

Alternate theories on how Putin can retain power after his second term expires

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Everybody has their own pet theory on how Vladimir Putin can retain power after the end of his second official term. I earlier wrote of one such theory: Change the constitution to permit a third term. In the intervening months, other theories have been put forth. Each one chips away at a different part of the statement that “the president can be elected to at most two consecutive terms”:

- Attack the word *the president*: Transfer all the powers of the presidency to the prime minister, then have Putin be the next prime minister. There is no limit on how many terms someone can serve as prime minister.
- Attack the word *elected*: Since the prime minister is first in line should the president step down, have Putin become the next prime minister and install a crony as president. When the president resigns on his first day, Putin becomes president without being elected.
- Attack the word *two* by changing the constitution, as noted already.
- Attack the word *consecutive*: Similar to the attack on the word *elected*, and then point out that since there was an intervening president, Putin’s next two terms will not be consecutive with the first two.

There’s also another method that merely plays by a different set of rules: Install a crony as president and pull the strings from backstage. As I noted in my earlier entry, I’m much more fascinated by the machinery being put into motion to arrange for Putin to retain power than in whether he actually does.

On an unrelated note, Mark MacKinnon explains the magic phrase to use as a foreigner when pulled over arbitrarily by the police.

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