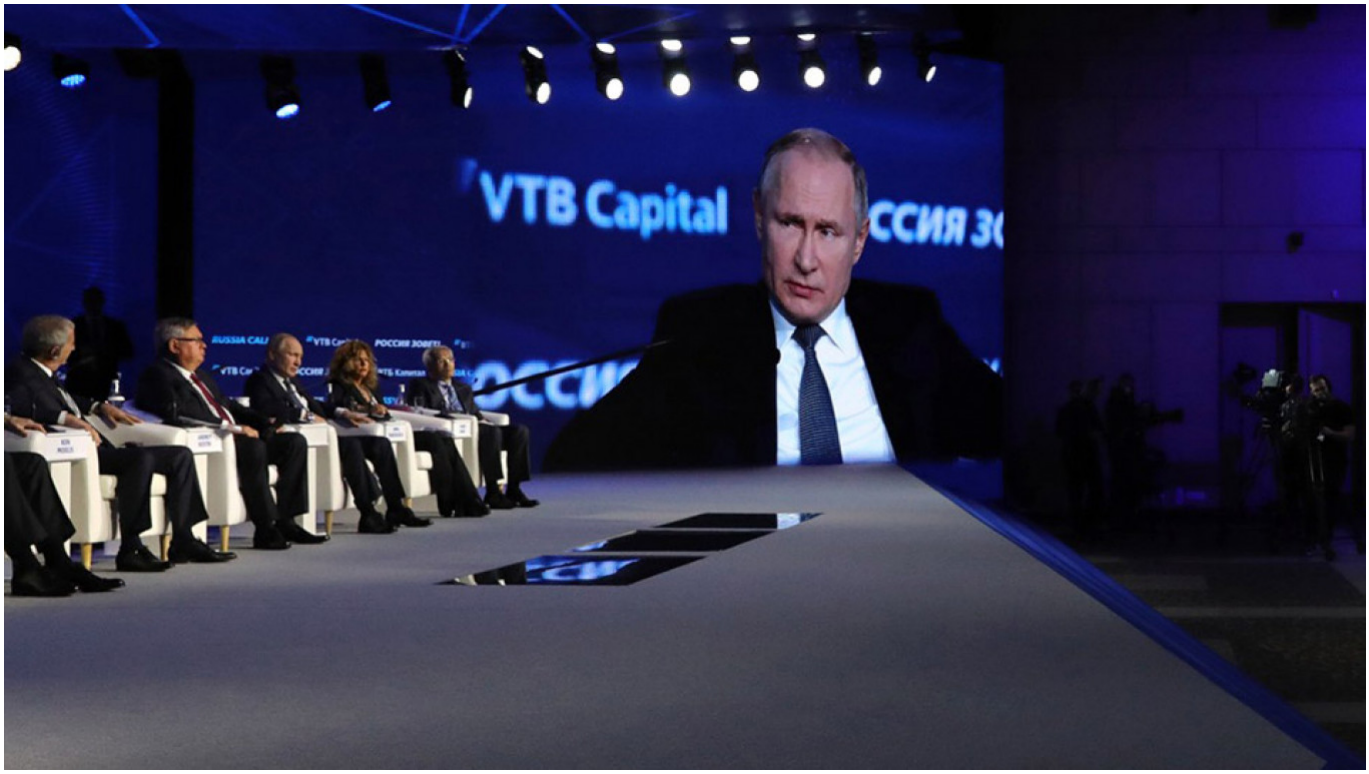
The Moscow Times
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Putin Says Zero-Carbon Energy Will 'Send Us Back to Caves'

November 20, 2019



Putin criticized green energy in a speech at an economic forum. **Kremlin.ru**

Producing energy without carbon emissions will send humanity back to the prehistoric period, Russian President Vladimir Putin told an investment forum Wednesday.

Putin has joked about climate change in the past, saying in 2003 that warmer weather could increase grain harvests and cut spending on fur coats. This summer he criticized wind turbines, saying they contribute to bird deaths and "cause worms to come out of the soil."

"When these ideas of reducing energy production to zero or relying only on solar or wind power are promoted, I think humanity could once again end up in caves, simply because it won't consume anything," Putin said at the forum, organized by Russia's state-run VTB bank.

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Solar and wind-powered energy development has not taken off in Russia — a leading producer of fossil fuel — as much as in other countries.

“The technology is currently such that we simply won’t be able to preserve civilization without hydrocarbons, nuclear energy or hydropower,” Putin said.

Putin dismissed the idea that most countries favor zero-carbon energy due to climate change considerations and blamed Russia’s competitors on the energy market for “pursuing their own agenda.”

“These people are trying to insert themselves into the current trends of public opinion, and trying to lead us all into delusions,” he said. “We’ve got to stick to realities.”

Putin touted Russia’s nuclear, hydropower and natural gas generation as being one of the world’s most environmentally friendly energy mixes.

Russia, the world’s fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, ratified the Paris climate agreement in September.

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