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Putin Frowns on Commercial Use of His Image, Peskov Says

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Shop assistants prepare T-shirts, printed with images of Russia's President Vladimir Putin, for sale at GUM department store in central Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin does not approve of his name or likeness being used by manufacturers for commercial gain, according to recent comments by his spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

At the same time, Peskov told the Izvestia newspaper that it was not a priority of the presidential administration to crack down on the use of Putin's image for commercial reward.

"It's not the main issue on the day's agenda," Peskov was cited as saying.

Putin's likeness, and even his name, have rapidly gained popularity following Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in March. Moscow's Red Square, known for its abundance of tourist souvenirs, now features numerous offers of T-shirts that feature an image of Putin wearing sunglasses.

The T-shirts generally also feature some slogan or phrase referencing Russia's annexation of Crimea or the Western sanctions against Russia that followed.

In addition to his portrait, the president's name has also appeared in advertisements for various products. In June, Russian media reported that an Italian company was selling an iPhone covered in gold and called "Supremo Putin."

Also in June, an African rap duo called K.King and Beni Maniaci released a song titled "Go Hard Like Vladimir Putin," in which the pair praised Putin's macho image and hard-line tactics.

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