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What to Expect From Putin's Fourth Term: Russian Pundits Weigh In

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Vladimir Putin was sworn in for his fourth term as Russian president on Monday at a lavish ceremony at the Grand Kremlin Palace after winning more than 70 percent of the presidential vote in presidential elections in March.

We asked several Russian political analysts to predict what to expect from his next six years in power.

Dmitry Oreshkin, an independent political analyst

This will be his most difficult term as president because earlier he was functioning in favorable circumstances. In the 2000s he presided over good economic conditions, he put the oligarchs in their place, people started to live better — of course this had to do with the reforms of the 1990s, but the people saw it as tied to Putin and he rose on this wave. Then he

kept himself on the wave from 2008 onward with Georgia, Ukraine, and Crimea – though these were illusory victories.

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People thought they had gotten up from their knees and became independent from the United States. We thought that we were stronger and richer. Well, now we're stronger but still weak.

Our economic growth in the past decade has averaged less than 1 percent per year. How can we solve these issues of economic stagnation, sanctions and no investment? It looks like he'll have to get [ex-Finance Minister Alexei] Kudrin, but Kudrin won't be able to do much anyway because his hands are tied with Putin's politics. The main problem for Putin is the economy. He can't get anywhere with foreign policy because everyone already knows what to expect from him.

Grigory Golosov, a St. Petersburg-based political analyst

The general tone will be tough against the West. His priorities for this term are directed at the ongoing situation, but this quickly changes. Right now, he wants to have a major role in geopolitics and to secure an agreement with the West to stop new sanctions, because the last ones were very damaging. But, these are contradictory goals. It's difficult.

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What he will do and what he will emphasize depends on how the situation develops. No one views him as a strategist; his long-term goals don't matter. Right now he wants to showcase what he did in Syria and Ukraine and to have the West treat him better, that's all there is to his tactics.

Alexander Chesnakov, a former Kremlin administration member turned political consultant

I don't think the tumult of the past few months — the Kemerovo fire, the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal and ensuing sanctions played a big role in Putin formulating a new course. Before this moment, he already had an understanding about what to do. I doubt the events of the past two months had an impact. They may have impacted his support, sure. Two months after the presidential campaign, his support decreased because there's no active campaign and propaganda distribution. Still, I believe the level of support for him is likely to remain very high.

We can expect a lot from this presidency, but we can only make predictions after the new administration and government is chosen. We can talk about what methods will be part of the new course depending on who his chosen.

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