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Putin Tops Forbes' 2014 List of World's Most Powerful People

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Vladimir Putin

Russia's role in Ukraine's ongoing civil strife has secured President Vladimir Putin's position atop Forbes magazine's list of the world's most powerful people for the second year straight.

"After a year when Putin annexed Crimea, staged a proxy war in the Ukraine and inked a deal to build a more than $70 billion gas pipeline with China — the planet's largest construction project — our choice simply seems prescient," Forbes said in the list, released Wednesday.

Putin beat U.S. President Barack Obama, ranked second and attested by Forbes as "the handcuffed head of the most dominant country in the world."

The top five was rounded up by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pope Francis and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Three other Russians also made the list: Igor Sechin, the head of oil giant Rosneft and Putin's right arm, ranked 42nd; his Kremlin rival Alexei Miller, head of state monopoly Gazprom, was

47th; and tycoon Alisher Usmanov, Russia's richest man with a fortune estimated at $17.9 billion, was 61st.

All improved their positions from last year's installment of the list, published annually since 2009.

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