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Putin's Bodyguards to Get Skiing Lessons

By The Moscow Times

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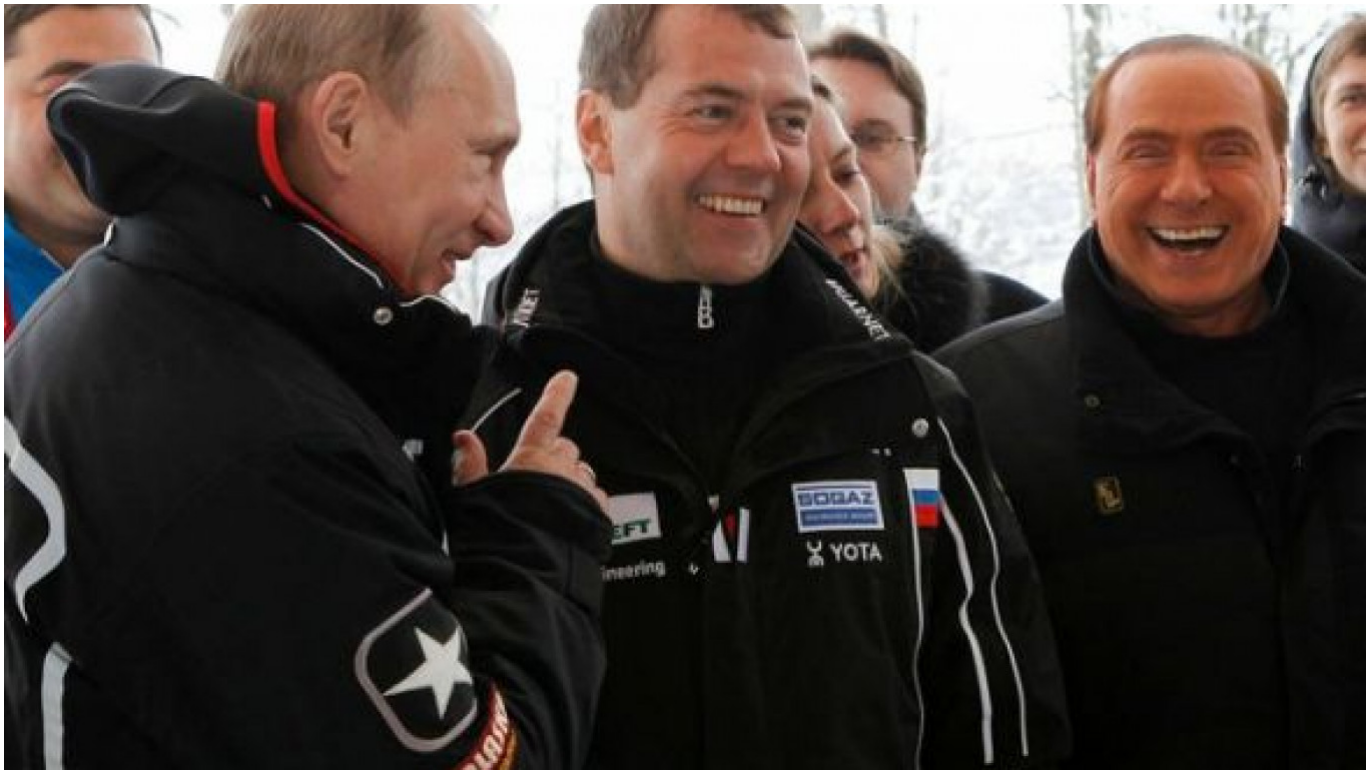

From left, Putin, Medvedev and Berlusconi sharing a laugh while on a trip to Sochi in March.

Officers of the Federal Guard Service, which is responsible for protecting top state officials, will receive ski training to be able to keep watch over President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and other functionaries while they're on the slopes.

Fifteen officers will be sent on a 148-hour skiing course, an unidentified Federal Guard Service official told Izvestia. The official did not reveal any other details about the training.

Putin and Medvedev have skiied together on multiple occasions in Sochi, the site of the 2014 Winter Olympics. On a trip after the presidential election in March, they were joined by former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, with whom they inspected the ski slopes that will be used in the 2014 games.

Meanwhile, members of the armed forces are currently undergoing a different kind

of mountain training in the Italian Alps.

Reconnaissance troops from a Ground Forces mountain unit have traveled to Italy to conduct military exercises with a regiment of Italian paratroopers, Ground Forces lieutenant colonel Nikolai Donyushkin told Interfax. Around 100 servicemen are taking part in the maneuvers that began Monday in the town of San Kandido and that will run until Sept. 21.

Similar exercises were conducted by Russian and Italian military units last year in the North Caucasus, the news agency said.

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