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Medvedev Drives Car in Secret

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He is president by day, concerned motorist by night.

Dmitry Medvedev says he secretly gets behind the wheel on his own and patrols the streets after a long hard day running the country so he can better understand what Moscow motorists really deal with.

"I sometimes drive around incognito — nobody knows about this — so I can feel like an ordinary driver. I can personally say that the difficulties we have with traffic really abound," he told United Russia activists on Monday after hearing a report on traffic issues, RIA-Novosti reported.

Medvedev said he had taken up driving around the city at night because the only way to solve traffic problems is to understand it.

"People who talk about it from their own experience in their cars know exactly how ridiculous things can be," he said.

Federal Guard Service spokesman Sergei Devyatov declined to discuss Medvedev's secret solo night missions, but told Gazeta.ru that the president was always provided with crack security.

Motorists' rights groups scoffed at the notion that Medvedev was really out on the streets working on fixing the city's frustrating traffic problems all on his own.

"I think it's simply PR, if it's real at all," Alexei Dozorov, leader of the Blue Buckets traffic protest group, told The Moscow Times.

He pointed to Medvedev's much publicized road-side embarrassments of late — including nearly driving a car into a crowd of supporters in Kazan and being caught on camera driving without his seatbelt, which drew howls from bloggers about the kind of fines that would earn regular drivers.

"Perhaps he would learn more about the reality of life on the road if he got hit with a fine like everyone else," Dozorov said.

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