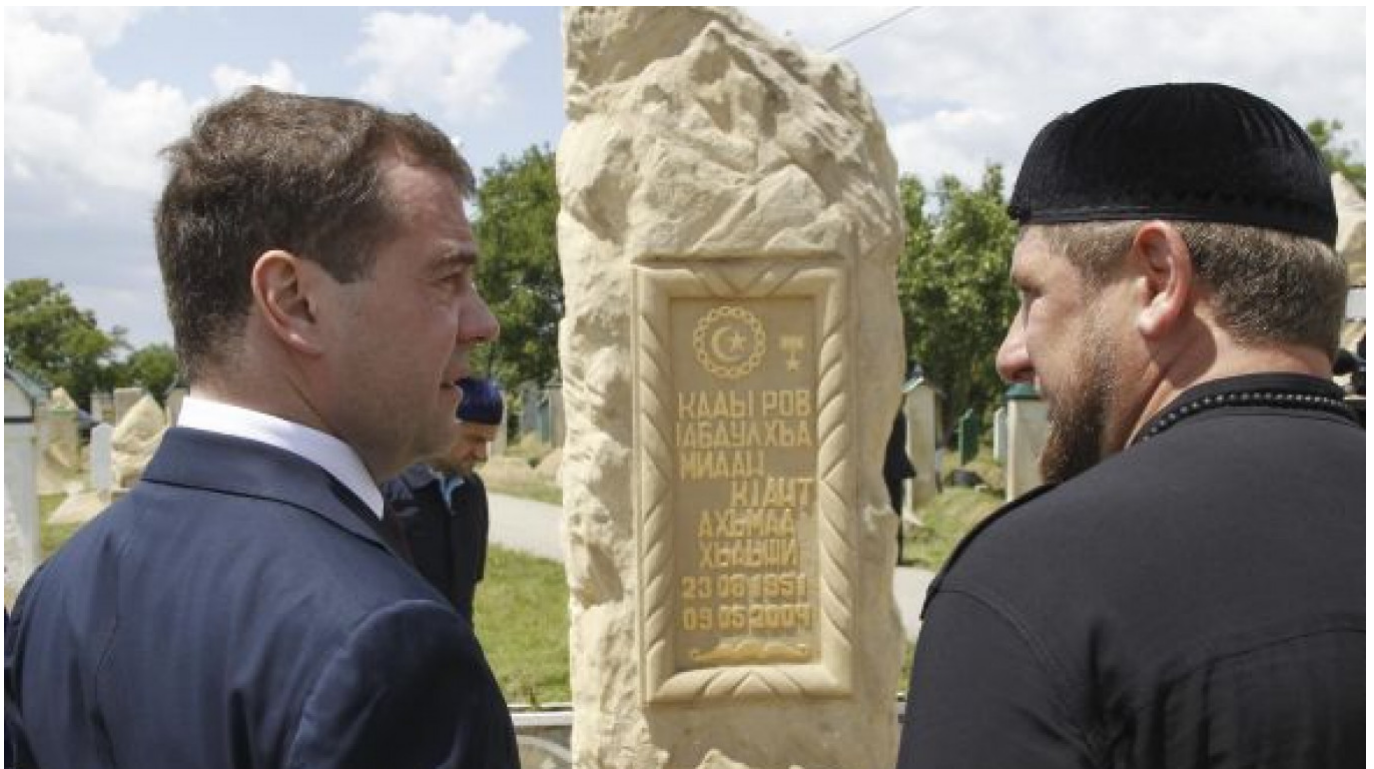


In Chechnya, Medvedev Makes Show of Support

June 19, 2012



Medvedev, left, and Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov visiting the grave of the first Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov near Grozny on Tuesday. **Dmitry Astakhov**

During a visit to Chechnya on Tuesday, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev made a public show of support for development of the North Caucasus region, calling the initiative "one of the government's most important priorities."

To address the task, Regional Development Minister Oleg Govorun proposed directing as much as 1.7 trillion rubles (\$52.2 billion) to the region through 2025.

Medvedev outlined a series of priorities for the area, including building more housing, reducing unemployment, guaranteeing safety for tourists, and developing infrastructure.

"We understand that investors, whoever they may be, will not go to an empty site — they need to understand the prospects for developing the territory's roads, gas and electricity infrastructure,"

the prime minister said at a meeting of the commission on economic and social development of the North Caucasus Federal District, RIA-Novosti reported.

At the meeting, Govorun proposed spending as much as 1.7 trillion rubles to develop the region over the next 13 years, clarifying that 442 billion rubles would come from the federal budget, 53 billion rubles from the district's subjects, and 1.2 trillion rubles from non-budgetary sources.

Medvedev, who became the chairman of the commission in the beginning of June, said he would continue to act in the capacity.

"We must, and this is an overall goal, qualitatively change the situation in the region, to make life in the North Caucasus attractive, safe and stable," the prime minister said.

Medvedev ordered a previously delayed development plan for the North Caucasus Federal District to be prepared by Dec. 1, warning officials that the deadline would not be moved.

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