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Pro-Kremlin Parties Spar Over 'Go Russia'

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The first skirmish of the new election season has flared after both A Just Russia and the ruling United Russia party announced plans to create pro-modernization movements called Go Russia.

A Just Russia held the inaugural congress for its movement — named after President Dmitry Medvedev's 2009 article on modernization — in Moscow on Saturday.

The movement is open to nonparty members, said Gennady Gudkov, deputy head of A Just Russia's faction in the State Duma who co-heads the movement together with economist Nikita Krichevsky and prominent test pilot Magomed Tolboyev.

A Just Russia Deputy Anatoly Aksakov, journalist and Public Chamber member Andrei Dementyev and liberal politicians Boris Nadezhdin and Vladimir Ryzhkov have also joined the group, which plans to file paperwork for registration with the Justice Ministry on Monday, RIA-Novosti reported.

Meanwhile, United Russia leader Boris Gryzlov said his party has created its own Go Russia movement open to everyone who supports modernization.

Medvedev supports United Russia's group, Gryzlov said, the party's web site reported Friday.

The group is to hold its inaugural congress this week, party secretary Vyacheslav Volodin said Thursday, Interfax reported.

Gryzlov accused A Just Russia of attempting to “privatize” Medvedev's modernization drive. Gudkov called the creation of the rival group a “sad, ridiculous and embarrassing” move, but added that he expected his movement to be denied registration.

Both pro-Kremlin parties are jumping on the modernization bandwagon to garner votes ahead of State Duma elections neat year, political analyst Alexei Makarkin said.

“The fight will be about active, modernization-minded voters,” Makarkin said, Interfax reported.

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