

Medvedev's Tie Comes Off

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Medvedev taking off his tie for Nazarbayev at Astana talks Friday. **Mikhail Klimentyev**

President Dmitry Medvedev overdressed for informal talks of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russia-led regional security group.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that Medvedev was the only head of state in the room wearing a tie at the start of Friday's meeting in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana.

After handshakes, Medvedev sheepishly loosened his tie and took it off, earning a wide smile from Nazarbayev.

"These informal events in a relaxed atmosphere allow us to discuss urgent issues of our cooperation," Nazarbayev told the visiting heads of state, who were all dressed in suit jackets and white shirts except Kyrgyz leader Roza Otunbayeva, who wore a tan dress with a white jacket. His remarks were [reported](#) by the Armenian news site Times.am.

Among the "urgent" items on the agenda was the impact of the planned withdrawal of U.S.-led military forces from Afghanistan on Central Asia, Nazarbayev said ahead of the talks.

The leaders also were to "exchange opinions on urgent issues of the modern international situation, including the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the CSTO responsibility zone," the Kremlin said in a statement carried by RIA-Novosti.

The CSTO comprises Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and is widely seen as a Kremlin-led attempt to form a counterweight to NATO. The presidents of all member states but Uzbekistan attended Friday's talks.

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