

# Yevgeni Primakov, Who Pulled Russia Back from the Brink, Has Died

by Rachel Douglas

June 26—Academician Yevgeni Maximovich Primakov, Russia's foremost Arabist, former director of the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies, head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), died today at the age of 85, after a two-year battle with cancer. He continued to contribute to Russia's national policy deliberations until very recently, presenting a paper in April at a session of his CCI Mercury Club, titled "Four Errors in Our Economic Policy."



While Primakov had a distinguished career as a specialist in Middle East policy, and knew British and U.S. intelligence operations in that region intimately, being an intelligence operative himself, he was also a leading economist, and his crowning achievement came in government, at the end of the first, disastrous post-Soviet decade in Russia. Appointed prime minister by President Boris Yeltsin after Russia's government bond default of August 1998 (reportedly because industry specialist Yuri Maslyukov refused to accept that office, but said he would serve as deputy PM in a Primakov government—as he then did), Primakov in his eight months in office halted the headlong demolition of Russian industry.

As recounted in the [EIR Special Report](#) *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, "The results of the Primakov-Maslyukov government's measures to salvage Russia's real economy were inherited by Vladimir Putin... They created a framework, in which decisions in favor of Eurasian continental development might be seriously considered."

"Also of strategic importance," the *EIR* Special Report recalled, "was the outstanding diplomatic en-

gagement of this government: Primakov's December 1998 visit to India, during which he proposed the formation of a 'strategic triangle' among Russia, India, and China. The collaboration of these Eurasian powers subsequently came to life through a years-long sequence of three-way academic and diplomatic meetings; after many turns in the road, the 'RIC' combination today is the core of the alliance called the BRICS."

Appreciations of Primakov, cast in precisely these terms, poured in today. Analyst Kirill Benediktov, in a commentary for *Izvestia*, wrote, "Primakov's idea of creating a Great Triangle, Moscow-Delhi-Beijing, is becoming a real political construct before our very eyes, no matter how loud the liberal jackals may yap. Yevgeni Maximovich first proclaimed the idea of the Great Triangle during his visit to Delhi in 1998. Many of us recall the condition Russia was in at that time: politically and economically crushed, having barely survived the August default, and just barely beginning to find our way out of the deep crisis into which Russia had been plunged by the 'young reformers' in alliance with the corrupt members of the Yeltsin Family. And here was the new prime minister of a country which, everybody believed, if it did recover from the misfortunes piled upon it, would not do so any time soon, proposing to his partners in India and China to form a strategic triangle, Moscow-Delhi-Beijing. ... Just seven years after Primakov's visit to Delhi, China and India were already calling themselves 'good neighbors and friends,' and in 2012 Beijing announced that Chinese-Indian relations could become the most important bilateral partnership of the century. And after Russia's 'isolation' by the Atlantic West, it became apparent that Moscow's joining the alliance of great Eurasian nations, as it took shape, was the only pathway to preservation of its political and economic sovereignty."

President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov were among those issuing statements of appreciation today for the life and unending work of Primakov, who will be buried June 29 at Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery.