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Kremlin Sees 'No Problem' In Disgraced Customs Head Continuing Service

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The Kremlin sees “no problem” in disgraced former customs chief Andrei Belyaninov continuing his career in government service, the RBC news website reported Friday.

Belyaninov resigned Thursday after police raided his home in connection with a smuggling case. The Federal Security Service (FSB) found shoe boxes piled with cash, expensive paintings, luxurious rooms filled with antiques and even an indoor swimming pool.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters Friday that he doesn’t know if Belyaninov will take up another government post, but that “nothing prevents him from doing so.” After submitting his resignation, Belyaninov had expressed a desire to keep working in government.

The raid was part of a criminal investigation into St. Petersburg businessman Dmitry Mikhalchenko, who was arrested on smuggling charges in March. Belyaninov has not been charged in the case and has been classified as a witness.

The raid and resignation came amid a wave of sackings. Putin dismissed four regional governors, four presidential envoys and an ambassador, replacing several of them with officials with a law enforcement background.

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