

Luzhkov Hints at Political Return

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Yury Luzhkov **Andrei Makhonin**

Former Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov hinted at returning to politics as an adviser to billionaire politician Mikhail Prokhorov ahead of Moscow City Duma elections scheduled for next year.

"I have warm feelings toward Prokhorov. He helped a great deal when I was mayor, and not out of personal gain," Luzhkov told Kommersant, adding that "mutual assistance is still only a possibility."

"Only nervy politicians can say for sure what will happen before the elections. But on a personal level, I like Prokhorov and am not indifferent to his ideas either," he said.

Prokhorov's Civic Platform party later confirmed that the former mayor could become an adviser to Prokhorov but said the matter had not been finalized.

Kommersant reported that Prokhorov and Luzhkov could settle the terms of their cooperation at a party conference on Feb. 15.

Unidentified sources told the business daily that Luzhkov's team of analysts had already drafted a campaign plan for Prokhorov, whereby he would first bid to enter the City Duma, before running for Moscow mayor, a seat in the State Duma and ultimately president. Luzhkov denied that such a plan had been drawn up.

Prokhorov, who amassed his fortune by owning large stakes in metals and mining companies, ran for president against Vladimir Putin in last year's elections. He came in a distant third with 7.9 percent.

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