

Right Cause Taps Ex-Yanukovych Aide

By [Alexander Bratersky](#)

July 20, 2011

The  Moscow Times

Mikhail Prokhorov's Right Cause party has tapped a spin doctor whose work in Ukraine was undone in 2004 by the Orange Revolution to lead its campaign for the State Duma elections.

Prokhorov has also announced that Right Cause will form a "shadow cabinet" with him at the helm, Interfax said.

A key position on Right Cause's campaign team will be assumed by Rifat Shaikhutdinov, currently a Duma deputy with the Liberal Democratic Party, Gazeta.ru [reported](#), citing senior Right Cause official Boris Nadezhdin.

Prokhorov's spokeswoman Yuliana Slashchyova said Tuesday that Shaikhutdinov would only serve as an adviser with a 100-member team headed by Prokhorov. But unidentified party members told Gazeta.ru that Shaikhutdinov was already at work as de-facto campaign chief.

Igor Lebedev, who heads the Liberal Democrats' faction in the Duma, denounced Shaikhutdinov's alliance with Right Cause as "a betrayal," RIA-Novosti [said](#).

Shaikhutdinov was not available for comment Wednesday.

Shaikhutdinov, a Duma deputy since 2003, has formidable experience in political campaigning that dates back to the 1990s. He also headed a state-owned aviation enterprise that went bankrupt in 2003, prompting the Investigative Committee to unsuccessfully seek in 2007 to have him stripped of parliamentary immunity and charged over the bankruptcy.

But Shaikhutdinov's biggest challenge came in 2004, when he headed the campaign team of Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich, who enjoyed the Kremlin's backing and declared himself the winner after the vote but agreed to a rerun election after sweeping public protests. He lost to Viktor Yushchenko but defeated him in a 2010 rematch, this time without Shaikhutdinov.

Prokhorov, who announced plans for the "shadow cabinet" at a news conference Tuesday, did not name any future ministers but himself, but said they would be included on the party list for the Duma vote. He has promised to give Right Cause the second-biggest Duma faction.

"We will invite people whose professional skills enable them to assume even the top posts," said Prokhorov, who in June voiced aspirations to become the prime minister after the elections.

"It's important to present an alternative view on government actions," senior Right Cause member Leonid Gozman said, Interfax reported.

The cabinet may gain importance if stocked with "influential people," said political analyst Iosif Diskin, who sits on the Public Chamber. He identified former deputy economy minister, Andrei Nechayev, and former Central Bank chief Sergei Alexashenko — both Right Cause members — as possible cabinet nominees.

But Eduard Limonov, who sat on a shadow cabinet established in 1992 by the Liberal Democratic Party, was skeptical of the idea. "Our shadow government had no influence," Limonov, now an opposition leader, said by telephone Wednesday. He predicted the same fate for Prokhorov's plan.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/20/right-cause-taps-ex-yanukovich-aide-a8381>