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‘We Must Work Harder:’ Russia Reacts to Putin’s Soft Pension Reform

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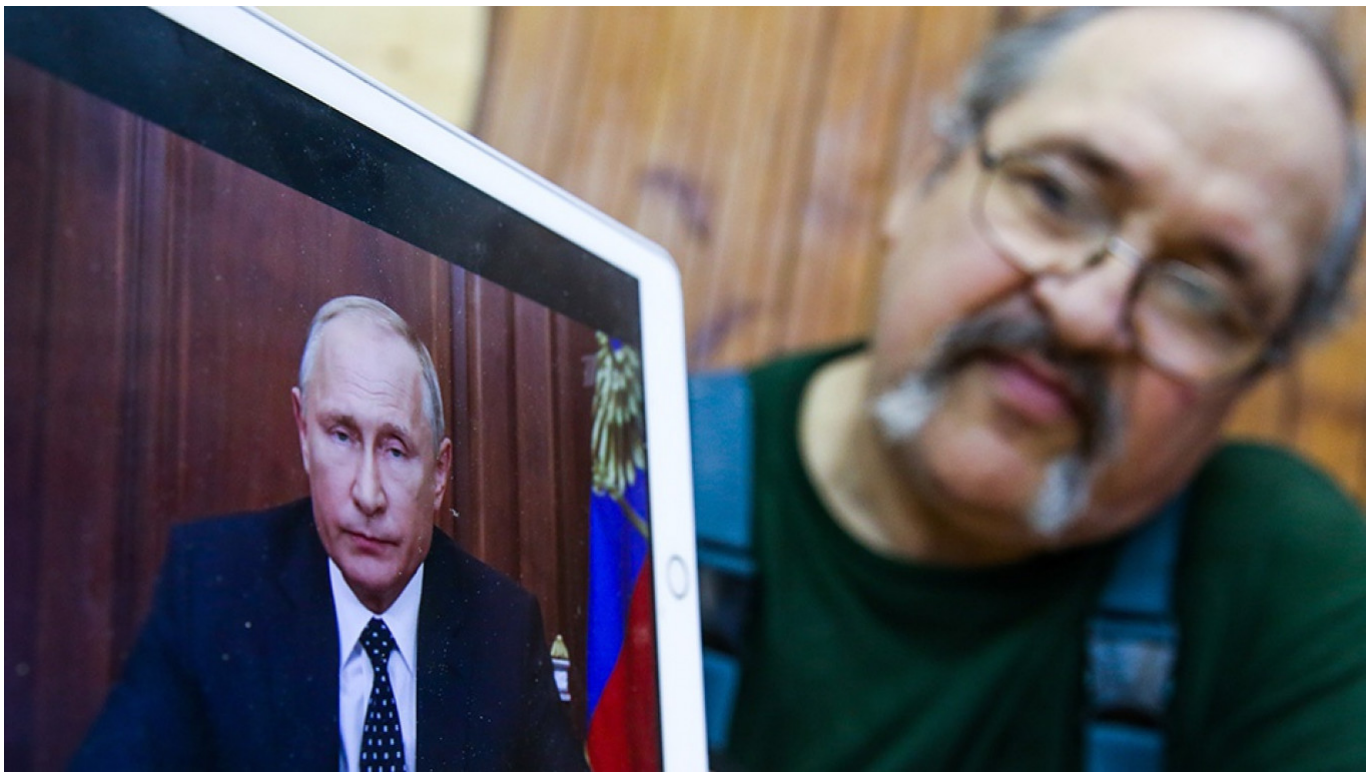

Alexander Ryumin / TASS

President Vladimir Putin offered several concessions to unpopular government plans to raise the retirement age on Wednesday, including cutting the proposed retirement age for women by three years to 60.

It was not immediately clear if Putin's intervention would be enough to defuse public anger, but state television, where most Russians still get their news, presented his intervention in a positive light, as did politicians from the ruling United Russia party.

This is how Russian public figures and analysts reacted to Putin’s proposals:

— Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov:

“Despite the issue’s exceptional unpopularity, Vladimir Vladimirovich’s speech today

demonstrated the wisdom, foresight and firm will of our national leader!"

Related article: Putin Announces Concessions in Retirement Age Hike

"We must work harder. Only then can we painlessly get through the pension reform stage."

— Alexei Kudrin, head of the Audit Chamber public finance watchdog:

"This is a well-balanced and carefully thought-out solution that is necessary to achieve the nation's goals."

— Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of Kremlin-funded RT news network:

"Putin took personal... responsibility for the most unpopular reform ever... He didn't have to, but he did."

— Political scientist Abbas Gallyamov:

"I believe Putin was able to establish an emotional connection with the audience and demonstrate that he's the only one who listens to and thinks about the people."

— Yevgeny Minchenko, president of Minchenko Consulting:

"Putin has sustained his image as the 'Wise Father of the Nation' who knows how the people live and does his utmost to make sure this really does make their lives better."

— Political analyst Mikhail Vinogradov:

"Two main messages came out of this reform. First, [the retirement] age for women is 60 and second, Putin is in the know, is responsible for the reform and the discussion about the details is closed. Now, the intrigue is which of the two messages will be more important to the public."

— Opposition leader Alexei Navalny:

"The Kremlin's political scientists and 'experts' are of course cackling about how Putin brilliantly outplayed everyone! How he cleverly calculated everything!"

"[The Kremlin] saw that the overwhelming majority of Russians are against the retirement robbery and some are so against it that they're even ready to go out onto the streets. This has to be urgently neutralized somehow, and that's why Putin is addressing the people with an urgent TV address."

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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