

Pro-Medvedev Spin Doctor Ousted From Kremlin

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Pavlovsky

The Kremlin has dropped prominent adviser Gleb Pavlovsky over his publicly stated preference for Dmitry Medvedev in next year's presidential vote, highlighting sensitivities over apparent rivalry with Vladimir Putin, Vedomosti reported Wednesday.

Pavlovsky had "openly bet on Dmitry Medvedev, offering to discuss his modernization agenda within the election campaign," an unidentified Kremlin official told the daily.

Pavlovsky runs the Foundation for Effective Politics, a think tank that advised the Kremlin in an unofficial capacity. Kremlin officials told the paper it would no longer be working with Pavlovsky's foundation, effectively severing ties with him.

In the lead-up to State Duma elections in December and next year's presidential vote, political figures have not shown preference for any one member of the ruling duo but expressed growing nervousness over the uncertainty.

Pavlovsky threw his weight behind President Medvedev over the past year in interviews with several media outlets. He first broke a taboo two years ago when he speculated about a possible coup against Prime Minister Putin from within.

A Kremlin official on Wednesday denied a political motive behind Pavlovsky's departure, telling Interfax that he had played a minor role in drafting Kremlin policies and resigned voluntarily.

"He did not provide any special political consulting lately," the unidentified official said. "His responsibilities were mainly limited to reviewing regional media, which, in the age of the Internet ... is hardly a unique service.

"He was kept in the job mainly because of his past achievements," the official added.

But Pavlovsky insisted that he was removed from the Kremlin for his vocal support of a second term for Medvedev. The tandem's refusal to announce their candidate "has dragged on for too long and weakens the whole party of power," Pavlovsky told Rusnovosti.ru.

"Putin has done all he could, and now he has to help Medvedev with his future presidency," Pavlovsky said.

Neither Putin nor Medvedev has commented on the issue.

But Putin said Tuesday during a trip to Denmark that the tandem would not take Western advice into account when deciding on the candidate.

"Future candidates for president of the Russian Federation do not need support from abroad," Putin said when asked by a reporter about calls by some in the West for him to stay out of the election.

"Future candidates for president of Russia need the support of the Russian people," he said, without elaborating.

In a poll released this week, 39 percent of Russians believe that Putin will become president in the 2012 poll, while 28 percent are predicting a victory for Medvedev, Vedomosti reported, citing the independent Levada Center.

(Reuters, MT)

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