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Archived Live Blog: Medvedev's Final Interview as President

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President Dmitry Medvedev at an interview with television journalists Thursday.

Dmitry Medvedev spoke live on television Thursday to journalists in his last interview as president and spoke about his future in the United Russia party, his views on the country's struggles with corruption, the Pussy Riot case, and other topics. Read the blog below for highlights.

2:00 p.m., Interview Is Over: The interview with Dmitry Medvedev has come to an end after precisely two hours.

1:55 p.m., Medvedev on Elections Officials: Medvedev said elections officials should not be demonized, apparently referring to Central Elections Commission head Vladimir Churov, whom the opposition has vilified for what they call his role in alleged falsifications in December's State Duma vote.

Medvedev said elections officials are simply "counters" of votes.

1:50 p.m., Medvedev on Daylight Savings Time: Medvedev said referendums, which are rare, should be conducted more often. He said at least a partial referendum in "a representative set of regions" should be done on the issue of returning daylight savings time, which polls have shown many Russians support.

1:48 p.m., Medvedev on Pension System: The president said pension reform can be undertaken without changing pension age at all and said a completely different pension system could be created. He said the government will take into account the views of citizens before making any deicision regarding an overhaul of the system.

1:40 p.m., Medvedev on Relations With Ukraine, Georgia: The president said he hoped Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich would act with "more pragmitism" and take into account the views of all Ukrainians.

Russian relations with Ukraine have been strained over lack of agreement on prices for gas, which Ukraine says are too high.

Regarding relations with Georgia, with whom Russia fought an 8-day war in August 2008, Medvedev said Russia relates very positively to the Georgian people but that Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili was a "zero" with whom Russia would not work. He said Russia would be ready to work with any other person as leader of Georgia.

1:32 p.m., Medvedev on U.S. Relations: The president said it's normal for the United States to be trying to influence the political situation in Russia, 'just like we try to influence it there."

Vladimir Putin in the past has criticized the West for allegedly trying to interfere in Russia's domestic affairs.

1:25 p.m., Medvedev on Pussy Riot: In response to a question regarding religious politics and the case of Pussy Riot, three members of which have been jailed while awaiting trial for their alleged participation in a performance at Christ the Savior Cathedral, Medvedev said it was a "very delicate topic" and that it needed to be approached "very carefully."

He said the "delicate peace" that has reigned in recent years among faiths needed to be preserved.

Regarding the Pussy Riot case, Medvedev said the women who took part in the performance "got exactly what they were seeking — popularity." He said he would not comment on the case further at least until a ruling had been made, so as not to influence the outcome.

1:16 p.m., Medvedev on Television: Medvedev said he thinks some state-owned television channels should be sold to private owners, a statement he has made before.

In reference to his recent order to create a public television channel, Medvedev said he hoped such a channel would become independent of state funds by being financed with an endowment. He said he hoped it would become maximally neutral, with as little political slant as possible.

1:07 p.m., Medvedev on United Russia: The president said he doesn't understand how people can say that ruling party United Russia is unpopular given that it received 50 percent of votes in December's State Duma elections, a level of support he said was confirmed by polling.

A series of unprecedented opposition demonstrations began in December to protest alleged falsifications in the Duma elections.

Regarding speculation that Medvedev would become head of United Russia in place of Vladimir Putin, the president said that if he receives the offer to lead the party from Putin, he will accept it. Medvedev said that unlike Putin, who led the party without being a member, he would join the party if he became its head.

1:01 p.m., Medvedev on Corruption: The president said: "Bureaucrats are a corporation — they don't want us to interfere in their affairs." He also said bureaucrats are "citizens just like us" and not all corrupt.

Medvedev said he had received a proposal to post online a list of bureaucrats against whom criminal cases have been opened but said he was not sure it was a good idea, given that sometimes the cases go nowhere.

12:52 p.m., Medvedev on Interior Minister: The president said that embattled Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev's "fate is clear," saying he, along with the other Cabinet ministers, will be fired May 7, when Vladimir Putin takes office as president. It was unclear whether he meant that Nurgaliyev will not be reappointed to his Cabinet post when Medvedev takes over as prime minister as is expected.

There has been pressure for Nurgaliyev to be fired from his post in the wake of a police abuse scandal in Kazan as a result of which a man died while in custody after being beaten and raped by officers.

Medvedev said: "If a minister is fired for any event, the system will face a collapse."

12:45 p.m., Medvedev Feeling Loose: The style of the interview is less formal than certain interviews done by Russian television journalists with Vladimir Putin. Medvedev is laughing frequently and joking occasionally, and he's not only giving answers to the five journalists sitting around the round table but also having back-and-forth discussion with them.

12:36 p.m., Medvedev on Khodorkovsky: The president said Khodorkovsky had to ask to be pardoned and admit his guilt in order for Medvedev to consider freeing him from jail.

He also used the question about Khodorkovsky to speak about prison policy, asking rhetorically, "Should there be so many people in prison camps?" He referred to a case when he was a lawyer when a man was convicted of stealing a carp — the fish — and was sent to prison for two years. "The problem concerns not only Khodorkovsky and Lebedevev," he said.

12:23 p.m., Medvedev on Governors: Medvedev said over 50 percent of regional heads have been changed over his time as president and said that when it has officially been said that they resigned of their own free will, they had actually been fired. He also said some criminal cases have been opened against allegedly corrupt governors.

12:10 p.m., Medvedev on Freedom: Medvedev said he thought the country had become more free over his years as the nation's head of state.

“Freedom is a unique concept that everyone interprets differently,” he said. Medvedev said he thinks progress has been made in this area.

“Let's ask people who were on the streets last month — not important who they were for — ask them if they were free,” Medvedev said.

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