

Putin Says He Won't Remain President Forever

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The  **Moscow Times**

President Vladimir Putin said in an interview published Sunday that that he does not intend to remain president for the rest of his life, TASS news agency reported.

Keeping the post of president for too long would be "wrong for the country, harmful, and I don't need that," Putin was cited as saying in an interview with TASS.

In the same interview, Putin said he would not rule out running for re-election in 2018, though he said it is not a decision he is ready to make right now.

"The Constitution permits it, but that doesn't at all mean that I will make that decision," Putin was cited as saying by TASS.

Putin also confronted recent speculation that Russia was becoming isolated amid ongoing diplomatic tensions with the West in light of the Ukraine crisis, which prompted wave after wave of Western sanctions against Russia. The sanctions, imposed in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March, were intended to pressure the Kremlin into staying out of

Ukraine.

Putin dismissed the idea that the sanctions would be ruinous for the Russian economy, saying they would not have "catastrophic consequences," TASS reported.

While dismissing speculation of Russia being cornered on the international stage, Putin also said he had no plans to steer the country in the direction of another Iron Curtain.

"We realize the malignity of the 'iron curtain' for us," TASS cited Putin as saying. "There were periods in the history of other countries, which tried to isolate themselves from the rest of the world and paid very dearly for that, practically by degradation and collapse. Undoubtedly we are not taking this path. And nobody is going to build a wall around us. It is impossible!"

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