

Putin Defends Russian Election, Sovereignty

Dec. 8—*Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin today held a nearly two-hour meeting with leading activists of the National People’s Front (NPF), the broad public organization he organized earlier this year, and whose members account for one-fourth of the people who won election to the State Duma Dec. 4 on the United Russia (UR) slate. In the course of the discussion, Putin responded to comments by his campaign co-workers with his own, pointed remarks to the statements of President Dmitri Medvedev and of the Russian Foreign Ministry, that blanket charges from foreign officials about the Duma elections being riddled with fraud were unfounded, and that outside funding for “street democracy” rose to the level of infringing on Russia’s sovereignty.*

Here are excerpts from the discussion, translated by EIR. Subheads were added.

Putin: ... I think that the most important, most effective way that a political force that is in power, the most fundamental tool for winning the trust of people, of the citizens, is, of course, the practical work of that force and the results it achieves.... The results of the elections reflect how people perceive what UR has done. And I think that the decline, the reduction by a certain number of seats, is just....

As for the actions of, let’s call it street democracy, here’s what I think: If people act within the law, they should have the right to express their opinion, and we should not limit anybody in those civil rights. If somebody breaks the law, then government and law enforcement agencies should demand obedience to the law, using all legal means. That’s the second point.

Finally, thirdly. We are all adults here, and we all understand that some of the organizers (I don’t mean all, but, still, some of the organizers) are acting according to a well-known scenario, with narrow and selfish political goals.... But you and I also know that people in our country do not want a situation to develop in

Russia, such as there was in Kyrgyzstan, or in the recent past in Ukraine. Nobody wants chaos. And, relying on the overwhelming majority of our citizens, we should conduct a dialogue with those who are in opposition, and give them the opportunity to speak out, to exercise their constitutional right to demonstrate, and to express and formulate their opinions. But, relying on the overwhelming majority of citizens who do not want any chaos in the country, the law enforcement agencies should organize all this within the existing legal framework and the Constitution of our state. I hope this is how it will be....

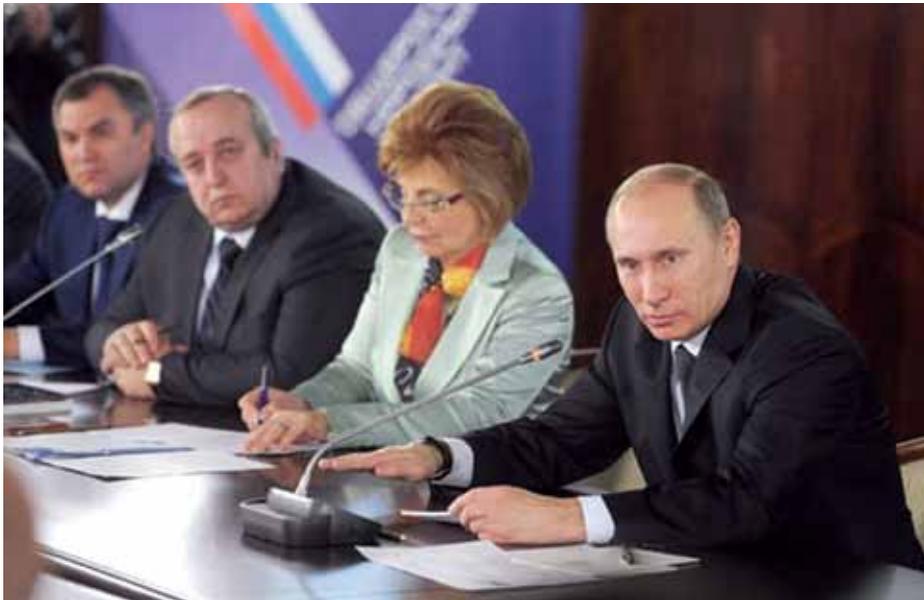
... I watched the first reaction of our American partners. The first thing the Secretary of State did, was that she gave a characterization and an evaluation of the elections, and said that they had been dishonest and unfair, although she had not even received the report from the ODIHR [Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, of the OSCE].¹ She called the tune for some figures inside our country, she gave the signal. They heard this signal, and began their active work, with this support from the U.S. State Department....

Yekaterina Lakhova (head of the Union of Women of Russia): Vladimir Vladimirovich, I want to say that it looks like Hillary Clinton went overboard, because we have been talking about [foreign] grant donors for a long time.... And today, of course, they support both public organizations, and party organizations, and provocateurs.... The people who are doing the destabilization, well, that’s clear.... Pink, orange, what kind of revolution do they want to make for us?...

We Are a Major Nuclear Power

Putin: Concerning financing from abroad for various areas of activity, I would not dump everything here into the same pile. There are quite fine and useful areas of activity and work, including with support from our colleagues and friends abroad. We don’t need to persecute anybody here, saying that they’re all enemies or that there’s some kind of plot against us. It is absolutely clear that work is being done, including this kind... After all, there is a political struggle going on inside the country, and there is a political struggle going on in the international area, and some of our colleagues... [The ellipses in this paragraph are Putin’s pauses.]

1. See www.osce.org/odihr/elections/85753



Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (foreground) chairs the meeting of the Russian Popular Front's Coordinating Council on Dec. 8.

Recently I was talking with the press, with the media, that—what are you going to say: We are a major nuclear power, and we remain one. And that causes certain concerns on the part of our partners. And we get “rocked,” so that we won’t forget who’s the master here on our planet, and so that we obey, and realize that they have levers of influence on us within our country. So if we’re talking about humanitarian issues, related to health or something like that, that’s fine. But when money from abroad is put into political activity inside our country, that should give us pause. It is especially unacceptable to pour money into the electoral process. This is simply impermissible.

Dr. Leonid Roshal (deputy head of the Directorate B or “Vypmel” special forces unit of the Federal Security Service): “I read a specific figure—[\$]9 million. The State Department official figures.

We Need To Defend Our Sovereignty

Putin: Excuse me, may I finish? Actually, more. Hundreds of millions of dollars are put into this work. And so we should, here in the People’s Front, and with the Deputies, talk about it and discuss: We need to develop ways of defending our sovereignty, defending against outside interference. We have, say, an internal law, which regulates. . . . And we are not against having foreign observers observe our political process and our electoral process; we are for

this, not against it.

By the way, in the [United] States itself, they don’t let observers in anywhere. They drive them out of the polling places. In the very recent period they have begun to let a few in, but they used to just say, “Go away!,” and they didn’t let anybody in. Things are very tough there, in reality. A lot less liberal than here. We are for it, but we have our laws.

And when they start financing some domestic organizations, which are supposedly our national organizations, but are essentially working on foreign money, and dancing to the tune of a foreign country within the electoral process, then that is

impermissible. And we need to look at what our laws are, and how they are working, and how much here Leonid Mikhailovich [Roshal] is absolutely right—money is being pumped in. We need to protect ourselves against this interference in our internal affairs and defend our sovereignty. All of Russian society is interested in that.

But, I repeat, that does not mean that we should ban everything. Many people truly have good will and want to work with us, and want to help and provide methodological support and assistance, as well as material, although they themselves have many problems; they themselves need support, and without any exaggeration the issue has now come up of Russia’s providing support and help. Ten years ago nobody would have dreamed this in their worst nightmare. It was hard even to imagine posing the question of somebody coming to Russia for help and support. And we indeed are in a condition today, where we can do it. The question is how, and by what channels? But there’s nothing to rejoice about in this. They’re having trouble now, as we did yesterday. And, by the way, there are many people there who had and still have good will toward us. But we are obliged to defend our sovereignty. We’ll have to think about improving our laws, and making people more liable if they are performing tasks for a foreign country, to influence the domestic political process.