

# Medvedev Must Give Up His Presidential Dreams

By [Vladimir Frolov](#)

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In an interview with the Times of London during the Olympics, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev again indicated his intention to run for president. He should think twice, however, before taking the plunge. He might find the experience much less pleasant than in 2008.

Medvedev's claim to the presidency is tenuous. It is based largely on his serving as a stand-in for Putin from 2008 to 2012.

Having ceded presidential power to Putin, Medvedev expects to be rewarded with another nomination when or if Putin decides to step down. They might have even discussed this possibility when they finalized the castling deal a year ago.

Having the unique distinction of being the only young former president in Russia, he believes he is particularly qualified for the job. He may also think he is appealing to the disgruntled elites and disenfranchised urbanites as a safe democratic alternative to Putin, thus ushering in a

less disruptive regime change. He must be under an illusion.

Although Medvedev proved loyal to Putin during the tandem years and would clearly guarantee Putin's safe retirement if elected again, Putin seems to be having second thoughts.

Since the election, Putin has been erasing Medvedev's modest legacy, reversing, abandoning or subverting many of his initiatives on political liberalization. Even Medvedev's role as commander-in-chief during the 2008 war with Georgia has now been questioned, which led to brutal attacks on Medvedev in the media.

Medvedev is no longer a privileged tandem partner and heir apparent. He is merely one of the multiple crown princes Putin cultivates to baffle everyone on his succession plans.

What's more, Medvedev has no loyal constituency. Those who endorsed his modernization efforts and viewed him as an alternative to Putin feel betrayed by his decision to step down. Had he run for a second term against Putin, he could have secured an electoral base even if he lost the election. These voters are now lost.

Today, Medvedev is trying to appeal to Putin's blue-collar majority as the new leader of United Russia, claiming he has never been a liberal. But he is an unconvincing leader for these conservative voters, unlike his rival crown prince, populist Dmitry Rogozin.

Medvedev says he is not too old to give up presidential aspirations. His problem is not that he is a known politician with baggage, it's that he is a used fake.

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