

Putin Aide-Turned-Critic Probed for U.S. Election Conspiracy Blog

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Andrei Illarionov served as Putin's chief economic adviser from 2000 to 2005 and has since become a critic of the Kremlin. **Oleg Dyachenko / TASS**

A libertarian U.S. think tank is investigating a former aide-turned-critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin for a blog post containing conspiracy theories about the 2020 election and last week's assault on the U.S. Capitol, Politico [reported](#) Tuesday.

Cato Institute fellow Andrei Illarionov claimed in a Russian-language LiveJournal entry Friday that rioters who stormed the legislative building were "provoked" by Black Lives Matter activists but did not violate the U.S. Constitution. Illarionov, a senior fellow at Cato's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, also alleged that the U.S. Capitol attack was a "trap" set by Washington's Democratic mayor and police.

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Illarionov said it was still "unknown" who won the 2020 presidential election and accused the

Democratic party of seeking “exclusive domination” to promote “radical socialism, black racism and green totalitarianism.”

Politico cited Cato spokesperson Corie Whalen as saying that Illarionov’s misleading post “is under discussion among senior management and with Mr. Illarionov.”

The think tank’s senior management “categorically rejects the claims” in Illarionov’s blog post, Whalen was quoted as saying.

The statement did not indicate whether the think tank would strip Illarionov of his fellowship.

Ilya Zaslavkiy, head of research at the U.S.-based Free Russia Foundation nonprofit, [wrote](#) Tuesday that Illarionov’s views are “widely popular among Russian-American Trump supporters, some of whom took part in the Capitol events.” Russian commentators have [pointed](#) to the U.S. Capitol attack as a sign of America’s decline, while President Vladimir Putin was among the few world leaders to remain silent on the events.

The Cato Institute itself [condemned](#) the Capitol attack as “mob rule” and criticized outgoing President Donald Trump and allied lawmakers for helping “stoke the flames of distrust and division.”

Illarionov served as Putin’s chief economic adviser from 2000 to 2005, when he quit amid repeated disagreements over what he has called a “lack of liberal or even mainstream policies.” Illarionov has since become an outspoken Kremlin critic.

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