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Nikitin to Head Initiative Agency

By The Moscow Times

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Andrei Nikitin, general director of Ruskompozit Management Co., has been appointed director of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced at a meeting of the agency's experts' committee.

Putin announced other appointments as well. Artyom Avetisyan, president of the NEO Tsentr consulting group, will be the agency's director for new business. Dmitry Peskov, general director of the Metaver project group, will be in charge of the young professionals area. Vladimir Yablonsky, director of the Information and Analytical Training Center, will head up social projects.

Putin created the agency, a noncommercial organization, in May. Political observers said the agency is part of an effort to consolidate supporters ahead of coming State Duma and presidential elections. Midsized businesses have been identified as a major source of donations to alternative political forces, including the Communists.

Putin first mentioned the idea of the agency at a United Russia congress, saying it was not

politically motivated but intended to provide a backstop for businesses that want to expand.

(MT, Interfax)

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