

Surkov Denies Claims About His Return to Government

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Vladislav Surkov with Sergei Nayshkin and Viktor Khristenko. **Igor Tabakov / MT**

Former Deputy Prime Minister Vladislav Surkov has denied reports that he will rejoin the government as a presidential aide for innovation development, a former United Russia party member said Tuesday.

An earlier report by Izvestia citing an unidentified government official claimed that Surkov, who stepped down in May, had been offered four separate positions since then, one of which was to head a corporation uniting nanotechnology company Rusnano and the Skolkovo innovation center.

But Alexei Chesnakov, who left United Russia in the same month, said he received a text message from Surkov refuting the claims.

"I have never discussed the position of aide on innovation, or envoy to the Southern Caucasus,

or minister of the Far East, or head of 'Rusnano-Skolково' [and I can't even imagine how it is possible to combine the latter]," Chesnakov wrote on his Twitter blog, quoting Surkov's message.

Surkov was an influential Kremlin adviser, often said to have played a vital role in crafting the ideology of the Putin government.

His resignation triggered widespread speculation. Some observers said he was forced to resign after publicly rejecting President Vladimir Putin's criticism of the Cabinet.

Others pointed to an ongoing conflict with the Investigative Committee over alleged corruption at Skolkovo.

Following a successful career in the private sector, Surkov joined the presidential administration in 1999 and later worked as a presidential aide. In 2011 he was appointed deputy prime minister.

He is known for coining the phrase "sovereign democracy" to describe the modern Russian political system.

The pro-Kremlin youth group Nashi is widely considered to be his concoction.

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