

In Wishing Bush Well, Putin Has Message for Obama

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram Thursday to his old sparring partner, former U.S. President George W. Bush, wishing him a quick recovery from heart surgery.

It may have been coincidence that the Kremlin released details of the telegram a day after Barack Obama pulled out of a planned summit with Putin, but little is left to chance in Russian politics.

The warm words to the man who once said he looked Putin in the eye and got a "sense of his soul" highlighted how different the relationship is between the leaders in the Kremlin and the White House now.

Bush described Putin years later as cold-blooded, and ties soured over the war between Russia and Georgia that began five years ago this week, but there was respect and camaraderie on display when they first met as presidents in June 2001.

While Putin stakes a lot on personal relationships, Obama likes to focus more on the business at hand, diplomats say. But Obama eventually became frustrated with the lack of progress in U.S.-Russian ties and the failure to build a more constructive relationship.

At Obama's most recent meeting with Putin during a G8 summit in Northern Ireland in June, the Russian president scowled, lectured, fidgeted and at times glowered.

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