enforcement agency" by splitting the powers of the Prosecutor General's Office with the Investigative Committee during his presidency.

Ilyukhin was a member of the Duma's Security Committee and anti-corruption commission.

No immediate information was released on funeral arrangements. Ilyukin is survived by his wife and an underage son.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/03/20/russian-kenneth-starr-dead-at-62-a5714