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Kremlin Insider Dmitry Kozak Criticized War in Letter to Putin Before Resigning – Agentstvo

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Dmitry Kozak. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin's former deputy chief of staff wrote a letter criticizing Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and presented it to the president before stepping down earlier this year, the investigative outlet Agentstvo reported Friday, citing people close to him.

Dmitry Kozak, a longtime Putin ally, does not believe his criticism angered the Russian leader and "expects to meet with him again soon," one source close to the former official told Agentstvo.

Another source described the letter as expressing his views on the war "in very strong terms" and said it had been prepared alongside his formal resignation letter, which was submitted in mid-September.

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Agentstvo did not publish excerpts of the reported letter. The Moscow Times could not independently confirm its existence.

The outlet's sources said Kozak has been traveling frequently to Israel since his resignation, not out of concerns for his own safety but to undergo medical treatment.

The New York Times reported in August that Kozak had fallen out of favor with Putin after opposing the war. He reportedly argued against escalation three days before the full-scale invasion, proposed an early settlement that Putin rejected and was later stripped of his Ukraine-related responsibilities.

Once considered a powerful behind-the-scenes operator, Kozak has maintained a low profile since he departed the Kremlin, with many of his duties reportedly shifting to Sergei Kiriyenko, the influential first deputy chief of staff.

Born in Ukraine's Kirovohrad region, then part of the Soviet Union, Kozak built his early career in legal roles in St. Petersburg, where Putin served in the mayor's office. He joined the federal government in 1999 and moved to the Kremlin after Putin's election the following year.

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