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Read Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's Poem to Russia's Late UN Ambassador

February 21, 2017



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (L) speaks with Vitaly Churkin during a UN Security Council meeting, Sept. 24, 2014. **Julie Jacobson / AP**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has published a poem dedicated to his country's late permanent representative to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin.

Churkin died unexpectedly yesterday in New York, reportedly from heart problems, just a day shy of his 65th birthday. Since then, many politicians and diplomats have paid their respects to the veteran diplomat, who had served in the Russian Foreign Ministry since the 1970s, and as Russian ambassador to the UN since 2006.

Even Churkin's biggest public foe in the United Nations, former U.S. Ambassador Samantha Powers, expressed her condolences in a tweet.

Embed:

> Devastated by passing of Russian UN Amb Vitaly Churkin.Diplomatic maestro &deeply caring man who did all he cld to bridge US-RUS differences
>
> — Samantha Power (@SamanthaJPower) February 20, 2017

Today, the Russian Foreign Ministry published Lavrov's poem on its official Facebook page.

In a preface to the poem, Lavrov noted that he and Churkin led parallel careers in the ministry and were both appointed deputy ministers in 1990.

Lavrov composed the poem to "friend and colleague" Churkin in time for his 42nd birthday. The year was 1993, and the future ambassador was at that point stationed in war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina. There, Lavrov wrote, Churkin was trying to get an "objective UN expert investigation" of the explosion at Sarajevo's Markale Market in Sarajevo, which others were "groundlessly trying to blame on the Serbs."

Churkin managed to get the "right result," Lavrov wrote. This inspired the future foreign minister to write a poem to his friend.

The Moscow Times has translated the poem in full.

TO THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin

Through storms, snowfall, drifts

In the sights of NATO guns

*And under the gaze of squinting Akashi,**

The diplomat stood his ground.

Neither threats, nor ultimatums

Broke his movement forward.

The world applauds the diplomat,

Gives him praise deserved.

You won't find a better moment —

To mark your birthday in battle.

Special ambassador of the President,

You have done your work with honor.

At the closing of the Bosnian battle,

We drink to these manly deeds.

With all our hearts, we congratulate you, Vitaly!

Happy Birthday! Our side won!

February 21, 1994

*Yasushi Akashi — The UN General Secretary's special representative in the Balkans during the first half of the 1990s.

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