The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Replaces Rusnano Chief Chubais Amid Reform Push

December 03, 2020



Vladimir Putin and Sergei Kulikov

President Vladimir Putin named a replacement for Anatoly Chubais, the head of state nanotechnology firm Rusnano, on Wednesday, exposing a rift between the president and the former deputy prime minister whose popularity has waned in recent years.

During his 12 years as Rusnano's head Chubais, who had been an architect of Russia's 1990s privatizations as deputy prime minister, was tasked with helping to create innovative technology and develop it commercially. A 2013 assessment by Russia's Accounts Chamber revealed ineffective management and spending at the firm, while opposition figure Alexei Navalny accused Rusnano and Chubais of "drinking the budget."

Putin proposed Sergei Kulikov, the current head of the Military-Industrial Commission and a former director of state conglomerate Rostec, to take the helm at Rusnano in Chubais' stead.

"Sergei Alexandrovich, you know that you are invited to head one of our largest development structures, Rusnano," Putin said during a videoconference with Kulikov.

Rusnano, formerly known as the Russian Nanotechnology Corporation, remains one of the “key development areas” for the country, Putin said during the videoconference.

"Without the development of technologies such as nanotechnology, our economy has no future, this is quite obvious. The same applies to artificial intelligence and other areas [such as] biotechnology," Putin told Kulikov.

The government has already prepared proposals to support Rusnano, the president said. Last month, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin announced reforms of state development institutions including Rusnano in order to complete Putin’s $360 billion National Projects agenda, which has fallen behind schedule since being announced in 2018.

The Russian government signed a directive for Chubais’ dismissal as Rusnano CEO and Kulikov’s appointment to the position on Thursday.

Chubais confirmed that Thursday will be his last day as Rusnano CEO. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there will be no meeting between the president and Chubais.

Chubais, 65, is a businessman and former politician who got his head start during the Yeltsin era and was one of the main figures behind the privatization of the Russian energy market.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/12/03/chubais-a72220