

Today in History, Dec. 31

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 10, 2014



Boris Yeltsin (right) leaving the Kremlin after his early resignation, with Vladimir Putin by his side (left).

Fourteen years ago today, on Dec. 31, 1999, Boris Yeltsin, the first president of the Russian Federation, resigned, turning his powers over to then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. In his farewell speech, Yeltsin asked for forgiveness "for the fact the dreams we shared did not come true" and lauded the "surprising wisdom of Russians."

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