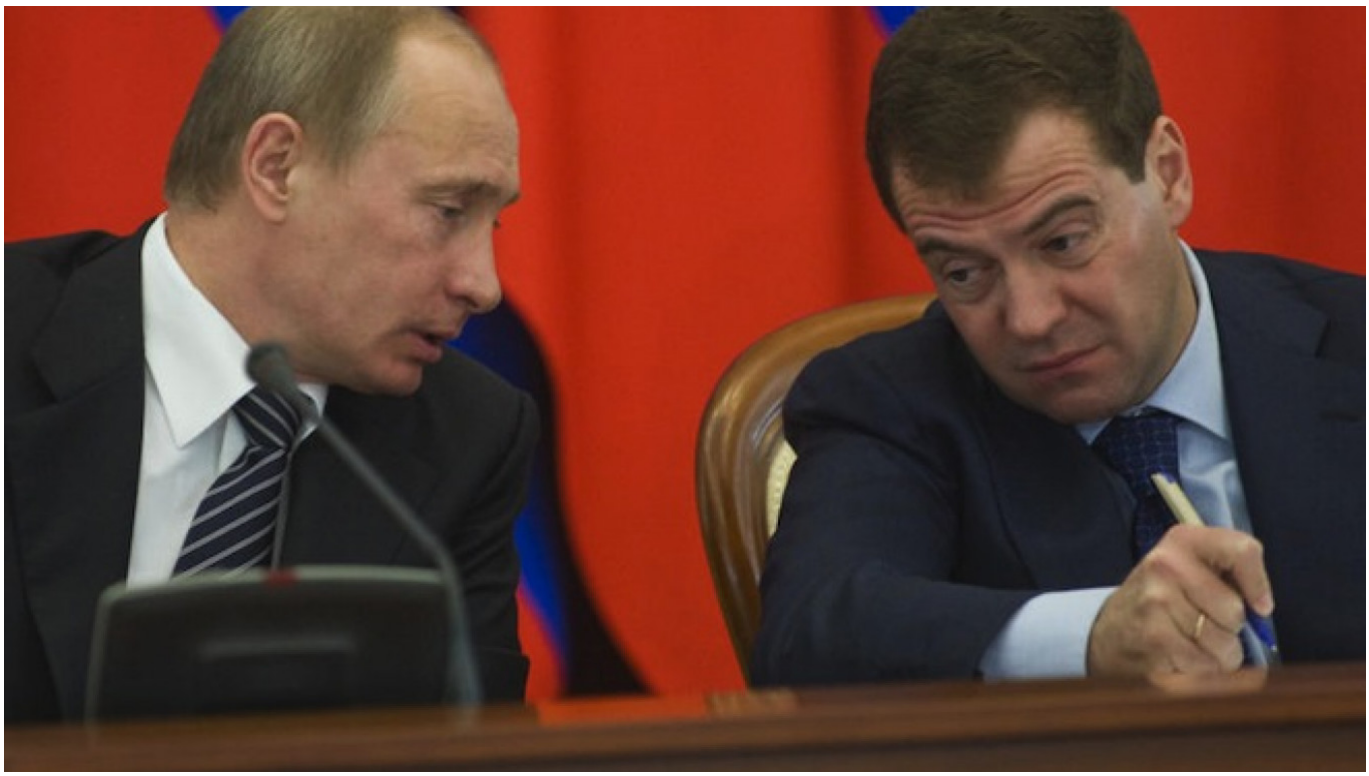
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Putin Gives Himself, Colleagues a Pay Cut

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President Vladimir Putin (L) and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

With the Russian economy in crisis, President Vladimir Putin has given himself and other members of the presidential administration and government a 10-percent pay cut from May 1, according to a decree signed by Putin on Friday and published on the Kremlin website.

Under the decree, the pay cut will be in place from May 1 to Dec. 31, 2015, and will also apply to members of the Audit Chamber.

The salary decrease of Putin himself will apply from March 1, along with those of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Prosecutor General Yury Chaika and Investigative Committee chairman Alexander Bastrykin, as announced in a separate decree published on the Kremlin's website.

Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov told state-run radio station Govorit Moskva that the president's anti-crisis move was a temporary measure. "If the economic situation does not change significantly, the measures will be extended, but if it changes for the better we will

not have any grounds for extending them," he was quoted as saying.

Last week, Sergei Naryshkin, chairman of the State Duma — the lower house of parliament — proposed cutting the salaries of Duma deputies by 10 percent, and this week the Federation Council — the upper house — followed suit.

Naryshkin said Friday that his initiative was supported by his fellow deputies. "The vast majority expressed understanding and supported me," the house speaker was cited as saying by Interfax news agency.

As the Russian economy falters amid a drastic drop in the price of oil and ongoing Western sanctions, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov earlier proposed cutting all government spending by 10 percent, with the exception of the defense sector.

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